

25th Sunday After Pentecost
Apodosis (Leavetaking) of the Entry &
Hieromartyr Clement of Rome
25 November / 8 December



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.

Troparion of the Feast: Today is the prelude of God's goodwill/ and the prophecy of the salvation of men./ The Virgin appears openly in the temple of God and foretells Christ to all./ So let us cry to her with loud voices:/ Rejoice, thou who art the fulfilment of the Creator's providence.

Troparion of the Hieromartyrs Tone 3: You were shown forth as trumpeters of divine knowledge/ and revealers of the ordinances of the Faith,/ Clement thou fruitful vine of life/ and Peter firm rock of the faithful./ Since you are seers of ineffable mysteries deliver us from every harm.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 8: By rising from the tomb Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam/ Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, / and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O Greatly Merciful One.

Kontakion of the Feast: The most pure Temple of the Saviour,/ the most precious bridal chamber and Virgin,/ the sacred treasury of the glory of God,/ today enters into the house of the Lord,/ bringing with her the grace that is the Divine Spirit./ And the angels of God sing of her:/ This is the heavenly tabernacle.

Kontakion of the Hieromartyrs tone 4: Unshakable divine towers of the Church,/ God-inspired and mighty pillars of piety:/ we praise you, Clement and Peter, guard us all by your intercessions.

Matins Gospel III

EPISTLE: Ephesians 4: 1-6

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

I BESEECH YOU TO HAVE A WALK WORTHY OF THE CALLING WITH WHICH YOU WERE CALLED

Great has the power of Paul's chain been shown to be, and more glorious than miracles. It is not in vain then, as it would seem, nor without an object, that he here holds it forward ...It is not merely being a prisoner that is honourable, but being so for Christ's sake ...Nothing is equal to this ...But what is this calling? You were called as His body, it is said...You have Christ as your head; and though you were 'enemies,' and had committed misdeed out of number, yet 'He has raised you up with Him and made you sit with Him' (Eph. 2:6) ...But how is it possible to 'walk worthily' of it? 'With all lowliness.' Such a one walks worthily. This is the basis of all virtue. If you are lowly, and realise what you are, and how you were saved, and will take this recollection as a motive to all virtue ...The lowly-minded man is able to be at once generous and a grateful servant. 'For what do you have,' he says, 'that you did not receive?' (I Cor.4:7) ...Even in your good deeds be lowly; for hear what Christ says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit' (Matt.5:3), and He places this in first order ...How is it possible to forbear, if a man is passionate or censorious? ...If you, he would say, are not forbearing to your neighbour, how shall God be forbearing to you? ...Wherever there is love all things are to be borne ...

THERE IS ONE BODY AND ONE SPIRIT

The love which Paul requires of us is no common love, but that which cements us together, and makes us cleave inseparably to one another, and effects as great and as perfect a union as though it were between limb and limb. For this is that love which produces great and glorious fruits. Hence he says, there is 'one body;' one, both by sympathy, and by not opposing the good of others, and by sharing their joy, having expressed all at once by this figure. He then beautifully adds, 'and one Spirit,' showing that from the one body there will be one Spirit ...God has called you all on the same terms. He has bestowed nothing upon one more than upon another. To all He has freely given immortality, to all eternal life, to all immortal glory, to all brotherhood, to all inheritance. He is the common Head of all; 'He has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Jesus Christ' (Eph. 2:6). You then, who in the spiritual world have such great equality of privileges, how is it that you are high-minded?

St. John Chrysostom. Homilies IX, X, XI on Ephesians IV. B#57, pp. 94, 96, 97, 99, 102.

GOSPEL: ST. LUKE 13: 10-17

Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

OUGHT NOT THIS WOMAN ...WHOM SATAN HAS BOUND ...

FOR EIGHTEEN YEARS, BE LOOSED FROM THIS BOND ON THE SABBATH?

