



Sunday of All Saints

First Sunday After Pentecost

1 / 14 June

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 8: Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! / Thou didst endure the three-day burial / to free us from our sufferings! / O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.

Tropar Of All Saints, Tone 4: Adorned in the blood of Thy martyrs throughout all the world, as in purple and fine linen. Thy Church, through them, doth cry unto Thee, O Christ God: Send down Thy compassions upon Thy people; grant peace to Thy flock and to our souls great mercy.

Kondak Of All Saints, Tone 8: To Thee, the Planner of creation, the world doth offer the God-bearing martyrs as the first fruits of nature. By their intercessions preserve Thy Church, Thy commonwealth, in profound peace, through the Theotokos, O Greatly merciful One.

God is glorified in the Saints, while the Saints have been given glory by God.

St. Silouan. Wisdom from Mount Athos. B#73, p. 61.

Vespers: Isa. 43:9-14, Wisd. 3:1-9, Wisd 5:15-6:3

Matins Gospel I

EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE HEBREWS 11: 33 – 12:2

Brethren, through faith, the saints subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented-- Of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

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

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

GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 10: 32 - 33, 37 – 38 & 19: 27 - 30

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

HE WHO DOES NOT TAKE HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW AFTER ME IS NOT WORTHY OF ME

Brothers and sisters! Last week the Holy Church placed flowers in our hands, as if saying to us: See how soulless nature is obedient to its Creator. Starting with the days of Christmas, the earth has been turning toward the sun, which began to bestow upon the earth its life-giving warmth. And nature does not prove itself ungrateful toward its Creator. In answer to His caress, she has produced this glorious beauty, these flowers, and further on, will produce fruits. And what about us? In answer to the spiritual warmth of God's Grace, so abundantly poured out on us, do we bring to our Creator spiritual beauty, flowers, fruits of virtues? After all, He became Man for our sake, died for us, rose for us, ascended into Heaven in order to send down to us His Holy Spirit. And what about us? Is not this beauty of nature around us a reproach to our conscience? Let us answer honestly. Yes, it is. But more than this, we want to justify our negligence, our ingratitude. The commandments of Christ are wonderful, we say; and if people would begin to fulfill them, then the whole earth would be transformed into a wonderful divine garden. But is this possible for weak human strength? And here this Sunday, the Sunday of All the Saints, answers this question loudly so that the whole world hears: Yes, it is possible.

All the saints being remembered today followed the example of Christ. And all of them in their time, in their circumstances of life, fulfilled God's commandment of love of God and neighbour. Occasionally their times were difficult, maybe more difficult than ours; and not infrequently their circumstances in life were more dangerous in spiritual terms, and often in worldly terms were worse than ours. But they still proceeded, struggled, and reached the abodes on high where they now triumph.

Just look at the murals of our church and you will see them: martyrs, confessors, ascetics, fools for Christ, educated people, simple people, rich, poor, bishops, monastics, lay people. This is the Heavenly Church. She is all-embracing, and she is filled up by the earthly, Militant Church. There is room for each of us there. This is what today's Apostle reading tells us: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb .12:1-2). Just think: all of these saints were live people like us. And like us, all of them were different people; and their paths were different. But all of them, absolutely all, had three qualities which they all possessed identically. These qualities are pointed out to us in today's Gospel. They are obligatory for everyone, and this means for us, too; we cannot escape them. Here they are: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father, which is in heaven" (Mt. 10:32). This is the first thing. Don't you feel, brothers, how important this is for us modern-day people? Why, the whole world around us as if asks us: "Are you Christian or one of ours?" We cannot leave this question unanswered. In our speech, our actions, our thoughts and feelings (for our feelings are somehow passed on to the others), we must answer loud and firm "Yes, I am a Christian!"

Here is the second: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (Mt.10:37). Here and now, the Lord demands from you and me this all-consuming love—to love Him more than everyone and everything. And only through this love for Him will we really be able to love our relatives, strangers, and even our enemies.

Finally the third: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me" (Mt.10:38). This instance does not even require explanation. Each of us has his own sorrows and difficulties in life; they are personal for each of us. It is difficult, burdensome, but such is our life; and this means, such is the Will of God for us.

Let us thank the Lord even for this cross! Without it we cannot be saved. And the Lord wants all of us to be saved, and to be united into one Triumph with all the Saints, whom we are glorifying today.

The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei

Saints of the Week

Apostles Fast Begins Monday through to the 12th of July

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.

6 / 19 June — Our Holy Father Bessarion born and educated in Egypt, he devoted himself to the spiritual life at an early age, and 'never soiled the spiritual garment in which he was clothed at his baptism'. He visited St Gerasim by the Jordan and learned from St Isidore of Pelusium. He conquered his flesh in strict fasting and vigils, but, as far as possible, hid his asceticism from men. He once spent forty days in prayer, neither eating nor sleeping, and had one single garment that he wore summer and winter. He had a great gift of wonderworking. He had no fixed abode, but lived in the mountains and forests, healing the sick and performing many other miracles to help men and glorify God. He entered peacefully into rest in 466. Our Holy Father Hilarion the New; Our Holy Mothers the Martyrs Archelais, Thecla and Susanna.

7 / 20 June — The Holy Martyr Theodotus of Ancyra - was a secret Christian and, as such, used to help the Church and give burial to the bodies of the martyrs. He buried the bodies of seven young maidens who had suffered for Christ. When the pagans discovered this, they attacked him and he was killed (see May 18th for more about him). The Holy Martyrs Kyria, Valeria and Maria; The Hieromartyr Marcellus, Pope of Rome; The Hieromartyr Marcellinus, Pope of Rome; Our Holy Father Daniel of Scetis; St. Colman, bishop of Dromore, Ireland (6th c.).