



# 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

## St. Joannicius the Great & Hieromartyr Nicander

### 4 / 17 November

**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.

**Troparion of St Joannicius the Great Tone 8:** With the streams of thy tears thou didst irrigate the barren desert, / and with sighs from the depths of thy soul thou didst render thy labors fruitful an hundredfold, / becoming a beacon for the whole world, resplendent with miracles. // O Joannicius our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

**Troparion of St Nicander Tone 4;** In his sufferings, Thy martyr Nicander O Lord, / received an imperishable crown from Thee, our God; / for, possessed of Thy might, / he set at naught the tyrants and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. // By his supplications save Thou our souls.

**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.

**Kontakion of St Joannicius the Great Tone 8:** Thou wast revealed to be a most radiant star, / shining forth in the world and bringing light to those in the gloom of the passions, / showing thyself to be a most mighty physician. / But as thou hast received the grace of healing, grant healing unto those who ask it of thee, // that we may chant: Rejoice, O father Joannicius!

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#### Vespers

Lord I have Cried, Tone 4, on 10: Octoechos 4; Saint 3 (O thou who wast illumined); Hieromartyr 3 (Receiving a fitting name); G: Saint (O venerable father); N: Sunday Dogmatic Tone 4 Aposticha: Octoechos; G: Saint (We honor thee as the instructor); N: Theotokion, Tone 8 (O unwedded Virgin)

#### Matins Gospel X

#### **EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S Letter To The Galatians 2: 16-20**

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

**I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST; IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE, BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME**

Observe how cautiously he expresses himself; he does not say that they had abandoned the Law as evil, but as weak. If the law cannot confer righteousness, it follows that circumcision is superfluous; and this far he now proves, but he proceeds to show that it is not only superfluous but dangerous ...He speaks more strongly ...If faith in Him, he says, does not avail for our justification, and should it be necessary to embrace the law again, having forsaken the law for Christ's sake, we are not justified but condemned for such abandonment. Then will we find Him, for whose sake we forsook the law and went over to faith ...Observe how he has resolved the matter to a necessary absurdity ...Observe the Apostle's discernment. His opponents tried to show that one who did not keep the law was a transgressor, but he

reverts the argument against them and shows that the one who did keep the law was a transgressor, not merely of faith, but of the law itself ...He means this: the law has confessedly ceased, and we have abandoned it and betaken ourselves to the salvation which comes of faith. But if we make a point of setting it up again, we become by that very act transgressors, striving to keep what God has annulled ...He adds the cause of his living, and shows that when alive, the law slew Him, but that when dead, Christ through death restored him to life.

He shows the wonder to be twofold: that by Christ both the dead was begotten into life, and, that by means of death. He means here immortal life, for this is the meaning of the words, 'That I might live to God I have been crucified with Christ.' How, it is asked, can a man now living and breathing have been crucified? ...It is Baptism He alludes to ...our subsequent manner of life, whereby our members are mortified. By saying, 'Christ lives in me,' he means nothing is done by me which Christ disapproves; for as by death he signifies not what is commonly understood, but a death to sin, so by life, he signifies a delivery from sin. For a man cannot live to God otherwise than by dying to sin, and as Christ suffered bodily death, so does Paul experience a death to sin (Cf. Col. 3:5) ...As sin, when it has the mastery, is itself the vital principle, and leads the soul wherever it will, so, when it is slain and the will of Christ is obeyed, this life is no longer earthly, but Christ lives, that is, works, has mastery within us.

*St. John Chrysostom. Commentary on Galatians, Chapter II. B#57, pp. 20-22*

## **Second Epistle Gal. 5:22 - 6:2**

### **THE GOSPEL: LUKE 8: 41-56**

And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, For he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, Came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace." While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

## **RESURRECTION OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS**

Last Sunday's reading from the Apostle told us that we are saved by Grace, and that Grace is received through faith, and this is the gift of God. And we were shown what faith is in a striking example.

And here, even today's Gospel speaks about faith. To some degree we all possess it. But because it is imperfect, our faith is often subject to temptations. And the most terrible, the strongest of such temptations, is the death of a person near and dear to us. I think that the majority of those present here have already lived through, or are now living through, this incurable grief. But if not, it is something which will inevitably come. Today's Gospel gives us a classic example of how, in spite of all the difficulty of such an experience, it is possible to endure it. And at the same time it shows us again how much we need faith. For only through faith does God give us and will give us His power of Grace not to fall spiritually in such a terrible moment.

Jairus approached Christ; his daughter was near death. He fell at the feet of Jesus and asked Him to enter his house. Christ agreed, but the people were crowding Him. On the way, the woman with an issue of blood was healed. The whole time there were delays. Christ moved slowly, very slowly. Imagine what Jairus was going through. Here he had asked Christ to hurry. After all, this was a matter of life and death for his daughter. If Christ were one minute late, it might be too late—his daughter could die. And

this is exactly what happened. Someone came from the house of the ruler of the synagogue and said to him: "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master" (Lk. 8:49).

