



Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

Fifth Sunday of Pascha

20 May / 2 June

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 4: When the women disciples of the Lord / learned from the Angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection / they cast away the ancestral curse / and elatedly told the Apostles / death is overcome / Christ God is risen / granting the world great mercy.

Mid-Pentecost Troparion, tone 8: Having come to the middle of the Feast, refresh my thirsty soul with the streams of piety; for Thou, O Saviour, didst cry to all: Let him who thirsts come to Me and drink. O Christ our God, Source of Life, glory to Thee.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 4: My Saviour and Redeemer / as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains / He has shattered the gates of hell, / and as Master, / He has risen on the

third day.

Mid-Pentecost Kontakion, tone 4: When the Feast of the law was half over, O Lord and Creator of all, Thou didst say to the bystanders, O Christ our God: Come and draw the water of immortality. Therefore we fall down before Thee and cry with faith: Grant us Thy bounties, for Thou art the Source of our Life.

Kondak of the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, Tone 8: Having come to the well in faith, the Samaritan woman saw Thee, the Water of Wisdom, whereof having drunk abundantly, she, the renowned one, inherited the kingdom on high forever.

Vespers

Lord I have Cried - Tone 4, on 10: Resurrection 4; Mid-Pentecost 3 (There is come now the middle of those days); Samaritan Woman 3 (At the sixth hour); G: Samaritan Woman (By Jacob's Well); N: Sunday Dogmatic (The Prophet David, the forefather of God).

Aposticha: The sticheron of the Resurrection 1 (Having ascended the Cross, O Lord); The Paschal Stichera, with their verses; G: Pentecostarion (When by Thine unfathomable dispensation); N: Pascha (It is the day of resurrection) and Christ is risen x1.

Troparia: O Theotokos and Virgin x2; Mid-Pentecost (In the midst of the feast) x1.

Matins Gospel VII

Epistle: The Acts of the Apostles 11: 19-26 & 29-30

Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Epistle for the saint: Hebrews 13: 17-21

BARNABAS AND SAUL TO ANTIOCH

The persecution turned out to be no slight benefit, as 'to those who love God all things work together for good' (Rom.8:28). If they had made it their express study how best to establish the Church, they would have done nothing else but this: they dispersed the teachers ...When Stephen was slain, when Paul was twice in danger, when the Apostles were scourged, then the Gentiles received the word, and also the Samaritans. Paul declared: 'It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles' (ch.13:46) ... 'And the hand of the Lord', it says, 'was with them,' that is, they wrought miracles ...Even so, it is no small part of providential management for Paul to be there ...In this way that Voice of the Gospel, that Trumpet of Heaven is not shut up in Jerusalem ...Truly this is the reason why it was there they were appointed to be called Christians, because Paul spent so long a time in Antioch!

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXV on Acts XI. B#55, pp.162-163.

The Gospel According To St. John 4: 5-42

So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' For you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not laboured; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours." And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.

“Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink” (Jn. 4:6-7). The Samaritan woman became filled with confusion and doubt of a purely worldly nature: How could He, a Jew, ask to drink from her, a Samaritan? The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. And even more, He said that if she knew Who He was, then she herself would ask drink from Him, and He would give her Living Water. How could He give her something to drink? Why, He didn't even have anything to draw water with, and the well was deep.

In worldly terms this was impossible. And what kind of “Living Water” was this? Christ was speaking about heavenly, spiritual things; but she understood in earthly, worldly terms. And she said to Christ: “Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? ...Jesus answered and said unto her: Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (Jn. 4:11, 13-14).

Still more confusing. But one thing was clear. He was offering a completely unusual kind of water. He who drank of it would never thirst. What a convenience. She would never have to come to this well and bend down to draw water. What a work and time saver. Although this offer seemed incredible, it was just too tempting and profitable to pass up; it paid to try it at least. “Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw” (Jn. 4:15), said the Samaritan woman in absolute frankness, explaining the practical point of view she had in mind. And now she stood, in full anticipation of a material, worldly gift. And Christ, now using her attention, suddenly changed the topic of conversation: “Go, call thy husband and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly” (Jn. 4: 16-18).

