



All Saints of Russia

Second Sunday After Pentecost

8 / 21 June

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 1: When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; / while the soldiers were guarding Thy Most Pure Body; / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour, / granting life to the world. / The Powers of Heaven therefore cried to Thee O Giver of Life: / glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ! / Glory to Thy Kingdom; / Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

Tropar of All Saints of Russia, Tone 8: As a beautiful fruit of the sowing of Thy salvation, / the land of Russia doth offer to Thee, O Lord, all the Saints that have shone in her. / By their prayers keep the Church and the world in profound peace, // through the Theotokos, O Most-merciful One.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 1: As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, / Raising the world with Thyself. / Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. / Adam exults O Master, Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to Thee; / Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ.

Kondak of All Saints of Russia Tone 3: Today the choir of the saints who pleased God in the land of Russia / doth stand before us in Church and invisibly doth pray for us to God. / With them the angels glorify Him, / and all the saints of the Church of Christ keep festival with them; // and they all pray together for us to the Eternal God.

Matins Gospel II

Epistle: St. Paul's Epistle To The Romans 2:10-16

But glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

BUT THE DOERS OF THE LAW WILL BE JUSTIFIED

He makes inquisition, not into the quality of persons, but into the difference of actions. By so saying, he shows that it was not in actions, but in persons only, that the Jew differed from the Gentile ...For it is not because one is a Jew and the other a Gentile, that one is honored and the other disgraced, but it is from the works that either treatment comes ...He shows not only the equality of the Jew and the Gentile, but that the Jew was even much burdened by the gift of the Law. For the Gentile is judged without law. But this 'without law' here expresses not the worse plight, but the easier, that is, he does not have the Law to accuse him; ...he is condemned solely from the reasoning of nature, but the Jew ...the greater the attention he enjoyed, the greater the punishment he will suffer ...For in that they said they did not need grace, being justified by the Law, he shows that they need it more than the Gentiles, considering they are liable to be punished more.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily V on Romans I. B#55, p. 364.

Second Reading: Hebrews 11:33 – 12:2

Gospel: St. Matthew 4:18-23

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, And immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

HE SAID TO PETER AND ANDREW, FOLLOW ME, AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN

Yet John says that they were called in another manner. Therefore it is evident that this was a second call. One may perceive this from many things. For there it is said that they came to Him when 'John was not yet cast into prison,' but here, after he was in confinement. And there Andrew calls Peter, but here Jesus calls both. And John says, Jesus seeing Simon coming, says, 'You are Simon, the Son of Jonah, you shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone' (John 1:42). But Matthew says that he was already called by that name ...And from the place whence they were called, and from many other things, one may perceive this: such as their ready obedience and abandonment of all. For now they were well instructed beforehand ..But mark both their faith and their obedience. For though they were in the midst of their work ...'They forsook all and followed.' Such is the obedience which Christ seeks of us... We can see this, too, when some other had come to Him and was asking leave to bury his own father: He permitted not even this (Matt.8:21,22).

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XIV on Matthew IV, 3. B#54, pp. 87- 88.

Second Reading: St. Matthew 4:25 – 5:12

Last Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost, we celebrated the Feast of All Saints. We asked the question, "What makes a person a saint?" We talked about how saints are consecrated, set apart for the service of God, and no longer focused on worldly purposes. We looked at the icons, and the saints we see there, in our family picture album, and our church "hall of fame." The conclusion was that they yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit, and so were set apart, consecrated to God – and that each one of us has received the same Holy Spirit, and that we are meant to be temples of the Holy Spirit, to minister to the needs of others and to proclaim the good news of our deliverance from death by our Lord Jesus Christ. We are all saints; and we are all meant to be "Saints," in the way that we talk about those whom we remember, who we venerate through their icon.

Today we celebrate the Feast of all the saints whose light has shined upon us from the land of Russia, from the time of the baptism of Russia in the year of our Lord 988 through trials and invasions and wars, to those who are among the new martyrs and confessors, some of whom suffered and died during our own lifetimes. It took almost a thousand years for the good news to reach Kievan Rus'; it took another 800 years to make the journey from there across the steppes and the taiga to the western shore of the Pacific Ocean, and then, from the port city of Saints Peter and Paul, to come to Alaska, and down the west coast of the North American continent, in the year 1794. The faith was carried across the Russian land, first by monks, who fled from cities and towns and villages to struggle in the wilderness; and then by others, who formed small sketes, and then monasteries. People began to move nearby, and settlements became villages, and then towns, and then cities; and so monks would again flee further east, into the wilderness, starting the cycle again. Time and again, the Orthodox faith was embraced by the people who heard the Gospel as the roving monks came their way, and so the Church grew, and her influence spread. Many miracles were performed, many people were healed, and many, many more were protected and comforted in troubled times. We could speak for hours on end about the many wondrous saints who lived in Russia, and not discuss them all – to say nothing of those whose names and circumstances are known to God alone, in Whose presence they dwell.