Yes, according to human understanding it was all over. Why trouble the Master? Anything is possible to mend, but not death. Death alone is irreparable. Before it even the Teacher is powerless. Yes, this is so according to human understanding, but not according to God's understanding. And Jesus, after He heard this, said to Jairus: "Fear not: Believe only, and she shall be made whole" (Lk. 8:50). And in this moment Jairus rejected human understanding and accepted God's understanding. Now before him stood not just a Teacher, but the Saviour of the world, the Son of God—God Himself. Because God alone has power over life and death.

Jairus accepted within himself His words: "Fear not: believe only!" From this very moment he lived only by these words and continued following after Christ. They entered the house. And again two sides: the human side—"All wept and bewailed her." And Christ said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." And again the human. "And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." But in the soul of Jairus there was an unspeakable calm. He had faith. And faith conquered. "Maid, arise!" exclaimed Christ, and her spirit returned into her and she immediately got up and was united with her father (Lk. 8:52-55).

Yes, but you may say this is a miracle of resurrection, and such miracles do not happen now. True. But the same miracle has been promised to all of us. Every day in our Confession of Faith we read, "I look for the resurrection of the dead." And this will happen, it will! Not as soon as it happened for Jairus, but it will happen! Pay attention to the following moment. Jairus already knew that his daughter was dead, but all the same he followed Christ, believing His words. How long this walk in faith lasted is not important; but what is important is that it took place.

Let us also believe in the words of the Gospel that the dead will rise; and like Jairus, let us follow Christ in faith. Mystically, this walk of Jairus after Christ did not end and will never end. It goes on even now, and we can all participate in it. Let us hasten to join Jairus. Then the words of Christ, "Fear not: Believe only, and she shall be made whole," will refer also to us. But for this to happen, like Jairus, we must hold fast to the robe of Christ and endure everything that God sends to us on the road of our life. The way of Jairus was comparatively short. Ours might be long, very long. It will go to the end of our life. But let us believe that there will be the resurrection of the dead and that we will be united with those dear to us who are already with the Lord. May God grant us the faith and the patience of Jairus!

*Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful*

## **Second Gospel Matthew 4:25 - 5:12**

### **Saints of the week**

**4 / 17 November - Our Holy Father Joannicius the Great** - This great spiritual light was born in the village of Marykata in the province of Bithynia, of his father Myrtrices and his mother Anastasia. He was a shepherd as a youth. Whilst tending his sheep at pasture, he would often retreat into solitude and remain in prayer the whole day, having encircled his flock with the sign of the Cross so that it should not wander off and get lost. After that, he was called into the army, and caused men to marvel at his courage, particularly in the wars against the Bulgarians. After his military service, Joannicius withdrew to Olympus in Asia Minor, where he became a monk and gave himself entirely over to asceticism, persevering in it till his death in great old age. He laboured in the ascetic life for over fifty years in various places, and had from God most abundant gifts of wonderworking: he healed all sicknesses and pains, drove out demons, tamed wild beasts, possessing a particular power over snakes; he walked dryfoot through water, became invisible to men when he so desired and foretold future events. He was distinguished by an outstanding humility and meekness. In outward appearance, he was like a giant, huge and strong. He took an active part in the destiny of God's Church, for, during the iconoclast period he was at first deluded, but then tore himself away and became an ardent defender of reverence towards the icons. He had a great friendship with Patriarch Methodius of Constantinople. Joannicius lived for ninety-four years, and entered peacefully into rest in the Lord in 846. He was a great wonderworker both during his lifetime and after his death.

**Hieromartyrs Nicander, bishop of Myra, and Hermas, presbyter** - Nicander and Hermas were both ordained by Apostle Titus. They were both distinguished by their great zeal for the Faith and their great labors in winning pagans for Christ the Lord. Because of this, they were accused before a certain judge, Libanus, who subjected them to bitter tortures. They were stoned and dragged over stones; they were

imprisoned, suffered hunger and endured many other tortures that no mortal man could endure without God's special help. The Lord appeared to them in various ways, and when they were thrown into a fiery furnace, the Lord sent His angel to cool the flames for them. Finally, they were buried alive by their cruel torturers. But in vain do men kill those whom the Lord gives life, and in vain do men dishonor those whom the Lord glorifies.

**St. Clether, hermit of Cornwall** - probably of Welsh origin and of the family of St. Brychan. After living in Wales by the river Never, he settled in North Cornwall in later life in the remote and beautiful Inny valley at the place which still bears his name.

**St. Birstan, bishop of Winchester (931-4)** - known for his personal service to the poor; his devotion to the dead evidenced by his frequent prayers for them in the cemetery (to which the departed souls once answered "Amen").