Terror and joy seized the Samaritan woman. This was the secret of her life, which tormented her sick conscience. How much she wanted to free herself from these pangs of conscience, to repent. But until this time no one could help her. But now, before her stood the One Who knew the secret of her heart. This was an unusual man. He could save her, teach her to repent, to pray. But where to pray?

The woman said to Him: “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me...the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth”(Jn. 4:19-21, 23-24). The heart of the Samaritan woman accepted this Divine revelation with trembling, but still she was living by what she knew in worldly terms: “I know [she said] that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He” (Jn. 4:25-26). This was all. All earthly understandings were overturned. She became a new person. She believed.

Is it not the same with us, brothers and sisters? So often we ask God for earthly goods which to us seem so necessary, and God does not give them to us. Yet our prayer is never in vain. So it was with the Samaritan woman. She asked Christ for water. And He gave her water, but not the one she was asking for, but another one —His water, which became a “well of water springing up into everlasting life.” He gave her Eternal Life. But in order to receive this water of Christ, she had to repent.

Let us do the same. Then He will reveal Himself to us and say, “I that speak unto thee am He.” And we will have such joy that we will not be able to contain it within ourselves. No. Without noticing it ourselves, we will start to preach Christ. And not in words only, but in our whole life. And those around us will say: “Now we believe, not because of thy saying,” but seeing thy life which thou hast dedicated to Him, we “know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world!” (Jn. 4:42).

The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei

Gospel for the saint: Luke 6: 17-23

Saints of the Week

20 May / 2 June — The Holy Martyr Thaleleus - born in Lebanon, his father's name being Berucius and his mother's Romylia, he was an eighteen-year-old youth, handsome and well-grown and with ginger hair. A doctor by profession, he suffered for Christ in the reign of Numerian. When he courageously confessed his faith in Christ the Lord before the judge, the latter commanded the two executioners,

Alexander and Asterius, to bore through his knees, pass a rope through the pierced bone and hang him from a tree. But the executioners, as though the unseen power of God had deprived them of sight, bored through a plank and hung it on the tree. When the judge discovered this, he thought that the executioners had done it deliberately, and ordered that they be flogged. Then Alexander and Asterius cried out under the flogging: 'The Lord is alive to us; from now on, we are become Christians. We believe in Christ, and suffer for Him.' Hearing this, the judge ordered that they be beheaded. Then the judge took the awl, to bore through Thaleleus's knees himself, but his hand was paralysed and he had to ask Thaleleus to heal him, which the kindly martyr, with Christ's aid, did by his prayers. Then he was thrown into water, but showed himself alive to the judge (for Thaleleus was praying within himself that God would not have him die at once, but would let his tortures continue). When he was thrown to the wild beasts, they licked his feet and rubbed tamely round him. He was finally beheaded and entered into eternal life in 284.

The Holy Martyr Asclas - Asclas suffered in the town of Antinoe in Egypt during the reign of Diocletian. He was flogged, scraped, burned with candles but he remained unwavering in the Faith to the end. When the tormentor Arrian was crossing the Nile by boat Asclas, through prayer, stopped the boat in the middle of the river and would not allow it to move until Arrian wrote that he believes in Christ as the One and Almighty God. But, ascribing this miracle to a magical skill of Asclas, the tormentor forgot what he wrote and continued to torment the man of God. Finally, they tied a stone around his neck and tossed him into the Nile river. On the third day Christians found the body of Asclas along the shore with the stone around his neck (as the martyr foretold them before his death) and honourably buried him in the year 287 A.D. Leonides, the holy martyr, also suffered with him. Arrian, their tormentor, later repented, believed in Christ with his whole heart and openly began to express his faith before the pagans. The pagans also killed him and so Arrian, a one-time tormentor of Christians, was made worthy of the martyr's wreath for Christ.

Also commemorated on this day: Synaxis of Hieromartyrs of Kholmok and Podliash (movable holiday on the Sunday after May 19th). Uncovering of the relics (1431) of St. Alexis, metropolitan of Moscow and wonderworker of all Russia. St. Dovmont-Timothy, prince of Pskov. Sts. Zabulon and Susanna, parents of St. Nina. Venerable Thalassius the Myrrh-giver of Libya. Venerables Nicetas, John, and Joseph, monks, of Chios. St. Ethelbert, king and martyr. Venerable Stephen, abbot of Piperi in Serbia. St. Mark hermit. St. Austregiselus, bishop of Bourges.