It is good for us to remember and to celebrate this heritage, this great treasure, this inheritance that is ours in the Orthodox Church that is Russian in its background and practice. But, like a buried treasure or an unclaimed fortune, we gain nothing from this inheritance that has been given to us if we do not claim it as our own, and put it on, so to speak, and wear it, and use it, and show it forth in the world as so many of the saints who have gone before us have done. If we do not embrace the faith whole-heartedly, with that spiritual hunger and thirsting, as we hear in the Beatitudes, and live it out in our lives, there is no point in celebrating the feast today. If we do not draw near to the faith, as did those who lived next to the monasteries did, there is no point in celebrating the feast today. If we do not flee from the cities of the world, so that we can put aside the temptations of the world and draw closer to God, as did so many monastic saints in Russia, there is no point to celebrating the feast today. And if we are not willing to undertake the ascetic labors needed to transform us, so that we, also, may draw those living in a world of darkness to the light of the life of Christ in us, there is no point in celebrating the feast today – for if we will not do these things, then we do not value the saints who have arisen in the Russian land.

Brothers and sisters, let us pray that God will bless us with grace and strength to learn and follow the examples of saintly living given to us by all the saints of Russia, that we may join them in glorifying God, and to making known to our land, as they did in theirs, the good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

O all you saints of the Russian land, pray to God for us!

Source: Rumbings from a Desert Cave

Saints of the Week
Apostles Fast Continues

8 / 21 June — St Ephraim, Patriarch of Antioch - during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius, Ephraim was governor of the eastern regions. He was famed for his great piety and compassion, and was much esteemed for these virtues. When the rebuilding of Antioch, which had been destroyed by earthquake and fire, was put in hand, the Emperor ordered Ephraim to oversee the work. Ephraim performed this work with diligence and love. There was among the ordinary workers a certain bishop who had left his see for unknown reasons and was working as a labourer. Not a soul knew that the man was a bishop. One day he lay down to take a rest from the exhausting work with the other labourers, and fell asleep. Ephraim glanced at him, and saw a flaming pillar rising above the man and reaching up to heaven. Amazed and frightened, Ephraim summoned him and bound him under oath to reveal who he was. The man hesitated a long time, but finally admitted that he was a bishop and foretold that Ephraim would shortly be consecrated Patriarch of Antioch (the patriarchal throne having been empty since the old Patriarch, Euphrasius, perished in the earthquake). Ephraim was indeed elected and consecrated as Patriarch. For his goodness, purity and zeal for Orthodoxy, a great gift of wonderworking was given him by God. Once, in order to convince some heretic that Orthodoxy is the true Faith, he placed his omophor in the flames and prayed to God. The omophor remained unharmed in the fire for three hours. When the heretic saw this, he was afraid and cast his heresy aside. Ephraim entered peacefully into rest in 546. Our Holy Father Zossima of Phoenicia; The Holy and Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates.

St. Merdadus - Bishop of Noyon, b. at Salency (Oise) about 456; d. in his episcopal city 8 June, about 545. His father, Nectardus, was of Frankish origin, while his mother, named Protagia, was Gallo-Roman. It is believed that St. Gildardus, Bishop of Rouen, was his brother. His youth was entirely consecrated to the practise of Christian virtues and to the study of sacred and profane letters. He often accompanied his father on business to Vermand and to Tournai, and frequented the schools, carefully avoiding all worldly dissipation. His exemplary piety and his knowledge, considerable for that time, decided the Bishop of Vermand (d. 530) to confer on him Holy Orders, and caused him to be chosen as his successor. Forced, in spite of his objections, to accept this heavy charge, he devoted himself zealously to his new duties, and to accomplish them in greater security, since Vermand and the northern part of France in general were then generally troubled by wars and exposed to the incursions of the barbarians, he removed his episcopal see in 531 from Vermand, a little city without defence, to Noyon, the strongest place in that region. The year following, St. Eleutherius, Bishop of Tournai, having died, St. Medardus was invited to assume the direction of that diocese also. He refused at first, but being urged by Clotaire himself he at last accepted. This union of the two dioceses lasted until 1146, when they were again separated. Clotaire, who had paid him a last visit at Noyon, had his body transferred to the royal manor of Crouy at the gates of the city of Soissons. Over the tomb of St. Medardus was erected the celebrated Benedictine abbey which bears his name. St. Medardus was one of the most honoured bishops of his time, his memory has always been popularly venerated in the north of France.