**Also commemorated on this day:** Martyr Nicholas confessor and priest (1931). Virgin-martyr Eugene (1935). New Hieromartyr Alexander priest (1937). New Hieromartyr Ismail priest (1941). Venerable Mercurius, faster of the Kiev Caves (14th c.). Venerable Nicander, abbot of Gorodensk (Novgorod) (1607). Blessed Simon of Yurievets (1584). St. Paul, metropolitan of Tobolsk (1770). St. Sylvia, mother of St. Gregory the Dialogist (6th c.). Martyr Porphyrius the Mime of Caesarea (361). St. John III Doukas Vataxis the Merciful, emperor of Nicaea (1254). Holy and Righteous Ioane, Stepane, and Isaiah the Georgians

**5 / 18 November - Our Holy Father Galacteon and our Mother Epistemis, Martyrs** - They were born in the city of Edessa in Phoenicia, both of pagan parents. Galacteon's mother was barren until she was baptised. After her baptism, she brought her husband also to the true Faith and baptised her son Galacteon, bringing him up a Christian. When the time came for Galacteon to marry, his devout mother Leucippe died, and his father betrothed him to a maiden called Epistemis. Galacteon did not wish to enter into marriage at all, and he quickly urged Epistemis to be baptised and then to become a nun at the same time as he became a monk. Both went away to the mountain of Publion, Galacteon to a men's monastery and Epistemis to a women's, and each of them became a true light in the monastery. They were first in labours, in prayer, in humility and obedience, and first in love. They did not leave their monasteries, and neither saw the other until the time of their death. A fierce persecution arose, and they were both brought to trial. While they were mercilessly whipping Galacteon, Epistemis was weeping, and they then whipped her also. They cut off their hands and feet, and finally their heads. One Eutolius, a man who had been a servant of Epistemis's parents and then a monk together with Galacteon, took their bodies and buried them. He also wrote the Lives of these two wonderful martyrs for Christ, who suffered and received their heavenly crowns in 253.

**St. Jonah, archbishop of Novgorod** - Jonah was born in Novgorod and was orphaned early. A certain God-fearing widow took him and educated him. Seeing him as a child, Michael, the fool-for-Christ of Klops said to him prophetically: ``Ivanushka, study diligently, for you will become archbishop in Novgorod the Great." And indeed, following the death of Archbishop Euthymius, Jonah was chosen and consecrated in his place. Jonah was devout and merciful to a rare degree for a mortal man. He built churches and monasteries and cared for his flock as a true good shepherd. He was offered the throne of Moscow as Metropolitan but declined, excusing himself because of his age. He entered into rest peacefully on November 5, 1570, and settled in the joyful heavenly habitations. One hundred years following his death there was a great fire in Novgorod. The relics of this saint did not burn in the furious flames, but on the contrary, from then on manifested healing power and emitted a wonderful fragrance.

**St. Cybi, abbot in Cornwall and Wales (550)** - a Cornish saint who travelled by sea and river, living as a hermit and/or evangelist in various places which bear his name before settling on Anglesey, where his most important work was achieved. This was his founding of a monastery at Holyhead (called in Welsh *Caer Gybi*, 'Cybi's Fort') in Anglesey, the small island on which it stands being called Holy Island or *Ynys Gybi*.

**Also commemorated on this day:** St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus (Election 1917). New Hieromartyr Gabriel priest (1937). Apostles Patrobus, Hermas, Linus, Gaius, and Philologus of the Seventy (1st c.). St. Gregory, archbishop of Alexandria (9th c.). All-Russian Church Council of 1917-1918. Martyrs Domninus, Timothy, Theophilus, Theotimus, Dorotheus, Eupychius, Carterius, Pamphilus, Agathangelus, and Castorus of Palestine (307). Hieromartyr Silvanus, bishop of Gaza. St. Kea, bishop of Devon and Cornwall. Venerable Odrada, virgin of Balen (8th c.). St. Gregory of Cassano, Calabria (1002).

**6 / 19 November - St Paul the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople** - When the blessed Patriarch Alexander was lying on his deathbed, the lamenting faithful asked him whom he would leave to follow him as chief pastor of the flock of Christ. Then the sick Patriarch said to them: 'If you want to have a shepherd who will teach you and whose virtues will illumine you, choose Paul; but, if you want a

suitable man as a figurehead, choose Macedonius.' The people chose Paul. This was not acceptable to the Arian heretics, nor to the Emperor Constantius, who was at that time in Antioch, and so Paul was quickly deposed and fled to Rome together with St Athanasius the Great. There, both Pope Julian and the Emperor Constans gave them a warm welcome and upheld them in their Orthodoxy. The Emperor and the Pope sent letters which restored Paul to his episcopal throne, but, after the death of Constans, the Arians raised their heads again and drove the Orthodox Patriarch off to Cucusus in Armenia. While Paul was celebrating the Liturgy one day in exile, he was set on by the Arians and strangled with his pallium. This was in the year 351. In the time of the Emperor Theodosius, in 381, his relics were translated to Constantinople, and, in 1236, to Venice, where they still lie. (A small piece of their relics is kept at the Russian Cathedral in London).