21 May / 3 June — The Holy Emperor Constantine and the Empress Helena - Constantine's parents were the Emperor Constantius Chlorus and the Empress Helena. Chlorus had further children by another wife, but by Helena he had only the one, Constantine. Constantine fought two great battles when he came to the throne: one against Maxentius, a tyrant in Rome, and the other against Licinius not far from Byzantium. At the battle against Maxentius, when Constantine was in great anxiety and uncertainty about his chances of success, a shining cross, surrounded by stars, appeared to him in the sky in full daylight. On the cross were written the words: 'In this sign, conquer!' The wondering Emperor ordered that a great cross be put together, like the one that had appeared, and be carried before the army. By the power of the Cross, he gained a glorious victory over enemies greatly superior in number. Maxentius drowned himself in the Tiber. Immediately after this, Constantine issued the famous Edict of Milan, in 313, to put an end to the persecution of Christians. Conquering Byzantium, he built a beautiful capital city on the Bosphorus, which from that time was named Constantinople. At this time, Constantine fell ill with leprosy. The pagan priests and doctors advised him to bathe in the blood of slaughtered children, which he refused to do. Then the Apostles Peter and Paul appeared to him and told him to seek out a bishop, Sylvester, who would heal him of the disease. The bishop instructed him in the Christian faith and baptised him, and the leprosy vanished from the Emperor's body. When there was discord in the Church about the troublesome heretic Arius, the Emperor summoned the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, in 325, where the heresy was condemned and Orthodoxy confirmed. St Helena, the Emperor's devout mother, was very zealous for the Christian faith. She visited Jerusalem and found the Precious Cross of the Lord, and built the Church of the Resurrection over Golgotha and many other churches in the Holy Land. This holy woman went to the Lord in 327, at the age of eighty. The Emperor Constantine outlived his mother by ten years and entered into rest at the age of about sixty in 337, in the city of Nicomedia. His body was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.

Also commemorated on this day: The Meeting of the "Vladimir" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. St. Constantine and his children Sts. Michael and Theodore, wonderworkers of Murom. Uncovering of the relics of Blessed Andrew of Symbiksk. Venerable Cassian the Greek, monk, of Uglich. Synaxis of Hieromartyrs of Kerel. Synaxis of Hieromartyrs of Simbir. Synaxis of Hieromartyrs of Ufa. Honour list of Icon of the Mother of God "Virgin of Tenderness" from Pskov-Pechersk, Zaonikievsky, Krasnogorsk, or Chernogorsk, Oransk. Venerable Agapitus, abbot of Markushev. St. Basil, bishop of Ryazan. St. Hospicius of Trier (Gaul). New Martyr Pachomius of Patmos. Hieromartyr Secundus and those with him in Alexandria. St. Cyril, bishop of Rostov. St. Helen of Dechani, Serbia.

22 May / 4 June — The Holy Martyr Basiliscus - a kinsman of St Theodore the Tyro, he was martyred together with Eutropius and Cleonimus (March 3rd). When these two were crucified and gave up the ghost, Basiliscus was taken back to prison. A change of governors occurring at this time, Basiliscus remained a long time confined in prison. He besought God with tears that He would not deprive him of a martyr's death for His sake. After he had prayed at length, the Lord Jesus appeared to him and promised to fulfil his desire, sending him to his village to say farewell to his mother and brothers. Thereupon the new governor, Agrippa, arrived and sent to have Basiliscus brought from the village immediately. On the way to the city of Amasea, the Lord worked great wonders through His martyr, bringing many of the people to faith in Christ. Agrippa ordered the martyr to offer sacrifice to Apollyon. "Apollyon" means "Destroyer", said Basiliscus, and, with fervent prayer, he knocked the idol to dust and burned the temple with fire from heaven. The terrified Agrippa attributed this all to magic, and ordered that Basiliscus be beheaded with the sword. Agrippa immediately became insane and, in his madness, went to the place of execution, found a little of the martyr's blood in the dust and smeared it on himself under his belt, being restored to health by it. Having come to his senses, he was baptised. Later, a certain Marinus, a citizen of Comana (the place of Basiliscus's execution) built a church over the martyr's relics, and many of the sick found healing there.