9 / 22 June — St Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria - He was of noble birth and a close kinsman of Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, after whose death he was chosen as Patriarch. He fought three fierce battles in the course of his life: against the Novatianist heretics, against Nestorius and against the Jews of Alexandria. The Novatianists began in Rome, and were so called after their leader, the heretic priest Novatian. They were filled with pride at their virtues, went about dressed in white, banned second marriages and declared that one must not pray for those who had committed mortal sin nor receive back into the Church those who had once fallen away, however deeply they might repent. Cyril overcame them and drove them out of Alexandria, together with their bishop. The battle with the Jews was harder and bloodier. The Jews had been in the ascendant in Alexandria right from the time that Alexander the Great founded the city. Their hatred towards the Christians was vicious and mindless. They killed Christians by treachery, by poison and by crucifixion. After a long and difficult struggle, Cyril succeeded in inducing the Emperor to drive the Jews out of Alexandria. His battle, however, against Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was resolved at the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus. Cyril himself presided at this Council, and also represented Pope Celestine of Rome at his request, he being prevented by old age from attending the Council. Nestorius was condemned, anathematised and exiled by the Emperor to the eastern borders of the Empire, where he died. After the end of these battles, Cyril lived in peace and guided Christ's flock with zeal. He went to the Lord in the year 444. It is said that he composed the hymn: 'Hail, Mother of God and Virgin.' St Kiril of Byelozersk (White Lake);

St. Columba of Iona, enlightener of Scotland (597) - born in County Donegal, Ireland, and spent fifteen years preaching to his native Irish and founding monasteries - the greatest of which were at Derry, Durrow and Kells. In 563 Columba sailed to the Scottish island of Iona, there to found a monastery that for centuries was the most famous in the west. Iona became the heart of Celtic Christianity. Daughter houses sprang up in England and on the Scottish mainland. The next thirty-four years of Columba's life were spent in missionary service. On 8 June 597 Columba was copying out the psalms. At the verse, 'They that love the Lord shall lack no good thing' he stopped, and said that his cousin Baithin must do the rest. He died the next day. 'Alone with none but Thee, my God, I journey on my way; What need I fear when Thou art near, Oh King of night and day? More safe am I within Thy hand. Than if a host did round me stand,' attributed to St. Columba. The Venerable Bede said, 'We know for certain that Columba left successors distinguished for their purity of life, their love of God, and their loyalty to the rules of the monastic life.'

10 / 23 June — The Hieromartyr Timothy, Bishop of Brussa - for his great spiritual purity, God gave him the gift of wonder-working, and he healed all manner of diseases and pains among the people. During the reign of the evil Emperor Julian, who had renounced Christ, holy Timothy was thrown into prison. The faithful visited him there to listen to the wise teaching of their bishop. When this came to his ears, Julian commanded that the executioner behead him in the prison. This was in 362, and his soul entered into Paradise while his relics remained, full of miraculous power, to help the people and declare the power of the Lord. The Holy Martyrs Alexander and Antonina; St Bassian, Bishop of Lodi; Synaxis of All Saints of Siberia: St. John (Maximovitch), metropolitan of Tobolsk; St. Innocent, bishop of Irkutsk; St. Macarius (Glukharev) of Altai; St. Macarius (Nevsky), Metropolitan of Moscow, apostle to Altai (1926) and others.