**Venerable Barlaam, abbot of Khoutyn** - Barlaam was born and raised as a Christian in Novgorod the Great. After the death of his parents, he was tonsured a monk and devoted himself to a life of strict asceticism. He founded a monastery on the bank of the Volkhov River, at a place where a heavenly light appeared to him. Barlaam was a great miracle-worker both during his life and after his death: he saw into the secrets of men's hearts, expelled unclean spirits and healed all sicknesses. After his repose, a servant of Prince Vasili Vasilievich became gravely ill and begged to be taken to the saint's grave. He further instructed them that, if he should die on the way, they should carry his dead body to the saint. And thus it happened-he died on the way and they carried him dead to the monastery, where he returned to life, stood up and prostrated before the grave of the saint. In the year 1471, Tsar Ivan the Terrible ordered that the saint's grave be dug up. As soon as they began to dig, a flame sprang from the grave and flared up along the walls of the church. The Tsar was so frightened that he ran out of the church and, in his haste, forgot his staff, which is still preserved beside the grave of the saint. The commemoration of this miracle is celebrated on the Friday after the Sunday of All Saints.

**All Saints of Ireland** - This day's feast is not only a celebration of the great multitude of Irish and Celtic Saints, many of whom were missionaries throughout Europe, but is also a celebration of the many contributions of Celtic culture to the world. A number of centuries ago, a family from a Central European tribe met with a tribe from the Carpathian mountains. The result was the beginning of Celtic civilization, especially with respect to the La Tene and Hallstadt cultures. The "Keltoi" as the Greeks called them were described vividly by Julius Caesar in Gaul. The Iberian Peninsula was once called "Celtiberia." Macbeth, High King of Scots, on his way to Rome by ship, visited these people and could carry on a conversation with them, no problem! The Celtic language of these people, "Galiz" from Galizia, has survived and they are one of the seven nations of the Celts (the others being: Irish, Highland Scots, Manx, Cornish, Breton and Welsh). Paris was named for the Celtic tribe that settled there, the "Parisii." Notre Dame Cathedral with its hanging heads calls to mind the way in which Celtic warriors would celebrate a military victory . . . Everything that had the prefix "Wal" in front of it was of Celtic origin. "Wales" and "Cornwall" and even "Wallachia" in Roumania. Sevastopol in Crimea was originally built by the Celts who settled there very early. "Walnuts" are also named for the Celts who developed them. St Peter Mohyla, Metropolitan of Kyiv, is also of Wallachian and therefore Celtic, descent. The Celtic Christian missionaries were intrepid travelers. They would cross vast areas in their little boats known as "birinns." Even Christopher Columbus visited Ireland to read the log books of St Brendan the Navigator who was said to have crossed over to the Eastern Coast of what is now Canada. There is evidence of early Christian settlements in Newfoundland and also in Baffin Island! Celtic missionaries came down through the Baltic Sea into Kyivan Rus'Ukraine and St Olha the Great greeted Celtic men of God at her court. The Celtic Rite is actually one of the most "Eastern" of those in the West. The Celts had strong ties with Coptic Egypt and its tradition of the Thebaid through the Ukrainian Saint, John Cassian. There are still mentioned in Celtic liturgical sources a veneration for "Seven Coptic Monks" buried in Ireland. The Irish Rite has many connections to the Egyptian liturgy. For example, following the Rule of St Pachomios, the Irish Celtic Office has groups of 12 Psalms. So, depending on the Feast, the Morning Office will have 12, 24, 36, 60 or 72 Psalms. In many cases, the entire Psalter is read in a single day. Prostrations to the ground, familiar in the East, were also practiced by the Celts. It was the Celts who invented the tradition of saying 150 Our Fathers and Hail Mary's for the Psalms. They devised strands of beads and knotted cords as prayer counters, the Celtic Rosary. The great asceticism of the Celtic saints is patterned after that of the Eastern Church Fathers. Saying the Psalter while standing in cold running water, among other things, required a hardy sort of person . . . The Celts had their own tonsure, the tonsure of Simon Magus, which was in front of the head, rather than on top in the Roman fashion. The Abbot, rather than the Bishop, was the administrator of the Celtic communities, built around the monasteries or "cashels" as they were. Their calculation of Easter was their own and varied from that of the rest of the Church at the time. The Celts inherited much from their druidic ancestors. Like the Eastern Slavs, they worshipped the Sun. After becoming Christian, the Sun symbol still figured prominently in their Christian faith. St Ninian of Galloway in Scotland and St Colum mac Felim O'Neill of Isle of Hy (Iona) and their missionary companions worshipped within stone circles and adapted other Sun imagery in their Christianised traditions. The haloed Celtic Cross is also popular in Ukraine. There is one marking the grave of Taras Shevchenko, the national poet and bard. It refers to the fact that Christ is our "Sun." It is also said to be a Celtic form of the "Chi Rho" or "XP" Greek symbol for the first two