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: In today's Gospel lesson we heard the beautiful story of a woman who had been bent over with an infirmity for eighteen years and could not fully straighten herself. Now it happened to be the Sabbath Day and as Jesus was teaching in the synagogue. He saw her, and having compassion on her, *He called her to Him and said to her, 'Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.' And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God (Luke 13:12-13).*

This unfortunate woman of today's Gospel is so much like most of us in this life. Many people in the world are broken, bent over, so to speak, by the weight of this life—its cares, its sorrows, pressures, temptations, infirmities and so on. All of us, at some time, have felt the crushing weight bending us down. And even if we seem overwhelmed by our own cares, consider the many unfortunates who are even worse off than us—hungry, naked, homeless, many roaming the streets looking for shelter, youngsters running away, because the pressures are so great, finding themselves at the mercy of the elements, fathers and mothers unemployed and worried sick over how to pay the bills, how to feed their children, and so on. Or we can look at so many of our elderly forgotten by their families, for whom they gave their very being, struggling to stretch a totally inadequate social-security check, many living in apartments or rooms not fit for animals, picking through supermarket dumpsters looking for food. We can set our sights further-through the whole world where countless thousands are starving to death in various parts of Africa, or driven out of their homes by war—indeed, human suffering and misery is everywhere and throughout this earth so many are, in a sense, bent over with a *spirit of infirmity*.

Unfortunately, just as now, so too, in the time of our Lord's earthly life, there were those who were more concerned with other things and could not see the reality right there in front of them, for, as Scripture tell us, *the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath*, and rebuked Him. The Law was the Law and it was not lawful to perform any work on the Sabbath! (Luke 13:14). The ruler couldn't see the whole picture, just like so many of us who are comfortable in our lives, and was only concerned with the rules, the *now*, so to speak, only that which was close around him.

But the Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" (Luke 13:15-16). An act of charity—an act of love can be done at any time. This expression of love and charity, as shown by the Lord Himself, far transcends any law, any rule, any bond. Just as the ox or the ass could be loosed from their bonds, even on the Sabbath, to be given the necessities of life, in this case water, so too, the bent woman could be released from her bonds and led to a better existence, even on the Sabbath.

Our Lord, Who is compassionate, merciful and full of love, in a far greater measure than any of us could hope to attain to, showed His charity to others all of His earthly life, and continues to do so, even when the act of doing so required great effort and great daring, such as *breaking* the Sabbath restrictions. So too, we are called upon to be daring, to exert great effort, to break away from our daily comforts and concerns, to reach out to others less fortunate, or, as a popular expression goes, "to give until it hurts!" Our Lord showed charity and likewise, the Church, Christ's very Body, asks us to extend charity to others. And really, if we call ourselves Christians, bearers of our Lord's Name, and are called upon to follow His example, how can we do any less?

For those among us who feel crushed and bent over by the cares of this life, remember that it is to Him that we must always turn, for only He can straighten our backs, so to speak, and relieve the weighty pressure of the crosses we are called to bear. May our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ fill all of us with His compassion and love and a spirit of humility, and especially a spirit of charity for those less fortunate than ourselves. Amen.

M.A.

Saints of the week

25 November / 8 December — Apodosis of the Entry into the Temple — Nativity Fast – The Hieromartyr Clement Bishop of Rome - Born in Rome and of royal blood, he was a contemporary of the apostles. His mother and two brothers were caught by a storm on a voyage and driven to different places. His father then went off to find his wife and sons, and himself disappeared. Clement, being then twenty-four years old, set off eastwards to look for his parents and brothers. In Alexandria, he made the acquaintance of the Apostle Barnabas, and afterwards became a friend of the Apostle Peter, who was already being followed by his two brothers, Faustinus and Faustian. By God's providence, the Apostle Peter found Clement's aged mother, who was living as a beggar-woman, and then his father also. Thus the whole family was reunited, and they all returned to Rome as Christians. Clement remained linked with the great apostles, who made him bishop before their death. After Peter's death by martyrdom, Linus was bishop in Rome, then Cletus—both of them only for a short time—and then Clement. He governed the Church of God with burning zeal and, from day to day, brought large numbers of unbelievers to the Faith. He set seven scribes to record the lives of the Christian martyrs who were at that time suffering for their Lord. The Emperor Trajan drove him out to Cherson, where Clement found about two thousand exiled Christians, who were all put to the hard toil of cutting stone in an arid region. The Christians welcomed Clement with great joy, and he was to them a living source of comfort. By his prayers, he brought water from the dry ground and converted so many of the pagan inhabitants to Christianity that there were seventy-five churches built in that place in one year. To prevent the further spreading of the Christian faith, Clement was condemned to death, and drowned in the sea with a stone round his neck in the year 101. His wonderworking relics were taken out of the sea only in the time of Ss Cyril and Methodius; The Hieromartyr Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria; Our Holy Father Paphnutius.