The Holy Martyr John Vladimir, King of Serbia - John Vladimir was of princely lineage from Zahumlje. His grandfather was called Hvalimir and his father Petrislav. As a ruler, he was wise, merciful, meek, chaste and brave. He fervently prayed to God and voluntarily built churches and supported them. However, he had difficult struggles both internally and externally. Internally, from heretics and the Bogomils and externally from Tsar Samuel and Tsar Basil who wanted to conquer him. Samuel deceitfully captured him and cast him into prison. While he languished in prison an angel of God appeared to him and foretold that he would shortly be freed, but that he would die a martyr's death. Getting to know him better, Samuel grew to like him and gave his daughter Kosara to be his wife. When Samuel died, his son Radomir was crowned Tsar. But Vladislav, his twin brother, slew Radomir and deceitfully summoned Vladimir and beheaded him in the year 1015 A.D. The relics of this saintly king repose uncorrupt in his monastery near Elbasan and over his relics, throughout the ages and even today, numerous miracles occur. In 1925, a church was built to honor this crowned martyr adjacent to the monastery of St. Nahum since John Vladimir was the benefactor of this glorious monastery.

The Second Ecumenical Council - This Council was called during the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Great in Constantinople in the year 381 A.D. Its goal was to confirm the Orthodox teaching concerning the Holy Spirit about Whom the Patriarch Macedonius of Constantinople erroneously taught. He erroneously taught that the Holy Spirit is God's creature and not a divine person [Hypostasis] equal to the Father and Son and One in essence with Them in the Holy Trinity. Macedonius was condemned by this Council and the teaching about the Holy Spirit was added to the Nicæan Symbol of Faith [the Nicene Creed].

Holy and Righteous Melchisedek, King of Salem - Melchisedek was a contemporary of our forefather Abraham. According to the words of the Apostle Paul he was a king, priest and proto-type of the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7).

Also commemorated on this day: Blessed James, youth of Borovichi (Novgorod). New Hieromartyr Michael priest (1942). New Hieromartyr Zachariah of Prusa. Martyrs Markella and Codratus. Martyr Sophia the Healer. New Monk-martyrs Paul and Demetrius of Tripoli near Kalavryta.

23 May / 5 June — Fast Day - St Michael, Bishop of Synnada - from his childhood, this wise and holy hierarch consecrated himself to the service of Christ. He laboured in asceticism together with Saint Theophylact of Nicomedia. Once, in a time of drought, these two holy men caused an abundance of rain to fall on the earth by their prayers. Because of the life of asceticism and chastity that Michael had led from his early youth, he was chosen and consecrated by Patriarch Tarasius as Bishop of Synnada. He took part in the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787. At the wish of the Emperor, he visited Caliph Harun al-Rashid to conduct peace negotiations. In the time of the wicked Emperor Leo the Armenian, he was deposed from his episcopal throne for his veneration of the holy icons and sent into exile, where he died in want and poverty, faithful to Orthodoxy to the end. He entered into the Kingdom of Christ the King in 818.

Our Holy Father, the Martyr Michael - After the death of his parents, Michael distributed all of his goods to the poor and went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Following that, he entered the monastery of St. Sabas the Sanctified where he was tonsured a monk. Michael was quite young and of a handsome countenance but, from much fasting, he appeared withered and pale. At that time, the Arabs ruled Jerusalem. One day Michael was sent by his spiritual father to the city to sell his handiworks. He was met on the streets by the eunuch of the Arabian queen who brought him to her to display his handiworks. When the queen saw this handsome monk she became inflamed with unclean passion and proposed carnal sin to the monk as once did the wife of Potiphar to the chaste Joseph. When Michael rejected the

impure offer and began to flee, the angry queen ordered that he be beaten with canes and after that brought him to the king with the charge that he blasphemed the faith of Muhammad. The king proposed that Michael embrace the Islamic faith, but he refused. He was then given a potent poison to drink. Michael drank the poison but nothing happened to him. Then the king ordered Michael to be beheaded in the centre of Jerusalem. Monks discovered his body and removed it to the monastery of St. Sabas where they honourably buried him. St. Michael suffered for Christ and was glorified in the ninth century.