letters of Christ's Name, also called the "Cross of St Constantine." The term "Celtic," as some have argued, may be connected to "Chaldea." It is also a play on the monastic notion of "cell." Another explanation is that it refers to the monastic Order of the Celi De or the "Friends of God." Celtic spirituality is very popular these days. Those who should probably know better are presenting it within a type of "New Age" context. Closeness to animals and nature are also stimulants to interest in this version of "Celtic spirituality." In fact, while Celtic monks and nuns lived very simply, their asceticism runs in the face of modern, easy-going spiritual orientations. Their lives were rather exhausting. In addition to daily Divine Liturgy and their Horologion, they recited the full 150 Psalms of David. One could always rest in the after-life, the old Irish spiritual teachers said . . . During the Irish Penal Times when it was against the law to be Catholic and a priest, Irish priests would roam the countryside incognito, just like during the Roman times of persecution. Irish families would light candles in their windows as a sign that this was where the priests could receive a meal and shelter for the night. When Cromwell's Puritan soldiers asked the people what the candles signified, the people said they were "lighting the way of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem." This interpretation has remained and is why, today, so many homes are decorated with Christmas lights! .The Celtic Thebaid was a school for Saints and it is this great Choir that we celebrate today. We are heirs to the rich Celtic Christian culture they produced. The Celtic missionaries were experts at spreading the Gospel and inculturating it with local traditions which they "baptized" as they said. This is why Celtic Christianity became so deeply rooted among the Celtic peoples. Presbyterianism, although Protestant, sees itself as an heir to this tradition as well. Certainly, the Celtic nations had long harboured resentment towards Rome for imposing its Rite on their ancient ways. There is renewed interest in the Celtic Rite today among Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Anglicans. What characterizes the Celtic Rite is its focus on the worship of the Holy Trinity, its spirit of simplicity and asceticism, devotion to the Psalms, the Horologion and the reading of the Gospel, a positive relationship to God's creation in nature, and community in monastic life. The ancient Celtic Rite exemplifies the spiritual richness of the undivided Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ. A missionary Church, the Celtic Rite was practiced throughout Western Europe at one time, reaching out to the shores of North America itself. The Saints of Eire and all Celtic Saints remind us of our calling to preach Christ to all nations, while inculturating the Gospel in every national tradition. All ye Holy Saints of Eire and the Celtic nations, pray unto God for us!

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Hieromartyrs Nicitas bishop of Orekhovo-Zuev, Anatoly, Arsenius, Nicholas, Nicholas, Constantine priests, Hieromartyrs Barlaam, Gabriel, Gabriel, Woman Hieromartyrs Nina and Seraphima (1937). New Hieromartyr Basil priest (1938). New Martyr Gregory the Cross-bearer (1936). St. Elias Fondaminskii of Paris (1942). Synaxis of the New Martyrs of Sarov: Anatole, Basil, Hierotheus, Isaac, and Rufinus. Repose of St. Herman, archbishop of Kazan (1567). Venerable Luke, steward of the Kiev Caves (13th c.). Venerable Barlaam of Keret Lake (16th c.). Virgin-martyrs Tecusa, Alexandra, Claudia, Matrona, Polactia, Euphrosyne, and Athanasia of Ancyra (303). Venerable Luke, monk, of Sicily (820). Venerable Winnocus, abbot (716). St. Leonard of Noblac (559). Venerable Illtyd, abbot of Llanilltyd Fawr, disciple of St. Germanus of Auxerre. St. Cowey of Portaferry, abbot of Moville (8th c.). St. Demetrianus, bishop of Cytheria in Cyprus (915).

**7 / 20 November - Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Hieron and his 32 companions(The 33 Martyrs of Melitene)** - He was born in the Cappadocian city of Tijane of a good and God-fearing mother, Stratonica, who was blind. Hieron was a very zealous Christian, and cared for his blind mother with a truly filial love. Because of both his faith and his mother, he refused to go into the army, and fended off and drove away those who were sent to take him, for he was loathe to leave his helpless, blind mother and be forced as a soldier to bow down and offer sacrifice to idols. Finally, Hieron was seized and taken before the governor of the city of Melitene, along with other Christians. While they were on the road, a man in white apparel appeared one night to Hieron and said to him: 'Behold, Hieron, I reveal to thee thy salvation: thou shalt not wage war for any earthly king, but shalt engage in a battle for the King of heaven, and quickly shalt thou come to Him and receive from Him both honour and glory.' Hieron's heart was filled with ineffable joy at these words. When they reached Melitene, they were all thrown into prison, where Hieron strengthened them all in their faith with great ardour, exhorting them that not one should fall away but that all should freely give their bodies over to torment and death for Christ. To a man, they all confessed their faith in Christ the Lord before the judge, except for one kinsman of Hieron's called Victor, who repudiated his faith. Hieron's hands were cut off, then he was flogged and tortured in various ways, until he was finally beheaded with the sword together with the others. Going out to the place of execution, the thirty-three martyrs sang the psalm: 'Blessed are those that are undefiled in the way, and walk in the Law of the Lord' (Ps. 1:1). Let us remember by name these honourable martyrs, who are inscribed in the Book of Life: Hesychius, Nicander, Athanasius, Mamas, Barachius, Callinicus, Theogenes, Nikon, Longinus, Theodore, Valerius, Xanticus, Theodulus, Callimachus, Eugene, Theodochus, Ostrichius, Epiphanius, Maximian, Ducitius, Claudian, Theophilus, Gigantius, Dorotheus, Theodotus, Castrichius, Anicetas, Themilius, Eutyechius, Hilarion, Diodotus and Amonitus. A certain man called Chrysanthus found Hieron's severed head and gave it burial, and he later built over it a church in honour of St Hieron. One of the martyr's hands was taken to his blind mother. St Hieron suffered with his companions in 298, and entered into the glory of Christ.