11 / 24 June — The Holy Apostle Bartholomew - one of the Twelve Great Apostles. It is generally agreed that Bartholomew and Nathaniel are one and the same person. He was a companion of the Apostle Philip and his sister, the virgin Mariamna— and for some time of St John the Theologian— preaching the Gospel in Asia, then in India and finally in Armenia, where he died a martyr. In Hierapolis, the holy apostles by their prayers killed a great snake which had been kept in a temple and deified by the pagans. In this same town, they restored the sight of one Stachius, who had been blind for forty years. This roused the mob against them, and Philip and Bartholomew were crucified, Bartholomew upside down. At this there was an earthquake, in which the evil judges and many of the people perished. Seeing this as a punishment from God, many ran to take the apostles down from their crosses, but Philip was already dead although Bartholomew was still alive. After that, Bartholomew went to India, where he preached and translated the Gospel of Matthew into the Indian language. After that, he moved to Armenia, where he cured the king's daughter of madness. But the king's envious brother, Astyages, took the apostle of God and crucified him, then had him flayed and beheaded in the Armenian town of Ourbanopolis. His body was buried by Christians in a leaden coffin. When many miracles had been wrought over his relics, pagans took the coffin and threw it into the sea. But the sea carried the coffin to the island of Lipara, where the bishop, Agathon, who had been warned by revelation in a dream, was waiting for it and buried it in the church. St Bartholomew appeared to St Joseph the Hymnographer in church one day, robed in white, and blessed him with the Gospels to sing spiritual songs, saying: 'Let streams of heavenly wisdom flow from thy tongue!' He also appeared to the Emperor Anastasius (491-518), and told him that he would protect the newly-built town of Dara. Later, the relics of this apostle were translated to Benevento, and then to Rome. Great and wondrous miracles have been wrought over them

The Holy Apostle Barnabas - one of the Seventy, he was born in Cyprus, of wealthy parents of the tribe of Levi, and studied with Gamaliel together with Saul. He was first named Joseph, but the apostles called him Barnabas, Son of Consolation, because he had a rare gift for comforting men's souls. After Saul's conversion, Barnabas was the first to welcome him among the apostles. After that, with Paul and Mark, he preached the Gospel in Antioch and other places. All accounts agree that he was the first to preach in Rome and in Milan. He suffered at the hands of the Jews on the island of Cyprus and was buried by Mark at the western gate of the city of Salamis, holding a copy of the Gospel of Matthew which he had transcribed with his own hand. His grave remained unknown for several centuries, but when many people had been healed of sickness in that place, it became known as 'the place of healing'. In the time of the Emperor Zeno, the Apostle appeared three times, on three successive nights, to Archbishop Anthemius of Cyprus, and revealed the whereabouts of his grave. This revelation by the Apostle took place just at the time when Peter, the power-hungry Patriarch of Antioch, was seeking to bring the Cypriot Church under his jurisdiction. After the revealing and finding of the miraculous relics of the holy Apostle Barnabas, it was established that the Cypriot Church, as an apostolic foundation, should be independent, and thus the autocephaly of the Church of Cyprus was finally confirmed.

The Feast of the Icon: 'It is meet ...', Within discussions of Orthodoxy, the Holy Mountain of Mt. Athos does get mentioned many times. Mt. Athos itself is what we call a "Spiritual Republic". It is an independent state which pledges allegiance only to Almighty God. Mt. Athos which is perched on a peninsula 20 miles long and seven miles wide is off the Macedonian Coast. The monasteries there are among the oldest in Christendom. Monks, hermits and holy men have lived there since the third century. During the Byzantine Era, the total population exceeded 50,000. No women have ever been allowed on Mt. Athos. The Blessed Ever-Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, is the "Patron Saint" of the Spiritual Republic of Mt. Athos. In one of the magnificent monasteries there is a huge icon on the Blessed Virgin Mary which has been titled "Axion Esti", meaning 'it is worthy to bless Thee, the Virgin'. This beautiful icon was painted in the seventh century and has since graced the sacred walls of the Cathedral of Mt. Athos. Today we commemorate the anniversary of the miracle which took place in front of this icon over 1,000 years ago, on June 11. During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy every Sunday, we hear the beautiful, and inspiring hymn called "Axion Esti" which follows the prayer (as we kneel) called the "Epiklesis". This hymn was written originally in the year 720 AD by St. Cosmas, one of the greatest hymnographers of the Christian Church. The hymn, however, began with the words "Thee that art more honourable than the Cherubim (Tin Timioteran)". It was well over one hundred years later that this hymn was added to the Divine Liturgy, but with an added beginning as the result of the following miraculous event: On June 11, 980 AD, as a group of monks were conducting an all-night vigil before the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary, they suddenly noticed a monk standing on the right of the icon whom they did not recognise at all. He was unknown to the monks, and no one could explain his abrupt presence. This unidentified monk began to chant the beautiful hymn written by St. Cosmas, but rather began with the words "Axion Esti os Alethos Makarizin Se Tin Theotokon", which means "It is very meet to bless Thee, Theotokos the ever blessed and most pure Virgin and Mother of God". The monk then explained to the others that he was the Archangel Gabriel and that these words should be added to the hymn. The Arch-angel then vanished from their sight, leaving the monks amazed at the power of God. Since that day on June 11, 980 AD, the additional words to the hymn of St. Cosmas have been sung by all Orthodox Christians around the world. The icon of the Blessed Mother Axion Esti is still venerated today in the Cathedral of Mt. Athos. "It is meet indeed to bless Thee, the ever-blessed and most pure and Mother of our God. Thee that art more honourable than the Cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, who without spot of sin didst bear God the Word; Thee, verily the Mother of God, we magnify";

