

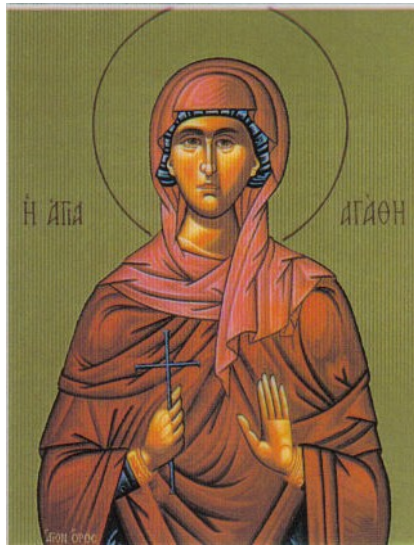
## 37<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost Zaccheus Sunday &

### Martyr Agatha / St. Theodosius 5 / 18 February

**Troparion of the Sunday, Tone IV** — 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 overthrown! / Christ God is risen, / granting the world great

mercy!

**Hymn to the Theotokos, Tone IV** — The mystery of all eternity, / unknown even by angels, / through you, O Theotokos, is revealed to those on earth: / God incarnate, by union without confusion. / He voluntarily accepted the cross for us, / by which He resurrected the first-created man, / saving our souls from death.



**Kontakion of the Sunday, Tone IV** — My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earthborn from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master, He has risen on the third day!

**Holy Martyr Agatha of Palermo in Sicily, Troparion, Tone IV** — Thy ewe-lamb Agatha crieth out to Thee with a loud voice, O Jesus:/ "I love Thee, O my Bridegroom,/ and, seeking Thee, I pass through many struggles:/ I am crucified and buried with Thee in Thy baptism,/ and suffer for Thy sake, that I may reign with Thee;/ I die for Thee that I might live with Thee./ As an unblemished sacrifice accept me,/ who sacrifice myself with love for Thee// By her supplications save Thou our souls, in that Thou art merciful.

**Troparion of the Feast, Tone I** — Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos full of grace,/ for from thee hath shone forth the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God,/ enlightening them that are in darkness./ Be glad thou also, O righteous elder,/ who receivest in thine arms the Deliverer of our souls,// Who granteth us Resurrection.

**Kontakion of the Martyr, Tone IV "Thou hast appeared today"** — Let the Church be adorned today with a glorious robe of purple/ dyed in the pure blood of the martyr Agatha,// crying out: Rejoice, O boast of Catania!

**Kontakion of the feast, Tone I** — O Thou Who didst hallow the Virgin's womb by Thy birth/ and didst bless the hands of Symeon as was meet,/ now Thou hast come and saved us O Christ God./ In the midst of battle grant peace to Thy community,/ and strengthen kings whom Thou hast loved,// O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

**St. Theodosius, archbishop of Chernigov, Troparion, Tone IV** —

O holy hierarch Theodosius, most honored among hierarchs, thou wast a beacon to thy flock; then thou didst pass on to the mansions of heaven. Pray thou at the throne of the King of glory, that He deliver us from the evils which assail us and save our souls, O holy one, by thine intercessions.

**Kontakion of St. Theodosius, in Tone IV** —

O holy hierarch Theodosius, for Christ the Chief Shepherd didst thou labor, nurturing thy rational sheep in the spiritual pasture; and from Christ God didst thou receive the gift of healing to cure the spiritual and bodily infirmities of all that with faith have recourse to thy healing relics. Wherefore, pray thou now, O holy one, that all that call upon thy name be saved from the assaults of the enemy, and that our souls find mercy.

## Matins Gospel IV

### **Epistle for Sunday: I Timothy 4: 9-15**

9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10 For to this end we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. 11 These things command and teach. 12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. 15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

### **GIVE YOURSELF ENTIRELY TO THEM, THAT YOUR PROGRESS MAY BE EVIDENT TO ALL**

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, Who ...made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ...He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death (Phil 2:5-8). For I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake ...We both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place ...being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it (I Cor. 4:9-12). But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the Gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ (Phil 1:12-13). For in truth He was in servitude to flesh and to birth and to the conditions of our life with a view to our liberation, and to that of all those whom He has saved, who were in bondage under sin. What greater destiny can befall man's humility than that he should be intermingled with God, and by this intermingling should be deified.

