



PASCHA

The Bright and Glorious Resurrection of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ

3 / 16 April

ODE ONE

Heirmos: IT is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant, O ye peoples; Pascha, the Lord's Pascha; for Christ God hath brought us from death unto life, and from earth unto Heaven as we sing the triumphal hymn.

Troparia: LET us purify our senses and we shall behold Christ, radiant with the unapproachable light of the Resurrection, and we shall clearly hear Him say: Rejoice! as we sing the triumphal hymn.

FOR meet it is that the Heavens should rejoice, and that the earth should be glad, and that the whole world, both visible and invisible, should keep the feast; for Christ, our everlasting Joy, hath arisen.

Katavasia: It is the day of Resurrection . Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life. (Thrice) JESUS, having risen from the grave as He foretold, hath granted us life everlasting and great mercy. These last two hymns are chanted thus after each Ode.

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: : For Thine is the dominion, and Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

ODE THREE

Heirmos: COME, let us drink a new drink, not one marvellously brought forth from a barren rock, but the Source of incorruption, which springeth forth from the grave of Christ, in Whom we are established.

Troparia: NOW are all things filled with light; Heaven and earth, and the nethermost regions of the earth. Let all creation, therefore, celebrate the arising of Christ, whereby it is established.

YESTERDAY I was buried with Thee, O Christ, and today I arise with Thine arising. Yesterday was I crucified with Thee; do Thou Thyself glorify me with Thee, O Saviour, in Thy Kingdom.

Katavasia: Come, let us drink a new drink . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For Thou art our God, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

THE HYPAKOE - Fourth Tone

WHEN they who were with Mary came, anticipating the dawn, and found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, they heard from the Angel: Why seek ye among the dead, as though He were mortal man, Him Who abideth in everlasting light? Behold the grave-clothes. Go quickly and proclaim to the world that the Lord is risen, and hath put death to death. For He is the Son of God, Who saveth the race of man.

And a reading from the Theologian, beginning with the words, It is the Day of Resurrection, and my beginning hath good auspices.

ODE FOUR

Heirmos: LET the Prophet Habakkuk, the proclaimer of divine things, keep the divine watch with us, and show forth the radiant Angel who with resounding voice hath declared: Today doth bring salvation to the world, for Christ is risen as omnipotent.

Troparia: CHRIST revealed Himself as of the male sex when He opened the Virgin's womb, and as a mortal was He called the Lamb. Thus, without blemish is our Pascha. for He tasted not corruption; and since He is truly God, perfect was He proclaimed. CHRIST, our blessed Crown, like unto a yearling lamb, of His own good will did sacrifice Himself for all, a Pascha of purification: and from the grave the beautiful Sun of Righteousness shone forth again upon us.

DAVID, the ancestor of our God, danced with leaping before the symbolical Ark of the Covenant. Let us also, the holy people of God, beholding the fulfilment of the symbols, rejoice in godly wise: For Christ is risen, as omnipotent.

Katavasia: Let the Prophet Habakkuk, the proclaimer of divine things . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For a good and man-befriending God art Thou, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

ODE FIVE

Heirmos: LET us arise in the deep dawn and, instead of myrrh, offer praise to the Master; and we shall see Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, Who causeth life to dawn for all.

Troparia: WHEN those held captive in the bonds of Hades beheld Thy boundless compassion, O Christ, they hastened to the light with a joyful step, exalting the eternal Pascha.

BEARING lights, let us go forth to meet Christ, Who cometh forth from the grave like a bridegroom. And with the ranks of them that love and keep this festival, let us celebrate the saving Pascha of God.

Katavasia: Let us arise in the deep dawn . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For hallowed and glorified is Thine all-honourable and majestic Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

ODE SIX

Heirmos: THOU didst descend into the deepest parts of the earth, and didst shatter the everlasting bars that held fast those that were fettered, O Christ. And on the third day, like Jonas from the sea monster, Thou didst arise from the grave.

Troparia: HAVING kept the seals intact, O Christ, Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Thou Who didst not break the seal of the Virgin by Thy birth; and Thou hast opened unto us the gates of Paradise.

O MY SAVIOUR the life-giving and unslain Sacrifice, when, as God, Thou of Thine own will, hadst offered up Thyself unto the Father, Thou didst raise up with Thyself the whole race of Adam when Thou didst rise from the grave.