**Our Holy Father Lazarus of Mount Galesius** - A pillar of light appeared above the house where he was born. Lazarus left his village of Magnesia and went to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage to the holy places. There, he was tonsured a monk in the Monastery of St. Sava the Sanctified. After ten years, he settled on Mount Galesius and lived a life of asceticism on a pillar as a stylite. Lazarus was a miracle-worker both during his lifetime and after death. Emperor Constantine Monomachus had great respect for him. Attaining old age, St. Lazarus entered into eternity toward the end of the eleventh century.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Hieromartyrs Cyril (Smirnov) metropolitan of Kazan, Michael, Alexander, Aleksander, Michael, Aleksander, Nicholas, Alexis, Paul, Basil, Paulinus priests, John and Benjamin deacons, Martyr Nicholas, Virgin-martyr Elisabeth (1937). New Hieromartyrs Sergius archbishop of Elets, Nicholas priest and Martyr Gregory (1937). Finding of the relics of priest Constantine Golubev (1995). New Hieromartyr Joseph (Petrovykh), metropolitan of Petrograd (1938). Venerable Zosimas, abbot of Vorbozoma (1550). Translation of the relics of St. Cyril, abbot of New Lake (Vologda) (1649). Martyr Theodotus of Ancyra (303). Martyrs Melasippus, Cassina, their son Antoninus, and forty children converted by their martyrdom, at Ancyra (363). Martyrs Auctus, Taurion, and Thessalonica at Amphipolis in Macedonia. "Leaping with Joy" (1795) Icon of the Mother of God. St. Willibrord, archbishop of Utrecht, apostle of Frisia (739). Martyr Athenodorus. Martyr Alexander of Thessalonica (305). St. Gregory, brother of St. Gregory the Wonderworker (3rd c.)

**8 / 21 November - Synaxis of the Archangels, SS Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salaphiel, Jugediel & Barachiel** - The angels of God have been commemorated by men from the earliest times, but this commemoration often degenerates into the divinisation of angels (IV Kings 23:5; A.V. II Kings). Heretics always wove fantasies round the angels. Some of them saw the angels as gods and others, if they did not so regard them, took them to be the creators of the whole visible world. The local Council in Laodicea, that was held in the fourth century, rejected in its 35th Canon the worship of angels as gods, and established the proper veneration of them. In the time of Pope Sylvester of Rome and the Alexandrian Patriarch Alexander, in the fourth century, this Feast of the Archangel Michael and the other heavenly powers was instituted, to be celebrated in November. Why in November? Because November is the ninth month after March, and it is thought that the world was created in the month of March. The ninth month after March was chosen because of the nine orders of angels that were the first created beings. St Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of the Apostle Paul (that Apostle who was caught up to the third heaven), writes of these nine orders in his book: 'Celestial Hierarchies'. These orders are as follows: six-winged Seraphim, many-eyed Cherubim, godly Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. The leader of the whole angelic army is the Archangel Michael. When Satan, Lucifer, fell away from God, and carried half the angels with him to destruction, then Michael arose and cried to the unfallen angels: 'Let us give heed! Let us stand aright; let us stand with fear!', and the whole angelic army sang aloud: 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!' (See on the Archangel Michael: Joshua 5:13-15 and Jude v.9). Among the angels there rules a perfect unity of mind, of soul and of love; of total obedience of the lesser powers to the greater and of all to the holy will of God. Each nation has its guardian angel, as does each individual Christian. We must keep in mind that, whatever we do, openly or in secret, we do in the presence of our guardian angel and that, on the Day of Judgement, a great multitude of the holy angels of heaven will be gathered around the throne of Christ, and the thoughts, words and deeds of every man will be laid bare before them. May God have mercy on us and save us at the prayers of the holy Archangel Michael and all the bodiless powers of heaven. Amen.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Martyr Michael the Blessed of Chernigov (1922). New Hieromartyr Paul priest (1937). Righteous Martha, princess of Pskov (1300). Venerable Tyssilio, abbot of Meifod (Powys) (7th c.). St. Willihad, bishop of Bremen. New Martyr Michael the Blessed of Chernigov (1922).