26 November / 9 December — Nativity Fast— St Innocent of Irkutsk - Saint Innocent was born John Veniaminov in 1797 in the village of Anginskoye in Irkutsk province. The son of a church server, he entered the Irkutsk theological seminary at the age of 20. He married, was ordained a deacon of the Church of the Annunciation in Irkutsk, and became a teacher before being ordained at the age of 24. At 26 he volunteered to travel to the distant island of Unalaska in the Aleutians as a mission priest, accompanied by his aging mother, his wife, his son, and his brother. It took them more than a year to travel from Irkutsk to the island of Unalaska. He built churches, learned the local languages, translated the gospels and hymns, and expanded his mission to the surrounding islands. In Unalaska he wrote his famous "Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven." We went on to Sitka Island, to minister to the Tlingits (or Kolushchans), who had not heard the Gospel and served there for fifteen years before returning to St. Petersburg to report on the mission. In St. Petersburg he received news of the death of his wife, and he was tonsured a monk and given the rank of archimandrite, then bishop and then archbishop of Irkutsk. In 1865, the Holy Synod issued a decree appointing Archbishop Innocent a member of the Holy Governing Synod. In 1867, after the repose of Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow, he was appointed Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna and Archimandrite of the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra. Both in Moscow and in the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Innocent achieved, under the guidance of Divine Providence, a great deal for the missionary cause. His administration of his diocese brought fruitful results: many members of the Moscow and village clergy were provided with houses by their communities, and their standard of living improved, thanks to funds raised by Metropolitan Innocent; a home for retired clergymen was opened in 1871; a diocesan school of icon painting and other arts was opened for poor children and orphans of the clergy who were not able to attend ordinary schools (1873); a school for daughters of the clergy; and a church dedicated to the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God was built for the Moscow Theological Academy. He reposed in 1879. One of his contemporaries wrote of St. Innocent, "His Eminence, Innocent stands out magnificently among all our Orthodox hierarchs, ancient and new, for his remarkable and unique qualities. Having grown up and worked up to the age of seventy in the midst of nature, surrounded by simple children of nature, he was himself approachable, kind and welcoming, straightforward and free of partiality, caring not for show or finery, nor prone to flaunt either his knowledge or his accomplishments, and his behavior at all times was simple and humble. His great natural intelligence was enriched with a wealth of knowledge that few possess. His heart had no place for envy and cunning, ambition and vanity, desire for riches or for earthly comforts. Since early childhood he had to wage a constant struggle with severe natural conditions and people, resisting need and privation, and he taught himself patience and industry, courage and perseverance, self-control and resourcefulness, restraint and the ability to be content with little, and implicit submission to the holy will of God in all circumstances." Preaching the Gospel was St. Innocent's main task in life, accomplished at great personal sacrifice and hardship, but with great joy. He wrote to his bishop in Irkutsk about his missionary expedition to the island of Unga in 1828: "Words cannot describe the zeal with which the Aleuts received my teaching, the gratitude with which they honored me for having instructed them, or the spiritual pleasure which teaching them brought me. Thanks be to God the Word, for granting me His Word, and for enlightening and comforting them with the Word."

Our Holy Father Alypius the Stylite - Born in Hadrianopolis, a city in Paphlagonia, he was from his youth dedicated to the service of God. As a deacon, he served in the church in that city with Bishop Theodore. But, desiring a solitary life of prayer and meditation, Alypius withdrew to a Greek cemetery outside the city, from which people fled as from a place of terror, as demonic visions had been seen there. Here he erected a Cross, and built a church in honour of St Euphemia, who had appeared to him in a dream. Near the church, he built a high pillar, climbed up onto it and spent fifty-three years there in fasting and prayer. Neither the mockery of men nor the evil demons could drive him away or shake his purpose. This saint endured endless assaults from the demons. They not only tried to terrify him with demonic apparitions, but also stoned him and gave him no peace day nor night for a long time. But Alypius courageously defended himself against this diabolical power with the sign of the Cross and the name of Jesus. Finally, the vanquished demons left him and fled, and men began to revere him and to come to him for his prayers, comfort, teaching and healing. Two monasteries were built beside his pillar, on one side for men and on the other for women. His mother and sisters lived in the women's monastery. St Alypius guided the monks and nuns