*St. Gregory of Nazianzus. The Fourth Theological Oration: On the Son, 3. B#7, p. 178.*

### **Gospel for Sunday: St Luke 19: 1 - 10**

1 Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house. 6 So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. 7 But when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner. 8 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold. 9 And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; 10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

### **ON THE GOOD FORTUNE OF ZACCHAEUS**

Thus spoke He whose words are life and joy, and the renewal of the righteous. As the mountains are ever more verdant with the breath of spring, so each man, however withered and darkened with sin, becomes refreshed and rejuvenated by the nearness of Christ. For Christ's presence is like that of some life-giving, scented balsam which restores health, enriches life and gives savour to the soul, the thoughts, the words of a man. In brief, distance from Christ means corruption and death, and closeness to Him means salvation and life.

'Today salvation has come to this house', says the Lord as He enters the home of Zacchaeus the sinner. Christ is the salvation that comes, and Zacchaeus is the house to which He comes. Each of us, my brethren, is a house in which sin dwells while Christ is afar off, and to which salvation comes as Christ draws near. Whether Christ is able or not to draw near to my house and yours depends on us. You see that He did not force an entry into Zacchaeus's house, but came as a warmly-invited guest. Little Zacchaeus had climbed up into a tree, to see the Lord Jesus with his own eyes. He had sought Him, desired Him. And we must seek Him in order to find Him, and desire that He draw near to us, and climb

up high in spirit to meet His glance. Then He will visit our house as he visited the house of Zacchaeus, and bring salvation with Him.

Draw near to us, O Lord, draw near, and bring us Your eternal salvation.

*Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic, the Prologue, 4 February. B#80, pp.90-1*

In today's Gospel lesson we heard about how our Lord Jesus Christ once visited Zacchaeus, the chief of the publicans, in the city of Jericho. Zacchaeus was a rich man, yet his soul was uneasy: his conscience reproached him for his unjustly gained wealth.

Upon hearing one day that the Lord Jesus Christ—the Miracle worker and Teacher of man's renewal and regeneration—was coming to Jericho, Zacchaeus' heart was fired with the desire to see Him. He hoped that Christ would be able to help set him also on the path of righteousness. But, being small of stature, Zacchaeus was unable to see Christ because of the crowd surrounding Him, and, therefore, he ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see the Savior better.

When the crowd came to the sycamore tree, Christ saw Zacchaeus' hopeful gaze fixed on Him and said: *Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house* (Luke 19:5). These words amazed Zacchaeus. The Teacher of Truth, Mercy and Love Himself wanted to visit him, a man despised by all and a great sinner! Zacchaeus quickly climbed down from the sycamore and received the Lord into his home with great joy. He stood and said: *Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold* (Luke 19:8). The miracle of Zacchaeus' regeneration under the influence of the Lord's love had taken place! It affected not only Zacchaeus, but his entire household, and Christ said: *Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham* (Luke 19:9), that is, Zacchaeus was also worthy of salvation.

This was the consequence, beloved brothers and sisters, of Zacchaeus' meeting with Christ, Who appeared in the world *to seek and to save that which was lost* (Luke 19:10). This meeting produced a total transformation in Zacchaeus. The light of Christ's truth, which illuminated Zacchaeus' soul, changed his entire inner being. From a greedy, cruel publican, the Lord in His mercy made him a kind, generous, loving man filled with the Christian spirit. This is the meaning of today's Gospel lesson.

According to St. Luke, Zacchaeus was a rich man, and therefore could have enjoyed all earthly blessings. However, wealth was of no comfort to him. Something troubled, tormented, and disturbed his soul, and he strove to escape from this despondent spiritual state, but the way out lay only in the rebirth of his inner being, which could only be accomplished by the Lord God Himself.