Katavasia: Thou didst descend . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For Thou art the King of Peace, and the Saviour of our souls, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

KONTAKION - Tone 8: THOUGH Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades, and didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

OIKOS: THE myrrh-bearing maidens anticipated the dawn, seeking, as it were day, the Sun Who was before the sun and Who had set in the tomb, and they cried out one to another: O friends, come, let us anoint with sweet-smelling spices the life-bringing and buried Body, even that Flesh which raiseth fallen Adam, who lieth in the grave. Let us go hence, let us make haste like the Wise Men, and let us adore and offer before Him myrrh as it were a gift to Him, Who is no longer wrapped in swaddling bands, but in a winding-sheet. And let us make lamentation and cry aloud in exclamation: Arise, O Master, Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

The Synaxarion of the Menaion, then the following: On this, the holy and great Sunday of Pascha, we celebrate the life-bringing Resurrection of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Verses: Christ, going down alone to the struggle with Hades, Came forth again and brought with Him plenteous spoils of victory. To Him be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then there is chanted in Tone 6: LET us who have beheld the Resurrection of Christ worship our holy Lord Jesus, Who is alone without sin. We worship Thy Cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Thy holy Resurrection. For Thou art our God, and we know none other beside Thee, and we call upon Thy Name. Come, all ye faithful, let us worship Christ's holy Resurrection, for behold, through the Cross joy hath come to the whole world. Forever blessing the Lord, we praise His Resurrection. He endured the Cross for us, and by death destroyed death. (Thrice)

JESUS, having risen from the grave as He foretold, hath granted us life everlasting and great mercy. (Thrice)

ODE SEVEN

Heirmos: THE only blest and most glorious God of our Fathers, Who hath redeemed the Children from the furnace, is become man, and as a mortal doth suffer, and through suffering doth clothe mortality with the grace of incorruption.

Troparia: THE godly-wise women followed after Thee in haste with sweet-smelling myrrh. But Him Whom they sought with tears as dead, they joyfully adored as the living God, and announced unto Thy disciples, O Christ, the glad tidings of the mystical Pascha.

WE celebrate the death of death, the destruction of Hades, the beginning of an everlasting life. And with leaps of joy we praise the Cause thereof, the only blest and most glorious God of our Fathers.

TRULY sacred and supremely festive is this saving night, radiant with light, the forerunner of the bright-beaming Day of the Resurrection, whereon the Timeless Light in bodily form shone from the grave for all.

Katavasia: The only blest . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: Blessed and glorified be the dominion of Thy Kingdom, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

ODE EIGHT

Heirmos: THIS chosen and holy day is the first of the sabbaths, the queen and lady, the feast of feasts, and the festival of festivals, wherein we bless Christ unto the ages.

Troparia: COME on this auspicious day of the Resurrection, let us partake of the new fruit of the vine of divine gladness and of the Kingdom of Christ, praising Him as God unto the ages.

CAST thine eyes about thee, O Sion, and behold! For lo, like divinely-radiant luminaries, from the West, the North, the Sea, and the East have thy children assembled unto thee, blessing Christ unto the ages.

O FATHER Almighty, the Word, and the Spirit, one Nature in three Hypostases united, transcending essence and supremely Divine! In Thee have we been baptized, and Thee will we bless unto all the ages. We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord.

Katavasia: This chosen and holy . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For blessed is Thy Name, and glorified is Thy Kingdom, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

The deacon: The Theotokos and the Mother of the Light, let us magnify in song.

And the choirs chant the hymns of the ninth Ode:

ODE NINE

Megalynarion: Magnify, O my soul, Him Who suffered willingly, and was buried, and arose from the grave on the third day.

Heirmos: SHINE, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord hath arisen upon thee; dance now and be glad, O Sion, and do thou exult, O pure Theotokos, in the arising of Him Whom thou didst bear.

Megalynarion: Magnify, ... And again the Heirmos:

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem . . .

Megalynarion: Christ is the new Pascha, the living sacrificial Victim, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Troparion: O THY divine and beloved and most sweet voice; Thou hast truly promised that Thou wouldst be with us unto the end of the world, O Christ; and we faithful rejoice, having this as an anchor of hope.

Megalynarion: Today the whole creation is glad and doth rejoice, for Christ is risen, and Hades hath been despoiled.

And again the Troparion: O Thy divine and beloved . . .

Glory. Megalynarion: Magnify, O my soul, the dominion of the Undivided Godhead of Three Hypostases.

Troparion: GREAT and most sacred Pascha, Christ; O Wisdom and Word and Power of God! Grant that we partake of Thee fully in the unwaning day of Thy Kingdom. Both now.

Megalynarion: Rejoice, O Virgin, rejoice; rejoice, O blessed one; rejoice, O most glorified one, for thy Son hath arisen from the grave on the third day.

And again the Troparion: O great and most sacred Pascha . . .

Megalynarion: The Angel cried unto her that is full of grace: O pure Virgin, rejoice, and again I say, rejoice; for thy Son hath arisen from the grave on the third day.