from his pillar by word and example, and shone like the sun in the sky for them all, showing them the way of salvation. This man of God had such grace that he was often bathed in heavenly light, and a pillar of this light stretched above him to heaven. Alypius was a great and mighty wonderworker, both in his lifetime and after his death. Living for a hundred years, he entered into rest in the year 640, in the time of Emperor Heraclius. Of his holy relics, the head is preserved in the monastery of Koutloumousiou on the Holy Mountain. Our Holy Father James the Solitary; Our Holy Father Stylianus; Our Holy Father Nikon the Preacher of Repentance; St Innocent of Irkutsk.



27 November / 10 December — Nativity Fast –Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God, Protectress of the Russian Diaspora. On 8 September, 1295, on the day of the Nativity of the Most-Holy Mother of God, a small force of hunters from Rylsk came to hunt at the Tuskora river, 27 versts from Kursk. One of the hunters, an honorable and pious man, seeking prey in the woods, found a small icon lying face down on the root of a tree. He had barely lifted it to inspect it when the spot upon which the icon lay burst out with a strong spring of pure water. The icon turned out to be of the type referred to as the "Sign" of the Mother of God. The hunter who found the icon knew that this was no ordinary occurrence. He called his companions and together they built a small wooden chapel, into which they placed this icon. The residents of Rylsk, hearing of the newly-appeared icon of the Mother of God, began to visit it for veneration, and many miracles began to appear from it.

In 1385 the Kursk region was again swept by the Tatars. They tried to burn down the chapel and its Icon, but the wooden structure would not burn. The priest who lived by the chapel, Fr. Bogolep, explained to them that the reason for this miracle was the Icon itself. The incensed Tatars hacked the Icon in half and tossed the pieces in different directions, then burned the chapel.

They took the priest prisoner and was forced to tend to Tatar flocks. Some time later he was ransomed by emissaries of the Muscovite Grand Duke who were on their way to the Golden Horde, and he returned to the place where the chapel had stood. After a long search, while praying and fasting, he found both halves of the holy Icon, placed them side by side, and they grew together seamlessly, exhibiting only something "like dew".

In 1676 the holy Icon traveled to the Don River for blessing the Don Cossack troops. In 1684 Tsars Ivan and Petr Alekseevich sent a copy of this Icon with the order that it accompany Orthodox troops into battle. In 1687 the holy Icon was sent to the "Great Army." In 1689 copies of the holy Icon were given to the armies in the Crimean campaign. In 1812 a copy of the holy Icon was sent to Prince Kutuzov and the battling troops. Before his icon St. Seraphim of Sarov prayed and was healed.

On the night of 7-8 March, 1898, conspirator revolutionaries-atheists tried to blow up the Miracle-working Icon with a hellish bomb, but the Lord Jesus Christ glorified His Most-Pure Mother yet more, for despite the terrifying destruction in the cathedral surrounding the Icon, it remained untouched.

On 12 April 1918, the holy Icon was stolen from the cathedral of the Monastery of the Sign of the Mother of God and stripped of its ornamentation, but on 2 May it was found and returned to its place.

Finally, in 1919, while accompanying Bishop Feofan of Kursk and Oboyan' and some monks of the Monastery of the Sign, the holy Icon crossed the border to the neighborly Serbia. In 1920 it again, at the behest of General Wrangel, visited Russia at the Crimea and remained there until the final evacuation of the Russian Army in the first days of November, 1920. The holy Icon returned to Serbia, where it remained until 1944, when, together with the Synod of Bishops, it went abroad, to Munich (Bavaria) with Metropolitan Anastassy. In 1951 Metropolitan Anastassy moved from Munich to America. Since 1957 the Icon had resided in the main cathedral dedicated to it in the Synod of Bishops in New York. The holy Icon regularly travels to all the dioceses of the Russian diaspora