Hieromartyr Metrophanes, the first Chinese priest, and the Chinese New Martyrs of the Boxer Uprising, at Peking and other places, in 1900 – (unable to find the icon on the internet herewith a verbal description) - The Orthodox Church believes that the icon is a window into heaven. In other words the icon makes visible the very real but invisible reality of Christ and the saints. The Orthodox Church also believes that the icon is the word of God in visual form. In other words this icon is a visual sermon that speaks to us about the heroic faith of the Chinese Martyrs, their willingness to die for Jesus Christ. When I looked at this icon I asked myself: What are they doing? What are they looking at? What are they doing with their hands? What is their body posture like? Are there any writings in the icon? Starting from the bottom of the icon we see a large group of people looking at us. It is a mixed group. It is made up of clergy and laity, men and women, adult and children, boys and girls. All of them are wearing haloes, the haloes signifying their having attained sainthood. (In the Orthodox Church salvation -- that is, life in Jesus Christ -- is available to both adults and children.) The golden haloes represent the "crown of righteousness"^[1] and the "crown of glory"^[2] promised to those who keep the faith and who love the appearing of Jesus Christ. Notice that everyone in the icon has a cross. This represents the cross that Christ gives us when we become his followers: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it." Bodily posture is also important. Their standing upright signify the fact that the Chinese martyrs are very much awake and conscious in heaven right now. It also symbolizes the Orthodox Church's belief that when we die we do not experience soul sleep but enter fully conscious into Christ's presence. One thing I like about this icon are the little details that carry much meaning. I see little details like the Chinese style clothing, the long braided pigtail worn by St. Paul (standing to the right of Fr. Metrophanes'), the distinctive Chinese style kung fu slippers on their feet, the Asian features on their faces. When I looked at the front row I expected to see the priest Fr. Metrophanes Tsi-Chung in the centre, instead I see the priest with his wife St. Tatiana. The fact that Metrophanes is of Chinese ancestry points to Orthodoxy's commitment to an indigenous clergy. Orthodoxy in China was not a foreign religion, but a religion with deep roots in Chinese culture. Also please note that the priest depicted in this icon is a married priest. More than that, he was a married priest with three sons. A family man with three sons! All this point to a powerful affirmation of Chinese family values. But what really impresses me is that here is a family willing to die for Christ. Imagine! A whole family who loved Jesus Christ more than anything else in the world. A careful examination of the front row shows other signs of family affection. In the left corner we see a little boy clinging to his father's robe. In the middle we see a mother putting her hand on her son's shoulder in a gesture of love and protection. In the right corner we see two sisters holding hands together. As I look upwards I see two buildings in the background. On the left a Russian Orthodox Church building with the distinctive onion shaped dome. And on the right a building in the distinctive Chinese architecture. This represents the dignity and wisdom of Chinese culture. The Chinese martyrs standing between the two buildings shows them standing between the two cultures. Looking further up I see the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven extending both hands in the gesture of blessing. Christ's position at the very top of the icon points to Christ's Lordship over all creation, his transcendence over all cultures: East and West. So likewise his extending out both hands in the gesture of blessing points to Christ's extending his grace and mercy to the whole world. This brings to mind the words in John's Gospel: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...."¹ In closing I would like to bring to your attention that for the Orthodox Christian, the icon is more than just a reminder of the past. This icon is a spiritual bridge linking us Christians living today to the Chinese Martyrs who died a hundred years ago. This leads us to the ancient belief in the communion of the saints. From the beginning Christians have not only remembered the saints and the martyrs, they asked the saints to remember them in their prayers. This is the significant of the eyes. Do you notice that the eyes of the Chinese Martyrs are looking at you? This is an invitation for you to enter into fellowship with them. It is also an invitation for us to ask them to pray to Christ for our salvation and for the salvation of China to the glory of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Robert A. Arakaki