Katavasia: SHINE, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord hath arisen upon thee; dance now and be glad, O Sion, and do thou exult, O pure Theotokos, in the arising of Him Whom thou didst bear.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life. (Thrice)

JESUS, having risen from the grave as He foretold, hath granted us life everlasting and great mercy.

Then the little litany with the exclamation: For all the hosts of the Heavens praise Thee, and unto Thee do they send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. The Choir: Amen.

EXAPOSTILARION, Second Tone: WHEN Thou hadst fallen asleep in the flesh as one mortal, O King and Lord, Thou didst rise again on the third day, raising up Adam from corruption, and abolishing death: O Pascha of incorruption ! O Salvation of the world! (Thrice)

FROM THE OCTOECHOS, First Tone:

Verse: Praise Him for His mighty acts, praise Him according to the multitude of His greatness.

WE praise Thy saving Passion, O Christ, and glorify Thy Resurrection.

Verse: Praise Him with the sound of trumpet, praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

THOU Who didst endure the Cross, and didst abolish death, and didst arise from the dead: Make our life peaceful, O Lord, since Thou alone art omnipotent.

Verse: Praise Him with timbrel and dance, praise Him with strings and flute.

THOU Who didst despoil Hades, and didst raise up man by Thy Resurrection, O Christ: Deem us worthy to hymn and glorify Thee with purity of heart.

Verse: Praise Him with tuneful cymbals, praise Him with cymbals of jubilation. Let every breath praise the Lord.

GLORIFYING Thy God-befitting condescension, we praise Thee, O Christ; for thou wast born of a Virgin, and yet Thou wast inseparable from the Father. Thou didst suffer as man, and didst endure the Cross willingly. And as one coming forth from the bridal chamber, Thou didst rise from the grave that Thou mightest save the world. O Lord, glory be to Thee.

THE STICHERA OF PASCHA WITH THEIR VERSES, Tone 5:

Verse: Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Him flee from before His face.

A SACRED Pascha hath been shown forth to us today; a new and holy Pascha, a mystic Pascha, an all-venerable Pascha, a Pascha that is Christ the Redeemer; a spotless Pascha, a great Pascha, a Pascha of the faithful, a Pascha that hath opened unto us the gates of Paradise, a Pascha that doth hallow all the faithful.

Verse: As smoke vanisheth, so let them vanish; as wax melteth before the fire.

COME from that scene, O women, bearers of good tidings, and say to Sion: Receive from us the tidings of joy, of the Resurrection of Christ. Exult, dance, and be glad, O Jerusalem, for thou hast seen Christ the King as a bridegroom come forth from the tomb.

Verse: So let sinners perish at the presence of God, and let the righteous be glad.

THE myrrh-bearing women at deep dawn drew nigh to the tomb of the Giver of life; they found an Angel sitting upon the stone, and he, addressing them, in this manner did say: Why seek ye the Living among the dead? Why mourn ye the Incorruptible amid corruption? Go, proclaim it unto His disciples.

Verse: This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein.

A PASCHA of delight, Pascha, the Lord's Pascha, an all-venerable Pascha hath dawned for us, a Pascha whereon let us embrace one another with joy. O Pascha, ransom from sorrow! Today Christ hath shone forth from the tomb as from a bridal chamber, and hath filled the women with joy, saying: Proclaim it unto the Apostles.

GLORY; BOTH NOW, Plagal of First Tone

IT is the day of Resurrection; let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, O brethren, even to those that hate us: Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection; and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life.

Then Christ is risen is repeated thrice more, and we continue chanting it until the brethren have greeted each other.

Homily of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople For the Holy and Radiant Day of the Glorious and Saving Resurrection of Christ our God