The Holy Martyr James the Persian - Born in the Persian town of Elapa, or Vilat, of Christian parents, he was brought up in the Christian faith and married a Christian wife. The Persian king, Yezdegeherd, loved James for his gifts and for his skill, and made him a noble at his court. Flattered by the king, James was deluded and offered sacrifice to idols, which the king also worshipped. His mother and wife, hearing of this, wrote him a reproachful letter in which they grieved over him as an apostate and one spiritually dead, begging him at the end of the letter to repent and return to Christ. Moved by this letter, James repented bitterly, and courageously confessed his faith in Christ the Lord before the king. The furious king condemned him to death, and added that his body was to be cut to pieces, little by little, until he breathed his last. The executioners fulfilled this command of the accursed king to the letter, and first cut off James's fingers, then his toes, his legs and arms, his shoulders and finally his head. During the entire process, the repentant martyr gave thanks to God. A fragrance came from his wounds as of cypress. Thus this wonderful man repented of his sin, and his soul went to Christ his God in the heavenly Kingdom. He suffered in about 400. His head is to be found in Rome, and a part of his relics in Portugal, where he is commemorated on May 22nd. St. Congar, bishop of Somerset; St. Fergus, bishop of Glamis; The Seventeen Holy Fathers Martyred in India; Our Holy Father Romanus the Wonderworker; Our Holy Father Pinuphrius; Our Holy Father Nathanael.

28 November / 11 December — Nativity Fast — Our Holy Father, the Martyr Stephen the New - As aforesaid Hannah the mother of Samuel, so Anna the mother of Stephen prayed God to give her a son. Praying thus at one time in the Blachernae church in front of the icon of the most holy Mother of God, a light sleep fell on her, in which she saw the holy Virgin, radiant like the sun, and heard her voice: 'Woman, go in peace; in fulfilment of your prayer, you have a son in your womb.' Anna indeed conceived and bore a son, this holy Stephen. He received the monastic habit at the age of sixteen on Mount St Auxentius near Constantinople, at the hands of the elder John, from whom he learned divine wisdom and asceticism. When

John entered into rest in the Lord, Stephen remained on that mountain in strict asceticism, taking on himself labour upon labour. His holiness drew many disciples to him. When the Emperor Constantine Copronymos began to persecute the icons even more ferociously than his father, Leo the Isaurian, Stephen showed himself to be a zealous defender of the veneration of the holy icons. The demented Emperor listened to various slanders against Stephen, and himself devised a number of intrigues, solely to break Stephen and get him out of the way. Stephen was exiled to the island of Proconnesus, and then taken to Constantinople, put in chains and cast into prison. There he met three hundred and forty-two captive monks, brought from all sides and thrown into prison for their veneration of icons. In the prison, they followed the whole order of church services as in a monastery. The wicked Emperor condemned Stephen to death. The saint foresaw his death forty days before, and took his leave of the brethren. The Emperor's servants took him from the prison and, beating and buffeting him, dragged him through the streets of Constantinople, calling on all who were on the Emperor's side to stone this 'enemy of the Emperor'. One of the heretics aimed a blow at the saint's head with a piece of wood, and the saint breathed his last. As Stephen the Protomartyr suffered at the hands of the Jews, so this Stephen suffered at the hands of the iconoclast heretics. This glorious soldier of Christ suffered in the year 767, at the age of fifty-three, and was crowned with unfading glory. The Holy New Martyr Christos; Our Holy Mother Anna; The Holy and Devout Emperor Maurice.

29 November / 12 December — Nativity Fast — The Holy Martyr Paramon, and 370 others - In Asian Bithynia, the governor, Aquilinus, was ferociously persecuting Christians. He once seized three hundred and seventy Christians and took them with him in bonds to some place where there was a temple to the god Poseidon. Here, the wicked governor tried to force them to offer sacrifice to idols. Although he threatened with death any who refused to obey his command, not a single one of the Christians submitted to it. At that time, there passed along the road running beside the temple a respected man called Paramon. He stopped beside the group of bound men and learned what was happening, then cried out: 'Oh how many innocent and righteous men does this foul governor desire to slaughter because they will not bow down to his dumb and dead idols? Paramon then continued on his way, and the furious governor sent servants to kill him. They caught up with him and seized him, first piercing his tongue with a thorn and then stripping him and stabbing him all over. Holy Paramon, with prayer in his heart, gave his soul into God's hands. After that, these three hundred and seventy martyrs, great sons of God and innocent lambs, were beheaded with the sword and thus entered into the immortal Kingdom of Christ the Lord. They suffered in the year 250. Our Holy Father Acacius of Sinai; The Holy Martyr Dionysius Bishop of Corinth; St Tiridates King of Armenia; The Holy Martyr Apollonius.