Our Holy Mother Euphrosyne, Princess of Polotsk - the daughter of Prince Vseslav of Polotsk. When her parents wanted to betroth her, she fled to a convent and was tonsured a nun. An angel of the Lord appeared to her three times and revealed to her where she must establish a new convent for virgins. She even attracted her sister Eudocia to the monastic life and many other maidens from the ranks of the aristocracy. Her cousin, Zvenislava, by birth Princess Borisov, brought all of her riches, clothes and precious stones and said: "All the beauty of this world, I consider vanity and these adornments prepared for my marriage, I give to the Church of the Savior and I, myself, wish to be betrothed to Him in a spiritual marriage and place my head beneath His good and easy yoke." Euphrosyne also tonsured her a nun and gave her the name Eupraxia. In her old age, Euphrosyne desired to die in Jerusalem and for that she prayed to God. God heard her prayers and, indeed, when she visited Jerusalem she died there. Euphrosyne was buried in the monastery of St. Theodosius on May 23, 1173 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: Uncovering of the relics (1164) of St. Leontius, bishop and wonderworker of Rostov. Synaxis of All Saints of Rostov and Yaroslavl. Venerable Paisius, abbot, of Galich. Uncovering of the relics of Virgin-martyrs Eudocia, Daria, Daria, and Mary. Holy Myrrh-bearer Mary, wife of Cleopas. Martyr Salonas the Roman. Martyr Seleucus. Venerable Damiane. St. Ioannicius I, archbishop of Serbia.

24 May / 6 June — Our Holy Father Simeon Stylites of the Wonderful Mountain - This wonderful and holy man was born in Antioch in 522, in the reign of the Emperor Justin I the Elder. His father perished in an earthquake and he was left alone with his mother, Martha. When he was six years old, he went away into the desert to John, a spiritual teacher there and, under his guidance, gave himself to a strict asceticism of fasting and prayer, to the wonderment of all who saw him. Whilst enduring fearful demonic trials, he received great comfort and grace from the Lord and His angels. Christ the Lord appeared to him in the form of a handsome youth, and, after this vision, Simeon's heart was inflamed with great love for Christ. He spent many years on a pillar, praying and singing psalms. Led by God, he took himself off to the mountain called 'Wonderful' by the Lord Himself, and is known as 'of the Wonderful Mountain' because of this. The measure of his love for God was such that rare grace was given him, by the help of which he was able to heal every sort of illness, tame wild beasts and perceive the most distant regions of the earth and the hearts of men. He was taken out of the body and saw the heavens, conversed with angels, harried the demons, prophesied, spent thirty days at a time without sleep and even longer without food, receiving nourishment at the hands of angels. The words of the Saviour: 'He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do' (Jn 14:12), were completely fulfilled in him. In the year 596, at the age of seventy-five, Simeon went to the Lord, to the eternal enjoyment of the vision of the face of God in the company of the angels.

The Holy Martyr Meletius Stratelates along with 1218 Soldiers and their wives and children - Meletius was accused of demolishing a pagan temple during the reign of Emperor Antoninus. Nailed to a tree, Meletius gave up his holy soul. Many soldiers under his the command, who refused to deny Christ their Lord, suffered with him. They all honourably suffered in the eleventh century and took up habitation in the kingdom of Christ the God.

Our Holy Father Nikita Stylites - As a youth, Nicetas lived an unrestrained and sinful life. Entering into church by chance, he heard the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "*Wash yourselves (from sin) and you will be clean*" ([Isaiah 1:16](#)). These words entered deeply into his heart and caused a complete turnabout in his life. Nicetas left his home, wife, property and entered a monastery near Pereyaslavl, where he lived an ascetical life of difficult mortifications until his death. He wrapped chains around himself and enclosed himself in a pillar for which reason he was called a Stylite. God endowed him with abundant grace so that he healed men of various tribulations. He cured Prince Michael Chernigov of palsy. Certain evil doers spotted the chains on him and, because of their brightness, thought they were made of silver. They killed him one night, removed the chains and carried them away. This occurred on May 16, 1186 A.D. After his death, he appeared to the Elder Simeon and ordered that his discovered chains be placed next to his body in the tombs.