Master Bless - If any be pious and a lover of God, let him delight in this fair and radiant festival. If any be an honest servant, let him come in and rejoice in the joy of his Lord. If any have wearied himself with fasting, let him now enjoy the recompense. If any have worked from the first hour, let him receive today his just reward. If any have come after the third, let him feast with thankfulness. If any have arrived after the sixth, in no wise let him be in doubt; in no way shall he suffer loss. If any be later than the ninth, let him draw nigh, let him not waver. If any arrive only at the eleventh, let him not be fearful for his slowness, for the Master is munificent and receiveth the last even as the first; He giveth rest to him of the eleventh even as to him who hath wrought from the first hour. He is merciful to the last and provideth for the first; and to this one He giveth, and to that one He showeth kindness. He receiveth their labours and acknowledgeth the purpose, and He honoureth the deed and praiseth the intention. Wherefore, enter ye all into the joy of our Lord, and let the first and the second take part in the reward. Ye rich and ye poor, join hands together. Ye sober and ye heedless, do honour to this day. Ye who fast and ye who fast not, be glad today. The table is full: do ye all fare sumptuously. The calf is ample: let no one go forth hungry. Let all enjoy the banquet of Faith. Let all enjoy the wealth of righteousness. Let no one lament his poverty, for the Kingdom is made manifest to all. Let no one bewail transgressions, for forgiveness hath dawned forth from the tomb. Let no one be fearful of Death, for the death of the Saviour hath set us free. He hath quenched Death by being subdued by Death. He Who came down into Hades, despoiled Hades; and Hades was embittered when he tasted of Christ's Flesh. Isaiah, anticipating this, cried out and said: Hades was embittered when below he met Thee face to face. He was embittered, for he was set at nought. He was embittered, for he was mocked. He was embittered, for he was slain. He was embittered, for he was cast down. He was embittered, for he was fettered. He received a body, and encountered God. He received earth, and met Heaven face to face. He received what he saw, and fell whither he saw not. O Death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory? Risen is Christ, and thou art overthrown. is Christ, and the demons are fallen. Risen is Christ, and the Angels rejoice. . Risen is Christ, and life doth reign. Risen is Christ, and there is none dead in the tomb. For Christ is raised from the dead, and is become the first-fruits of them that slept. To Him be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then we chant the Dismissal Hymn of Saint John Chrysostom, Tone 8: GRACE shining forth from thy mouth like a beacon hath illumined the universe, and disclosed to the world treasures of uncovetousness, and shown us the heights of humility; but whilst instructing us by thy words, O Father John Chrysostom, intercede with the Word, Christ our God, to save our souls.
After the dismissal the Liturgy begins:

Epistle: The Acts of St Apostles 1: 1-8

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; For John truly baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

TO WHOM HE PRESENTED HIMSELF ALIVE

But why did He appear... only to the Apostles? Because to the many it would have seemed a mere apparition, inasmuch as they did not understand the secret of the mystery. For the disciples themselves were at first incredulous...and needed the evidence of actual touch with the hand, and of His eating with them...For this reason therefore, by the miracles wrought by the Apostles, He renders the evidence of His resurrection unequivocal...All men thereafter should be certain ...that He was risen...But they did not, you say, perform miracles? How then was our religion instituted?

St. John Chrysostom. Homily I on Acts I, B#55, p. 5.

The Gospel According To St. John 1: 1-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' " And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

AND THE WORD WAS GOD

Now this is a proof that Christ is God the Word, and the Power of God. For whereas human beings cease, and the word of Christ abides, it is dear to all eyes that what ceases is temporary, but that He who abides is God, and the true Son of God, His only begotten Word.

St. Athanasius of Alexandria. On The Incarnation, 55. B#7, p. 109.

Through the incarnation of God the Logos, there entered into human nature the all- perfect Divine Wisdom, the all- perfect Divine Logic, and the all-perfect Divine Mind. 'The Word became flesh,' which means: all the transcendental Divine values became internal to human nature, for they are congenial to the essence of man's godlike soul. All the eternal Divine values, incarnated in man, ultimately merge into one immeasurable and insuperable value: the God-man Christ. Consequently, the God-man is the first, the greatest, the most basic, and the supreme value in the world of man. For nothing is more human than the Lord Christ, who personifies in Himself the most ideal perfection of all that is truly human, truly manlike. Furthermore, He, as the God-man, is the most perfect synthesis of the Divine and the human ...of the natural and the supernatural, of the physical and the metaphysical, of the real and the ideal. In Him, being the God-man, there was created and preserved in the most ideal way an equilibrium between the Divine and the human; and preserved together with this was the autonomy of what is of man and human, as well as the autonomy of what is of God and divine ...

What especially makes the God-man Christ the value above all values is the fact that He is the first and only one to solve completely the problem of life and death ...having actually demonstrated in His Divine-human person incarnate, humanised immortality and life eternal. He demonstrated and proved this powerfully indeed by His resurrection from the dead and ascension into the eternal life of the Godhead ...

'He came into His own.' Yet how are they His people unless by reason of their godlike soul? ...By acknowledging the God-man, we indirectly acknowledge the Christlikeness of man. the divine descent of man, the divine elevation of man ...The struggle for the God-man is the struggle for man. Not humanists, but men of divine-human faith and life are struggling for true man, godlike and Christlike man.

Archimandrite Justin Popovic. The Supreme Value and Infallible Criterion, B#80A, Vol. 4, pp. 114,116,138.