St. Brendan of Birr - Friend and brother monk with Saint Brendan the Navigator at Clonard abbey. Spiritual student of Saint Finian. Founded the monastery at Birr in central Ireland c.540, and served as its abbot. Friend and advisor of Saint Columba. At Brendan's death, Columba had a vision of the abbot's soul being carried away by angels.

Tropar of Saint Brendan of Birr, Tone 8: Most glorious ascetic and chief of Ireland's Prophets, O Father Brendan, thou wast a bright beacon in the western isle guiding many to salvation. At thy heavenly birthday the Angels rejoiced and miraculously announced their joy to our Father Columba. The prayers of the righteous avail much for us sinners. Wherefore O Saint, pray to God for us that He will find us a place in the Mansions of the Blest.

Saint Sadwen of Wales - Brother of Saint Illtyd. Disciple of Saint Cadfan. Sixth century hermit. Several Welsh churches are dedicated to him.

Tropar of St Sadwen, tone 8: The remoteness of the Welsh mountains was thy desert, O Father Sadwen, where thou didst serve God in fasting and humility. May thy continual intercession avail for us sinners that our souls may be saved.

30 November / 13 December — Nativity Fast — The Holy Apostle Andrew, the First-Called - He was the son of Jonah and brother of Peter, born in Bethsaida and a fisherman by profession. He was first a disciple of St John the Baptist, but, when John pointed to the Lord Jesus and said: 'Behold the Lamb of God' (Jn. 1:36), St Andrew left his first teacher and followed Christ. After that, Andrew brought his brother Peter to the Lord. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, it fell to the lot of the first of Christ's apostles, St Andrew, to preach the Gospel in Byzantium and Thrace, then in the lands along the Danube, in Russia and around the Black Sea, and finally in Epirus, Greece and the Peloponnese, where he suffered. In Byzantium, he installed St Stachys as its first bishop; in Kiev he raised the Cross on high and prophesied a Christian future for the Russian people; in Thrace, Epirus, Greece and the Peloponnese, he brought many people to the Faith and gave them bishops and priests. In the city of Patras he performed many wonders in the name of Christ and brought many to the Lord, among whom were the brother and wife of the imperial governor, Aegeatus. Aegeatus, infuriated by this, put Andrew to torture and then crucified him. While he was still alive on the cross, the Apostle of Christ taught the Christians who were gathered round him. The people wanted to take him down from the cross, but he would not let them. Finally, the Apostle prayed to God and a strange radiance surrounded him. This light lasted for half an hour and, when it disappeared, the Apostle gave his holy soul into God's hands. Thus the first-called Apostle, who first of the twelve Great Apostles came to know the Lord and followed Him, finished his earthly course. St Andrew suffered for his Lord in the year 62. His relics were translated to Constantinople, but his head was later taken to Rome and one hand to Moscow. In the 3rd century some of his relics were taken by a monk, Regulus, to Scotland and given to Oengus, King of the Picts on the eve of a mighty battle in 747 and that night the king and his army saw a huge St. Andrew's Cross blazed in fire across the face of the heavens; so they went forth to battle and triumphed. After this St. Andrew became the Patron Saint of Scotland. His remains were taken to the ancient Pictish city of Muckcross and deposited there. That city is the modern St. Andrews. St. Frumentius, Enlightener of Abyssinia;

St Tudwal, bishop in Wales & Brittany - A Welsh monk Saint Tudwal (died c. 564) was one of the seven founder Saints of Brittany. He travelled to Ireland to learn the scriptures, then became a hermit on what is now called Saint Tudwal's Island East. St Tudwal later emigrated to Brittany, settling in Lan Pabu with 72 followers, where he established a large monastery.

Tudwal was made Bishop of Tréguier on the insistence of Childebert I, king of the Franks. Tudwal is shown in iconography as a bishop holding a dragon.

Tropar of St Tudwal, tone 1: Having left thy native Wales/ thou didst serve God in Brittany, O Father Tudwal,/ and both by thy zealous preaching and thy piety thou didst win souls for Christ./ Wherefore we hasten to thee, O radiant Hierarch,/ that thou wouldst intercede for us that our souls may be saved.