St. Vincent of Lerins - + c 445. Perhaps of a noble family in Gaul, in early life he followed a military career but abandoned it to become a monk at Lérins in southern France. He is best known as the writer of the Commonitorium, where he formulates the Orthodox principle that the only true teachings are those which have been held 'everywhere, always and by all the faithful' (Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus). It is the Church which interprets the Scriptures and is the source of the Faith.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Xenia of Petersburg, fool-for-Christ (Glorification 1988). St. Gregory, archbishop of Novgorod. Nun-martyr Martha, abbess of Monemvasia.

25 May / 7 June — Fast Day - The Third Finding of the Head of St John the Baptist - in the eighth century, during a period of fierce iconoclasm, the head of St John the Baptist was taken to Comana, the place of St John Chrysostom's exile. When the iconoclast persecution ended in 850, in the time of the Emperor Michael and Patriarch Ignatius, the honoured head of St John was taken to Constantinople and placed in the church at the imperial court.

The Hieromartyr Therapon, Bishop of Cyprus - Therapontus was a monk and an ascetic on the island of Cyprus. He was found worthy of the episcopal rank, but during the time of the persecution of Christians, he was found worthy of an even greater wreath, the crown of martyrdom. His body reposed in a church on Cyprus. When, during the reign of Emperor Nicephorus in the year 806 A.D., the island of Cyprus was attacked by the Hagarenes, the saint appeared to the sexton of that church and told him that the infidels will attack Cyprus and ordered him to remove his relics to Constantinople. The sexton did this immediately. While the boat was travelling on the sea with the reliquary, a great storm arose but the sea was calm around the boat and a sweet-smelling fragrance emitted around the entire boat in all directions. The sexton opened the reliquary and everyone witnessed that it was filled with myrrh [oil] which flowed from the saint's relics. By rubbing themselves with this oil, many of the sick were healed. A church was built in Constantinople over the relics of this miracle-worker, who continued to grant healing to all those who with faith touched them. By the Grace of God, the gravest illness of possession, of cancer, of haemorrhaging, of insanity, of blindness, of barrenness and of various other maladies were cured by the relics of St. Therapontus.

The Holy Martyrs Pasicrates, Valentian, Julius and others - They were all Roman soldiers. They all suffered for Christ in Macedonian Dorostol about the year 302 A.D. When Pansicrates' brother Papian, who apostatized from Christ because of fear, began to persuade him to deny Christ and remain alive, St. Pansicrates answered him: "Depart from me, you are not my brother!" Pansicrates and Valentian were beheaded together. At the trial, St. Julius said: "I am a veteran; for twenty-six years I have faithfully served the emperor and since I was faithful to a lesser one, how can I not be faithful to a greater one?" i.e., to the Heavenly King. After that, Nicander was brought before Maximus the Perfect. Nicander's wife encouraged her husband to die for Christ. "Foolish old woman" Maximus said to her angrily, "You just want a better husband." The woman answered him: "If you think that of me, give the order and let them kill me now before my husband!" Marcian was also slain with Nicander. Marcian's wife approached the scaffold carrying her son in her arms. Marcian kissed his son and prayed to God: "O All-powerful Lord, You take care of him!" Following that, they were beheaded and were translated into the kingdom of Christ.

St. Aldhelm, bishop of Sherbourne. - 639-709. Born in Wessex in England, he became a monk at Malmesbury and taught there. In 675 he became abbot and in 705 first Bishop of Sherbourne. Aldhelm was the first Englishman to attain distinction as a scholar.

Also commemorated on this day: Virgin-Martyr Helen. New Hieromartyr Tavrion. St. Innocent archbishop of Cherson. St. Dodo, prince of Georgia. Synaxis of Saints of Volhynia: Saints Yaropolk, Stephen, Macarius, Igor and Juliana. Commemoration of the reunion of 3,000,000 Uniates with the Orthodox Church at Vilna in 1831. Martyr Celestine. St. Olbian, monk.

May 26 / June 8 — Holy Apostle Carpus - One of the Seventy, he was a follower and companion of the Apostle Paul, who installed him as Bishop of Varna in Thrace. But he also preached the Gospel in Crete, where he was host to St Dionysius the Areopagite. St Dionysius testifies that he was a man with an exceptionally pure mind, of great humility and guilelessness. He further relates how the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to Carpus in a vision with His angels, and how he never began the Liturgy without first receiving a heavenly vision. He endured many assaults for the name of Christ, and finally suffered at the hands of the faithless Jews and was murdered. His soul entered into the Kingdom of God, to delight forever in the vision of the Lord in glory; The Holy Apostle Alphaeus - the father of two of the Twelve Apostles: James the son of Alphaeus and Matthew the Evangelist. He entered peacefully into rest.