And He is called the Word, because He is related to the Father as word to mind ...Perhaps, too, this relation might be compared to that between the definition and the thing defined since this also is called logos. For, it says, he who has mental perception of the Son (for this is the meaning of 'has seen') has also perceived the Father; and the Son is a concise demonstration and easy setting forth of the Father's nature. For everything that is begotten is a silent word of Him who begat it ..He is also called Wisdom, as the knowledge of things divine and human...And Power, as the sustainer of all created things and the furnisher to them of power to keep themselves together. And Truth...and as the pure seal of the Father and His most unerring impress. And the Image, as of one substance with Him...For this is the nature of an image, to be the reproduction of its archetype.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Fourth Theological Oration, 20. B#7, p. 191.

Since the exile from paradise and the dispersion of Babel, human language has lost its transparency. Words have become void of truth ...But the Word of God was made flesh, has become human word. It was a becoming which was prepared step by step from the creation right up to the fiat of the Virgin, prepared through continuous and successive revelations ...The image of God has never been totally erased from mankind by the primal transgression and fall. In its incarnation, the Word of God - clothed in human flesh and in human language - possesses an efficacy which is both spiritual and sacramental...

The primary aim [of Christian language] is to express and describe the mystery of Christ: the mystery of His incarnation, of his redemptive Passover, and of His sacramental presence in the Church for the life of the world, until His second glorious coming...We may affirm quite clearly that the trinitarian revelation in its entirety proceeds from the coming and the presence of Christ, in whom and through whom and by whom we discover the love of the Father and the power of the Spirit. In the first place, all names, titles, attributes of God, all biblical types and figures pertain to Jesus, the divine Logos.

Archpriest Boris Bobrinskoy, Revelation of the Spirit, Language beyond Words. Sobornost, Vol. 8 No. 1,1986.

Saints of the Week

Bright Week – Fast Free Week

3 / 16 April — St Nicetas the Confessor - He was born in Bithynia, in the town of Caesarea. His father, Philaret, losing his wife, became a monk. Nicetas remained with his paternal grandmother. After he had grown up and finished his schooling, he went to a monastery in Midikion, where Nicephorus, the abbot, tonsured him as a monk. After seven years of toil and asceticism, he was ordained hieromonk by Patriarch Tarasius. After the deaths of Nicephorus and Nicetas's great friend, Athanasius, the brethren chose Nicetas as abbot, much against his will. St Nicetas was a holy example of life and asceticism to his brethren for many years. But when Leo V, the Armenian, came to the throne, following the devout Empress Irene and the pious Emperors Nicephorus and Michael, the iconoclast heresy sprang up again. The Emperor deposed Patriarch Nicephorus and sent him into exile, and in his place put a heretic, Theodotus Cassiteras, a man of impure life. Nicetas was imprisoned and tortured, but remained unwavering in his Orthodoxy. He was taken from prison to prison and tortured by hunger and thirst, by cold and heat and malice. But he remained utterly unwavering. A certain Nicolas pestered him particularly with his derision and malice. But one night the dead father of this Nicolas appeared to him in a dream and said: 'Leave that servant of God alone!' From that moment Nicolas repented, and not only

refrained from pestering him but prevented others doing likewise. When the Emperor Leo the Armenian had made an evil end, the throne passed to the Orthodox Emperor Michael Balbus, who freed all the Orthodox sufferers. Nicetas retired to a lonely place near Constantinople, where he spent the remaining days of his earthly life in prayer and thanksgiving to God. When he died, his body was taken to his monastery and, during that journey, many of the sick, on touching his body, were healed. His relics were placed close to the graves of his spiritual father, Nicephorus, and his friend Athanasius. This great hierarch entered into rest in 824; St Paul the Wretched;

The Holy Martyr Ulphianus - a young man from the city of Tyre. He suffered for Christ at the hands of Urban, the mayor of the city of Tyre, who also was the torturer of Amphianus [April 2]. Finally, he was tied in a sack along with a dog and a snake and tossed into the sea. He suffered and was glorified in the year 306 A.D.

4 / 17 April — Our Holy Father Joseph the Hymnographer - He was born in Sicily of devout and virtuous parents, Plotinus and Agatha. After the death of his parents, he moved to Salonica, where he became a monk. As a monk, he was an example to all in fasting, restraint, ceaseless supplication, psalmody, vigils and toil. The Bishop of Salonica ordained him hieromonk. The famous Gregory of Decapolis, visiting Salonica, loved Joseph with heart and soul for his rare character, and took him back with him to his monastery in Constantinople. When the flame of iconoclasm sprang up again under Leo the Armenian, Joseph was sent to Rome to call the Pope and the Roman Church to battle for the true Faith. But pirates captured him on the way and took him to Crete, where he was kept in prison for six years by the heretics. Joseph rejoiced that he was made worthy to suffer for Christ, and thanked God constantly, regarding the iron chains with which he was bound as golden ornaments. In the sixth year, around Christmas, the wicked Emperor was murdered at the morning service in church. At the same moment, St Nicolas appeared to Joseph in the prison and said to him: 'Get up and follow me.' Joseph felt himself lifted up in the air, and found himself all at once in Constantinople. His arrival was a source of rejoicing to all the Orthodox faithful. He composed Canons and hymns for many of the saints. He had the gift of insight, because of which Patriarch Photius made him spiritual father and confessor to his priests, recommending him as 'a man of God, an angel in the flesh, a father of fathers'. In great old age, he gave his soul into the hands of the God he had served so faithfully in work and song. He died peacefully on the eve of Holy Thursday in 883;