1 / 14 December — Nativity Fast — The Holy Prophet Nahum - Born of the tribe of Simeon in a place called Elkosh, on the further side of the Jordan, he lived seven hundred years before Christ and foretold the fall of Nineveh two hundred years after the Prophet Jonah. The people of Nineveh had repented after hearing Jonah's preaching, and God had protected them and not destroyed them. But, with the passage of time, they came to forget God's mercy and turned again to evil. Nahum foretold their doom, warning them that, if they showed no repentance, they would receive no protection. The entire city was so utterly destroyed by earthquake, flood and fire that its location is no longer known. Holy Nahum lived for forty-five years before going to his rest in the Lord, leaving us a small book of his true and genuine prophecies. St. Philaret the Merciful.

REFLECTION

It is said of St. Peter of Alexandria that he never climbed the steps and sat on the patriarchal throne in church, but rather stood or sat before the steps of the throne. When the faithful complained that their hierarch did not sit in his place, he replied: "Whenever I approach the throne, I see a heavenly light and power upon it, and that is why I do not dare climb and sit on it." Beside this vision, St. Peter had another, yet more wondrous vision. While he was in prison, the impious heretic Arius hypocritically pretended that he had repented of his heresy, and sent word to the captive Peter that he had renounced his heresy, with an appeal to Peter to receive him into the Church again. Arius did this only because he thought that Peter would be martyred, and he could then acquire the patriarchal throne and disseminate and strengthen his heresy. Before he gave any reply, Peter prayed to God in the prison. During prayer, a mystical light illumined the prison, and the Lord Jesus appeared to him as a twelve-year-old boy, shining brighter than the sun, so that it was not possible to look at Him directly. The Lord was clothed in a white tunic, rent down the front from top to bottom. He clutched the garment around Himself with His hands, as though to hide His nakedness. At this, St. Peter was in great fear and horror. He cried out: "Who, O Savior, has torn Thy garment?" The Lord replied: "The madman Arius. He tore it, for he alienated My people from Me, whom I acquired by My Blood. Be careful not to receive him in communion with the Church, for he has cunning and diabolical thoughts against Me and My people." At this, St. Peter sent word to his priests, Achilles and Alexander, that he could not receive Arius's petition, for it was false and cunning; and the saint pronounced a curse on Arius in both worlds. He also prophesied that Achilles, and then Alexander, would succeed him as patriarch, and so it was.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the wondrous creation of the world (Genesis 2): 1. How God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam and took one of his ribs; 2. How the Lord God made the woman Eve from Adam's rib and brought her to Adam; 3. How this is the foundation and reason for the mysterious attraction and unity of husband and wife.

HOMILY - on the apportionment of functions and callings

And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

As the various organs in a man's body have different functions but all work in harmony for the good of the entire body, so the Lord instituted various organs with different functions in the Church, which is His Body. In the first place came the apostles, to whom was given not just one honor, but rather all honor; not one function, but rather all functions; not just one gift, but rather all the gifts of grace. The apostles were simultaneously apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The apostolic calling is not given anymore. Of the Great Apostles, there were twelve, the thirteenth being the Apostle Paul; and of the Lesser Apostles, there were seventy. The prophets are those who received the gift of prophecy from the Holy Spirit. Here, it is not the Old Testament prophets that are being discussed, but rather the New Testament prophets (Acts 11:27, 21:10, 13:1). The prophets were, and still are, prophets regardless of their class and position. The evangelists were firstly those who wrote the Gospels, and then missionaries who spread Christ's teaching among the unbelievers and, finally, the interpreters of Holy Scripture who in their writings presented the Christian truth for each and all. Pastors and teachers-these are actually one and the same calling, for it is difficult to imagine a pastor who is not a teacher at the same time. The pastors are limited to a certain place and a certain number of faithful whom they lead to salvation, and they govern the Church of God. So, the Lord ordained all of this through His holy apostles. Blessed is he who knows his function and gift received from the Spirit, and who serves according to his designation to the end. Just as the Holy Spirit now apportions His gifts, so the Lord, in His time, will apportion rewards.

O Lord, Holy Spirit, true God, help us to use Thy gifts to the end of our lives in humility, for the well-being of Christ's Church and for our eternal salvation.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.