**9 / 22 November - Fast Day - The Holy Martyrs Onesiphorus and Prophyrius** - These two wonderful men were martyred for the name of Christ in the time of the Emperor Diocletian (284-305). They were harshly beaten, and then burned in iron coffins, and after that tied to horses' tails and dragged over stones and thistles. They were thus broken to pieces and gave their holy souls into God's hands. Their relics were buried in Pentapolis.

**St. Nectarios (Anastasios Kaphalas), metropolitan of Pentapolis** - born in Greece in 1846. His family was very poor, so he left home at the age of 14 to seek work. He found a job in Constantinople, but he received very low wages and ate poorly and only wore rags. Seeing that his master received many things by mail, he decided to write a letter for help. He had no friends in the world, and the post did not go to his mother's village. In his childlike faith, he decided to write to Christ to tell him his needs, writing on the envelope: "To the Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven". On his way to post it a merchant who knew him saw him and offered to post his letter. Reading the address and being overcome by curiosity, the merchant opened the letter and read the boy's plea to God for help. Greatly moved, he put money in an envelope and sent it anonymously to the boy, who gave thanks to God. Young Anastasios visited the Holy

Places when he was very young. On the way he calmed a terrible storm through his prayers. Then, in his twenties, he entered a monastery, being tonsured in 1875 with the names Lazarus. Because of his virtues and piety he soon became a deacon and then a priest. He left his monastery because of Moslem rule and went to Egypt where he was elected the Metropolitan of Pentapolis. He lived a holy life and because of this was slandered by others, even his brother-bishops in the See of Alexandria. Thus, he was suspended from his diocese. Nevertheless, the saint bore this slandering humbly. When the people, greatly upset by his suspension, began to grow restless, he secretly left for Greece so as not to be the cause of dissension.. He found there, however, that the slanders had travelled ahead of him, and that the Church authorities would not give him a position. Some people who had come to love the Saint very much used their influence to have him appointed Dean of a seminary in Athens. The busy city life was not pleasing to the saint and he looked for a quiet place where he could dedicate himself to prayer. Finding a disused convent on the island of Aegina he rebuilt the church and gathered a few nuns around him. Many came to confess their sins and receive wise counsel. He lived here until his death in 1920. On the day of his repose, the hospital in which he died was filled with a beautiful fragrance. An item of the saint's clothing, placed by a nurse on the bed of a sick man while they prepared the saint's body for burial, was a source of healing. His relics were incorrupt for many years after his repose, even after the impious Archbishop of Athens, Chrysostom, ordered that the relics be exposed to the elements for two days so they would dissolve. A friend of the saint's, a doctor, opened the relics in 1934 and was surprised to find the saint was easily recognisable to any who knew him during his life.

**The Venerable John The Dwarf** - John is numbered among the greatest of the Egyptian ascetics. "Kolobos" means "dwarf," for he was of little stature. He came to Scetis with his brother Daniel and, with the greatest zeal, devoted himself to such asceticism that Daniel had to urge him to moderation. John was a disciple of St. Pambo, and was later the teacher of St. Arsenius the Great. His fellow disciple under St. Pambo was St. Paisius the Great. Once, when he and Paisius were discussing what kind of asceticism to undertake, an angel of God appeared to them and commanded John to stay where he was and instruct others, and Paisius to enter the wilderness and live as a hermit. In order to test John's obedience, St. Pambo ordered him to water a dry stick planted in the ground until it turned green. Without hesitation or doubt, John watered this stick daily for three whole years until by the power of God, it grew green sprouts and brought forth fruit. Pambo then gathered the fruit from this tree, brought it to church and distributed it among the brethren saying: "Draw near and taste of the fruit of obedience!" John the Dwarf had many disciples. Some of his wise sayings have been preserved. He entered into rest peacefully and took up his habitation in the joy of his Lord.

**St. Simeon Metaphrastes** - Simeon was a gifted Constantinopolitan. He had both a secular and spiritual education. He attained the rank of imperial logothete [chancellor] and was first among the nobles at the imperial court, yet he lived a pure and blameless life as a true ascetic. He distinguished himself by great military bravery and statesmanly wisdom. For these qualities, Emperor Leo the Wise greatly respected him and sent him to Crete to negotiate a peace with the Arabs who then occupied the island. Successfully completing his mission, he returned to Constantinople and soon thereafter withdrew from the world and worldly affairs. He wrote many lives of saints, compiling 122 new biographies and correcting 539 biographies. He entered into rest in about the year 960, and a fragrant and healing myrrh flowed from his relics.