The Holy Martyr Pherbutha - During the reign of the Persian Emperor Saborius, St. Simeon, the bishop, was slain. At the wish of the empress, Pherbutha, the sister of Bishop Simeon, was taken to the palace. Pherbutha was exceptionally beautiful and because of that many suitors thronged to her among whom were many pagan priests and soothsayers. Pherbutha rejected them all and provoked much anger against herself. At that time, the empress became ill and all the pagan priests explained to the emperor that the empress was poisoned by Pherbutha and, as a cure for the ailing empress, they recommended the following: that Pherbutha, her sister and their slave, as Christians, be sawn and that three parts of their bodies be placed on one side and three parts on the other side and that the empress should be borne between them. The emperor agreed to the recommendation of these blood-thirsty pagan priests. Pherbutha, together with her sister and their slave, suffered for Christ in the year 343 A.D., thereby earning the incorruptible wreath in the eternal kingdom of their Lord; Our Holy Father Zossima;

Our Holy Father, the Martyr Nicetas - a Slav from Albania. As a monk of the Holy Mountain (Mt. Athos), he went to Serres where he debated with the Mullahs about religion. Being that they could not overcome him with reason, the Turks subjected him to torture under which Nicetas, the holy one, died and gave up his soul to his God in the year 1808 A.D.

5 / 18 April — The Holy Martyrs Agathopous and Theodulus - The first was a deacon and the second a reader in the Church in Salonica; the first adorned with the white hairs of age and the second with the chastity of youth. In the time of Diocletian's hunting of Christians, these two were summoned for trial. They went there joyfully, and, each holding the other by the hand, went in crying: 'We are Christians!' The whole court's urging them to deny Christ and worship idols was in vain. After long imprisonment and starvation, they were condemned to death by drowning in the sea. Their hands were bound behind them and a large stone tied to their necks, and they were taken off to be drowned. When they went to throw Agathopous into the depths, he cried out: 'Lo, by a second baptism we are washed from all our sins, and will go cleansed to Christ Jesus!' The sea quickly threw their drowned bodies onto the shore, and Christians gave them burial. St Theodulus appeared to his friends in the form of a shining angel in white raiment and commanded them to distribute all his remaining goods to the poor. These great soldiers of Christ suffered with honour under the Emperor Diocletian and Faustinus, the governor of Salonica, in the year 303;

Our Holy Father Mark of Trache - also called "Mark the Athenian" because Athens was the place of his birth. His parents died after he completed his higher education in Athens. He thought to himself that death, even for himself, was unavoidable and that one should sufficiently prepare beforehand for that honourable departure from this world. Distributing all of his possessions to the poor, he sat on a plank in the sea and with a tenacious faith in God's help, prayed that God direct him wherever He wills. God, in His Providence, protected him and brought him to Lybia (or Ethiopia) to a mountain called Trache. Mark lived an ascetical life on this mountain for ninety-five years, seeing neither man nor beast. For thirty years, he waged a violent combat with evil spirits and suffered from hunger, thirst, frost and heat. He ate dirt and drank sea water. After thirty years of the most vehement suffering, the defeated demons fled from him and an angel of God began to bring him food daily in the form of bread, fish and fruit. St. Serapion visited him before his death and, afterward, made known the miraculous life of Mark. Mark asked St. Serapion: "Are there any Christians in the world now, who, if they were to say to this mountain, 'Arise from here and hurl yourself into the sea,' would it be so?" At that moment, the mountain upon which they stood moved in the direction of the sea. Mark raised his hand and stopped it. Such was the miracle-working power which this man of God possessed. Before his death, he prayed for the salvation of mankind and then gave up his soul to God. St. Serapion saw angels as they bore Mark's soul and he also saw an extended hand from heaven which received it. St. Mark lived to be one-hundred thirty years old and died about the year 400 A.D.