St. Augustine of Canterbury, evangeliser of England (c.605) — a native of Italy and a disciple of Felix, Bishop of Messina.

He became prior of the Monastery of St Andrew on the Celian Hill in Rome, and was chosen by Saint Gregory the Great to lead a mission of forty monks to evangelise the Anglo-Saxon peoples of Britain. He arrived in 597A.D., landing at Ebbsfleet in Kent. He was given a guarded welcome by King Ethelbert, being allowed to centre his mission on the ancient church of St Martin in Canterbury. Subsequently he brought the pagan king to the Christian Faith, baptising him and many thousands of his people. He was consecrated Bishop by St Virgilius of Arles, built the first cathedral in Canterbury and founded the

Monastery of Sts Peter and Paul there, which, now in ruins, is more commonly called St Augustine's. He was instrumental in founding the English dioceses at Rochester and London, consecrating Sts Justus and Mellitus as their bishops. He also helped the king draft the earliest Anglo-Saxon written laws and founded a school in Canterbury. He was known as a miracleworker in his lifetime, and he reposed in the Lord in the year 604 on 26th May. He was laid to rest near the as yet unfinished monastery Church of Sts Peter and Paul, and in 613 A.D., when it was dedicated, his sacred relics were placed within the church. Along with his Elder, the Pope St Gregory, he is rightly called the Apostle of the English. He was the founder of the English Church and hierarchy which remained Orthodox in faith and an integral part of the One Church founded by our Saviour for four and a half centuries. The many saints of that period are his spiritual children. Through his prayers may the Lord grant that those people of England who are now returning to the Apostolic and Orthodox faith receiving the one Baptism of the Church, might in this life and in the next be counted among that company of saints, the flock of St Augustine; Queen Bertha, apostle to the Anglo-Saxons at Kent.

Also commemorated on this day: Translation of the relics of New Martyr George of Kratovo and Sofia. Uncovering of the relics of Venerable Macarius, abbot of Kolyazin. Martyrs Abercius and Helen, children of Apostle Alphaeus. Venerable John of Psichaita the Confessor of Constantinople. New Martyr Alexander of Thessalonica, who suffered at Smyrna. Icon of the Mother of God of Vladimir of Seligersk. New Hieromartyrs Milan Banjac and Milan Golubovic of Drvar, Serbia.

‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡

Monday - Luke 1:39-49, 56 (Matins Gospel); Acts 12:12-17; John 8:42-51
Philippians 2:5-11 (Epistle, Theotokos); Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (Gospel, Theotokos); Acts 26:1-5, 12-20 (Equals-to-the-Apostles); John 10:1-9 (Equals-to-the-Apostles).

Tuesday - Acts 12:25-13:12; John 8:51-59

Wednesday - Acts 13:13-24; John 6:5-14

Thursday - Acts 14:20-27; John 9:39-10:9

Friday - Luke 7:17-30 (Matins Gospel); Acts 15:5-34; John 10:17-28; 2 Corinthians 4:6-15 (Forerunner); Matthew 11:2-15 (Forerunner)

Saturday - Acts 15:35-41; John 10:27-38

THE EARLIEST CHURCH

Do you see the watchful souls? With women and children and maid servants, they sang hymns to God, made purer than the sky by affliction ...Nothing ever was more splendid than that Church. Let us imitate these, let us emulate them: ...the Church of God rising up in the midst of the night.

Do you rise up too, and behold the quire of the stars, the deep silence, the profound repose, contemplate with awe the order of your Master's household. Then your soul will be purer: it will be lighter, subtler, and soaring, disengaged: the darkness itself, the imposing silence are sufficient to lead you to compunction ...Sleep has invaded and defeated nature: it is the image of death, the image of the end of all things ..Let the house be a Church, consisting of men and women...For where two, He says, are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20) ...Where Christ is there must be Angels, and Archangels, and the other Powers.

XII. B#55, p. 172. St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXVI on Acts