**The Icon of the Mother of God, Named "Quickly-Hearing"** - The Icon of the Mother of God, named "Quickly-Hearing" - an ancient wonderworking image, is located on Holy Mount Athos at the Dokhiareia monastery. The monastery tradition suggests that its time of writing belongs to the X Century, during the time of the monastery head Saint Neophytes (Comm. this same day). In the year 1664 the kitchener Nilos, coming at night to the kitchen with a burning torch, heard a voice from the image of the Mother of God raised up over the door, summoning him in future not to walk here and not to soot the icon. The monk thought that this was a prank of some one of the brethren; he disregarded the warning and continued to walk into the kitchen with the sooty torch. Suddenly he fell blind. With fervent repentance the Monk Nilos prayed before the icon of the Mother of God, begging forgiveness. And again he heard the wondrous voice, proclaiming forgiveness and return of sight and a command to announce to all the brethren: "From this time this My icon shalt be name Quickly-Hearing, since quickly to all hastening to it shalt appear mercy and fulfillment of entreaty". The Most Holy Mother of God did then fulfill and now fulfills Her promise - quick help and consolation manifest for all who with faith hasten unto Her.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable Matrona, abbess, of Constantinople (492). Venerable Theoctiste of the isle of Lesbos (881). New Hieromartyrs Parthenius bishop of Ananiev, Constantine, Demetrius, Nestor, Theodore, Constantine, Victor, Elias priests, Joseph deacon and Hieromartyr Alexis (1937). Venerable Onesiphorus the Confessor of the Kiev Caves (1148). Martyr Alexander of Thessalonica (305). Martyr Anthony of Apamea (5th c.). Venerables Eustolia (610) and Sosipatra (635) of Constantinople. Venerables Euthymius (990) and Neophytus, the Serbians of Mt. Athos. Martyrs Narses and Artemonos. St. Helladius, monk. Martyrs Claudius, Castor, Sempronian, and Nicostrat.



**10 / 23 November - The Holy Apostles Olympas, Erastus, Quartus, Herodion, Sosipater and Tertius** - They were all among the Seventy. The last three are also commemorated elsewhere: Herodion on April 8th, Sosipater on April 28th and Tertius on October 30th. Ss Olympas and Herodion were followers of the Apostle Peter and, when Peter suffered, they suffered too, being beheaded at Nero's command. Erastus was steward of the Church in Jerusalem, and later became Bishop of Paneas in Palestine. Quartus was bishop in Beirut; he suffered greatly and brought many to the Christian faith. Sosipater was bishop in Iconium, and Tertius followed him as bishop there. They strove in spirit, became victors and were crowned with wreaths of glory.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Hieromartyr Niphont and Martyr Alexander (1931). New Hieromartyrs Prokopius (Titov) archbishop of Odessa, Dionisius, John and Peter priests (1937). New Hieromartyrs Augustine (Belyaev), archbishop of Kaluga (1937) and with him John priest, New Hieromartyrs Ioanicus, Martyr Alexis, Appolon, Michael (1937). Martyr Nicholas and Virgin-martyr Anna and St. Boris deacon confessor (1930-1940). Virgin-martyrs Olga (1941) and Theoctista (1942). Martyr Orestes of Cappadocia (304). Hieromartyr Milos (Miles), bishop in Persia (341), and two disciples. Venerable Theocteristus, abbot of Symbola on Mt. Olympus. Martyr Constantine, grand prince of Kartli, Georgia (852). Commemoration of the torture of Great-martyr George in 303. St. Nonnus, bishop of Heliopolis (471). Translation of the relics of St. Gregory, presbyter, in Assos of Lesbos. St. Eucharius, first bishop of Trier (3rd c.).

### ‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡

**Monday** - Colossians 2:13-20; Luke 12:13-15, 22-31

**Tuesday** - Colossians 2:20-3:3; Luke 12:42-48

**Wednesday** - Colossians 3:17-4:1; Luke 12:48-59; Colossians 4:2-9; Luke 13:1-9

**Thursday** - Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (Matins Gospel); Hebrews 2:2-10 (Epistle, Angels); Luke 10:16-21 (Gospel, Angel)

**Friday** - Colossians 4:10-18; Luke 13:31-35

**Saturday** - 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Luke 9:37-43

### REFLECTION

If God can bring forth water from a rock as a comfort to men, He is also able to send down fire from the heavens as a punishment. The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah is a classic example of God's punishment upon incorrigible sinners. That God can repeat this punishment was demonstrated over Constantinople in the year 472, during the time of Emperor Leo the Great and Patriarch Gennadius. At noon on November 6 of that year, the sky became overcast with thick, dark clouds, causing darkness on the land. These clouds turned red as fire, then became dark, and alternated their appearance continuously. This phenomenon over Constantinople lasted for a full forty days. The frightened people turned to repentance and prayer. With the emperor and patriarch, they walked in procession through the streets from church to church and prayed to God with tears and lamentation. On the final day hot black ash fell like rain from evening until midnight, then stopped. The following day dawned clear and bright, but the sooty ash lay on the ground to a depth of nine inches. With great effort, the people cleaned their houses and streets of this sooty ash, but the crops in the field were utterly destroyed. All who had understanding, understood that this was God's punishment, and that it was God's gentle punishment because the people hastened to repent before Him. Had it not been for this profound repentance for their great and accumulated sins, who knows what would have happened to Constantinople in those days? But the timely repentance of sinners, and the prayers of the Most-holy Theotokos, as well as the prayers of the countless saints and martyrs of Constantinople, greatly lessened the punishment.