6 / 19 April — St Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople - Born in Phrygia of devout parents, he was the son of an officer. Once, Eutychius was playing with some other children of his own age, their game being to write their names on a wall and put beside them the rank that they reckoned they would have in life. When Eutychius' turn came, he wrote: 'Eutychius—Patriarch!' He became abbot of a monastery in Amasea at the age of thirty, and ten years later the Metropolitan of Amasea sent him to the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 as his representative. At the Council, he shone like a bright star among the Church fathers, both for his learning and his devotion. When a quarrel arose about whether heretics could be anathematized after their deaths or not, he supported his belief that they could by citing III Kings (A.V. I Kings) 13:1-8, and IV Kings (A.V. II Kings) 23:16. He became greatly liked by both Emperor Justinian and Patriarch Menas. The Emperor very frequently turned to him for advice, and Menas (at that time very rich) designated him his heir and asked the Emperor to ensure that this happened. And so it came to pass. Eutychius governed the Church in peace for twelve years. But then the devil raised a storm against him. This storm reached the Emperor Justinian himself. The Emperor was deluded and fell into the Monophysite heresy of Aphthartodocetism, which taught the falsehood that the Lord Jesus, before the Resurrection, had a divine and uncorrupting body, not feeling hunger or thirst or pain. Eutychius stood firmly against this heresy, for which the Emperor sent him into exile to his first monastery. There Eutychius lived for twelve years and eight months, being shown to be a great wonder-worker, healing people of various diseases by his prayers and by anointing with holy oil. Justinian repented and died, and his successor, Justin II, called Eutychius back to the patriarchal throne, on which this saint remained till his death, governing the Church of God in peace. In 582, at the age of seventy, he went to the Kingdom of Christ the Lord; the Lord whom he had served so faithfully and courageously all his life;

The One Hundred and Twenty Martyrs in Persia - When the Persian Emperor Sapor plundered the lands of Byzantium, he enslaved one-hundred twenty Christians. Since his attempts to persuade them to deny Christ and worship fire proved to be in vain, the emperor tossed them into the fire and burned them alive. Among those martyrs, were nine virgins dedicated to God. They all suffered honourably between the years 344 A.D. and 347 A.D. and took up habitation in the mansions of Christ the King.; St. Govan of Cornwall.

7 / 20 April — St George the Confessor - For his great virtues, which he acquired through long asceticism, George was chosen and installed as Metropolitan of Mitylene. And this saint governed his flock with zeal and wisdom to old age. But when a persecution arose under Leo V, the Armenian, who destroyed the holy icons, this holy elder was summoned by the Emperor to Constantinople, to the Council of bishops which was summoned, at the Emperor's desire, to put a stop to the veneration of icons. But George not only refused to act according to the Emperor's desire; he, together with some other courageous bishops, stood up in defence of the holy icons. For this he was held in derision by the Emperor and exiled to the region of Cherson, where, in physical pain and every sort of need, he spent the remainder of his earthly life. He died and went to immortal life in about 816. He was a wonderworker both during his life and after his death, through his great righteousness and love for the Lord Jesus.

Our Holy Father Nil Sorsky - Nil is one of the great Fathers of the Russian Church. He was the founder of the Scete way of monastic life in Russia. He died peacefully in the year 1508 A.D. His relics repose in the Sorsky Monastery. His "Rule of Life" for the "Scete" way of monastic living represents a first-class work on the spiritual and practical life of a monk;

The Holy Martyr Calliopius - an only son granted by God to a senator from Perga in Pamphylia after the senator had shed many tears in prayer. From his early youth his devout mother, Theoclea, taught him to respect God and to live a chaste life. Calliopius was still a youngster when a terrible persecution began during the reign of Emperor Maximian. To spare him from death, his mother placed him in a boat, gave him an ample amount of money and saw him off to the city of Pompeiopolis. However, God in His Divine Providence, planned it otherwise. Landing in Pompeiopolis he fell into the midst of a tumultuous polytheistic celebration. When Calliopius refused to participate in this ridiculous feast, at the insistence of the crazed mob, he was pushed toward Maximus the commander, before whom Calliopius confessed that he was a Christian. The commander ordered that Calliopius be beaten with lead canes and burned by fire. Wounded throughout, they cast him into prison. Learning about the tortures of her son, Theoclea distributed her entire estate to the poor and needy and with a paltry sum of money hurried to her son in prison. Upon entering the prison, Theoclea bowed down before her son and dressed his wounds. Finally, the commander pronounced the ultimate sentence. Calliopius was to be crucified on a cross. Joy and pain intermingled in the heart of his mother. When they brought her son to the place of execution, she slipped five pieces of gold to the executioners to have her son crucified, not as the Lord was, but rather upside down. Theoclea did this out of humility before the Lord. Calliopius was crucified upside down on Holy Thursday. His mother stood beneath the cross-giving praise to God. One the second day when they removed his lifeless body from the cross, she fell upon her son and she, herself, died. Thus, these two went before the Throne of the King of Glory together. They honourably suffered in the year 304 A.D.;

Our Holy Father Daniel of Pereyaslavl – he had, as a unique form of mortification, that of caring for the dead. Whenever he heard that someone was found frozen to death or that had died in some other manner, Daniel would hasten to bury him decently and to offer prayers to God for him. He died peacefully in the year 1540 A.D. His relics remain intact.; Our Holy Father Gregory the Sinaite.