12 / 25 June — Our Holy Father Onuphrius the Great - this holy ascetic had been living a whole sixty years in the desert when the monk Paphnutius visited him. His hair and beard reached down to the ground, and long hair, as white as snow, had grown all over his body during his years of nakedness. His appearance was cadaverous, unearthly and awe-inspiring. Seeing Paphnutius, he called him by name and then recounted to him his life in the desert. His guardian angel had appeared to him and taken him to that place. He had for a long time only eaten earth, which it was hard to find in the desert, and, after that, when he had survived an intensive struggle with diabolical temptations and when his heart had become utterly established in love for God, an angel had brought him bread to eat. And besides that, through God's gracious providence, a palm tree grew up at one side of his cell, that gave good dates, and a spring of water began to flow there. 'But especially,' said Onuphrius, 'my food and drink are the sweet words of God.' To Paphnutius's question about his receiving of Communion, the hermit answered that the angel of God brought him Communion every Saturday. On the next day, the old man told Paphnutius that it was the day of his departure from this world; then he knelt down, prayed to God and gave his spirit into God's hands. Then Paphnutius saw a heavenly light that illumined the body of the departed saint, and heard a choir of the angelic hosts. He buried Onuphrius's body with honour and returned to his own monastery, there as a living witness to narrate to the brethren, for their edification, the wonderful life of the man of God and the greatness of God's providence towards those who give themselves wholly to His service. Onuphrius died in the year 400. Our Holy Father Peter the Athonite; Our Holy Father Timothy the Hermit, of Egypt; Our Holy Fathers Bassian and Jonah.; Russian New Martyrs Bishop Onuphrius (1938) and his co-sufferers Hieromartyrs Anthony, Barsanuphius and Joseph (1937), Hierarch Alexander of Kharkov.

13 / 26 June — The Holy Martyr Aquilina - born in the Palestinian town of Biblos of Christian parents, little Aquilina was already, at the age of seven, living as a true Christian, and by the age of ten was so filled with divine understanding and the grace of the Holy Spirit that she used to preach Christ with great power and zeal to her girl friends. When Diocletian's persecution began, Aquilina was handed over to the imperial governor, Volusianus, who was more like a beast than a man. He ordered that she first be flogged and then that a heated rod be passed through her ears and brain. Until the last moment, the virgin Aquilina freely and clearly confessed Christ the Lord; but when her brains started flowing with her blood from her head, she fell as if dead. Believing her to be indeed dead, the governor ordered that her body be taken outside the city and thrown onto a dungheap for the dogs to eat. But, during the night, an angel of God appeared to her and said: 'Arise and be healed!', and the maiden arose and was restored to health, and stood a long time expressing her gratitude and praise to God and begging Him not to deny her a martyr's death. A voice was heard from heaven: 'Go; and it shall be to thee as thou desirest', and Aquilina went into the city. The city gates opened of their own accord for her, and she passed through them and went to the governor's palace like a ghost, standing before his bed and showing herself to him. The governor was seized with unspeakable terror when he saw the maiden whom he had thought dead. On the following day, he ordered the executioner to take Aquilina out and behead her with the sword. Before her execution, she knelt in prayer and surrendered her spirit into God's hands, leaving her dead body to be beheaded by the executioner. Her relics gave healing to many of the sick. St Aquilina was twelve years old when she suffered for the Lord; she endured her Passion and was crowned with a wreath of martyrdom in the year 293. St Triphyllius, Bishop of Levcosia; St Anna and her son John.

14 / 27 June — The Holy Prophet Elisha - lived nine hundred years before Christ. When the Lord willed to take the aged prophet Elias to Himself, He revealed to him that He had set aside Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of the tribe of Reuben and from the city of Abel-Menolah, to inherit his prophetic calling. Elias made the Lord's will known to Elisha and draped him in his mantle, asking God for a double portion of the grace of prophecy for him. Elisha at once left his home and his people and followed after Elias. When the Lord took Elias in the fiery chariot (A.V. II Kings 2:11), Elisha remained to carry on the work of prophecy with yet greater power than Elias. In his purity and zeal, he was equal to the greatest prophets, and surpassed all the others with the wondrous power given to him by God. He divided the waters of the Jordan as Moses once divided the Red Sea; he made the bitter waters in Jericho drinkable; he brought water down into the trenches in the war against the Moabites; he caused the widow's jars to fill to the brim with oil; he raised the dead son of the Shunammite woman; he fed a hundred people with twenty small loaves; he healed Naaman, captain of the hosts of Syria, of leprosy; he blinded an entire Syrian army and put another to flight; he foretold many events both for the nation and for individuals, and went to his rest at a very great age. St Methodius, Patriarch of Constantinople; St John, Metropolitan of Euchaita; Our Holy Father Niphon.