8 / 21 April — The Holy Apostles Herodion, Agabus, Rufus, Asyncritus, Phlegon and Hermas - They were all among the Seventy, and are all mentioned by St Paul in his Epistles. Herodion was a kinsman of Paul's: 'Salute Herodion my kinsman', he writes to the Romans (16:11). Herodion suffered greatly at the hands of the Jews as Bishop of Neoparthia; he was beaten about the head, stoned on the mouth and stabbed in the legs. When they had left him for dead, St Herodion arose and continued to serve the apostles. He helped the Apostle Peter in Rome, and was beheaded along with many other Christians on the same day that Peter was crucified. St Agabus had a spirit of prophecy. Two of his prophecies are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. First, he prophesied a great famine throughout the world, which came to pass in the time of Claudius Caesar (Acts 11:2~). The second was when he met the Apostle Paul in Caesarea. Paul was on his way to Jerusalem, and Agabus took Paul's girdle and bound himself hand and foot, saying: 'Thus saith the Holy Spirit: so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle' (21:11). St Rufus was Bishop of Thebes in

Greece. The Apostle Paul mentions him also: 'Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord' (Rom. 16:13). St Asyncritus (Rom. 16:14) was Bishop of Hyrcania in Asia. St Phlegon, who is mentioned in the same place as St Rufus, was bishop in the Thracian city of Marathon. St Hermas, mentioned with the others, was bishop in Dalmatia. All these, with bee-like industry, spread the Gospel, suffering greatly for the love of Christ. They all went to the eternal Kingdom of their beloved Christ;

St Niphon, Bishop of Novgorod - distinguished by his great enthusiasm in constructing and restoring the churches of God and by showing great courage in opposing the stances of the tyrannical princes. Thirteen days before his death, St. Theodosius appeared to Niphon and announced his imminent passing over to the other world. He died in the year 1156 A.D.; St Celestine, Bishop of Rome.

9 / 22 April — The Holy Martyr Euppsychius - He was of gentle birth and was reared in faith and devotion. In the time of the Emperor Julian the Apostate, when St Basil the Great was governing the Church in Caesarea, Euppsychius married a girl of good family. But he was not given even one day to live in wedlock, for, on his wedding day itself, there was a pagan festival with sacrifices to the idol of Fortune. Euppsychius went out with some others and smashed all the idols in the temple, then pulled down the temple itself. Julian was furious, and commanded that the culprits be beheaded, that many Christians be taken into the army, that an enormous levy be imposed on Christians, the proceeds of which were to be used to rebuild the Temple of Fortune, and that the town cease to be called Caesarea (as it had been named by Claudius Caesar), and revert to its former name, Maza. Euppsychius was first bound to a tree and cruelly tortured, and then beheaded, in 362. A little after this time, the wicked Emperor Julian visited that town on his way to Persia, against which he was waging war. St Basil went to meet him, bearing three barley loaves as a sign of honour and welcome. The Emperor ordered that, as a return gift, the saint be given a fistful of hay. Basil said to the Emperor: 'You ridicule us now, O King; we bring you bread, by which we are fed, and you give us miserable food which you, with all your power, are not able to turn into nourishment for men!' To this the Emperor replied: 'You can be sure that I will feed you with this hay when I return from Persia ! ' But the wicked apostate did not return alive from Persia, but perished there by a fitting and un-natural death;

Our Holy Father Vadim the Martyr - During the reign of the Persian Emperor Sapor, Vadim, the abbot of a certain monastery and a man famous for his generosity was cast into prison with seven of his disciples. With them in prison was a certain Prince Nirsan who was also a Christian. Everyday they were taken out and beaten. Prince Nirsan became terrified and promised to deny the Faith and worship the sun. This was gratifying to Sapor and he promised to give Nirsan, among other things, the entire estate of Vadim's monastery if he would behead Vadim by his own hand. Nirsan agrees to this. With a quivering hand and frightened by the majestic countenance of St. Vadim, he struck this holy man with the sword many times on the neck until he finally beheaded him. Shortly after that, Nirsan succumbed to despair and stabbed himself with the sword and received at his own hand, the due punishment for the murder of the righteous one. St. Vadim suffered in the year 376 A.D.; St. Woutruide.