Dear brothers and sisters, are there none among us who are like Zacchaeus before his regeneration? Of course there are! The story about Zacchaeus tells us that the path to regeneration is never closed to a penitent. No matter how deeply a man has sunk into the mire of sin and vice, no matter how far he may have departed from people and the Lord, he will always find divine mercy and help for spiritual renewal. We can always step onto the path of Christian truth, if only we desire it, if only we go out to meet Christ and open the doors of our souls to Him. And the Lord will say to us, as He did to Zacchaeus: *Today salvation has come to this house*. May the story of Zacchaeus' regeneration strengthen our faith in divine mercy and awaken in us a desire to seek a meeting with Christ in our hearts, Who will not delay in coming to give solace to our souls. Amen.

*The Living Word*

### **Saints of the week**

**5 / 18 February — Holy Martyr Agatha** - Agatha, this glorious virgin and martyr for Christ, was born in the Sicilian town of Palermo of noble and wealthy parents. When Emperor Decius began a persecution against Christians, St. Agatha was arrested and brought to trial before Judge Quintian. The judge, seeing Agatha beautiful in countenance, desired to have her for his wife. When he suggested this, Agatha answered that she is the bride of Christ and cannot be unfaithful to her Betrothed. Quintian subjected her to cruel tortures. Agatha was ridiculed, whipped, bound to a tree and flogged until blood flowed. After that, the judge again tried to persuade her to deny Christ and to avoid any further torture and suffering. To that the bride of Christ replied: "These tortures are very beneficial for me; just as wheat cannot arrive at the granary before it is cleansed from the chaff, so my soul cannot enter into Paradise if my body, beforehand, is not humbled by tortures." Then, the torturer ordered that her breasts be cut off and that she be cast into prison. St. Peter appeared to Agatha in prison and restored her to health and wholeness of body. Again, Agatha was led out for torture and again, cast into prison where she gave up her soul to God in the year 251 A.D. in the town of Catania during the reign of Emperor Decius. After her

death, the torturer Quintian departed for Palermo to usurp her estate. However, along the way, his horse and the horses of his soldiers became wild with rage. Quintian was bitten on the face, thrown to the ground and trampled to death. Swift was the punishment of God that reached out for this savage crime perpetrated against St. Agatha.

**St. Theodosius of Chernigov** - Sainted Theodosii (Feodosii), Archbishop of Chernigov, was born at the beginning of the decade of the thirties of the XVII Century in Podol'sk governance. He was descended from an old court-nobility lineage, the Polonitsky-Uglitsky's. His parents were the priest Nikita and Maria. The piety prevailing within the family of the future saint contributed greatly to the spiritual growth of the boy. From childhood he distinguished himself with his gentleness and disposition towards prayer. The innate abilities of the youth came to light in the Kievo-Bratsk college at the Kiev Theophany monastery. This was a time of an extensive flourishing of the college (the end of the 1640's), when its rectors were the archimandrite Innokentii (Gizel'), and later the hegumen and afterwards archbishop of Chernigov, Lazar (Baranovich). Among its instructors were: the priestmonk Epiphanii (Slavinetsky), the priestmonk Arsenii (Satanovsky), the Belorus bishop Theodosii (Baevsky), the hegumen Theodosii (Saphonovich) and Meletii Dzik - all these were indeed men of enlightenment for those times. The comrades of Saint Theodosii at the college were themselves to become future outstanding pastors: Simeon Polotsky, Ioannikii Golyatovsky, Antonii Radivillovsky, Varlaam Yasninsky. The Kievo-Bratsk Theophany school was at this time the chief centre in the struggle of Orthodoxy against the assaults of Catholic clergy, and Jesuits and Uniates.

The vocation of Saint Theodosii to the monastic life ultimately formed during his years of study: he devoted all his free time to prayer, meditation on God and the reading of Sacred Scripture. It might be surmised, that the saint did not finish the full course of the college studies, since the school ceased its activity for several years following the devastating of Podolia by the Poles. The saint all his life had deep regard for the Kievo-Bratsk monastery that had educated him. In the Synodikon of the Kievo-Vydubitsk monastery is the following remark about Saint Theodosii: "He was a man of fine intellect and generous to the Kiev Bratsk monastery". Upon receiving his education, the future hierarch accepted monastic tonsure at the Kievo-Pechersk Lavra with the name Theodosii, in honour of the Monk Theodosii (Feodosii) of Pechersk (Comm. 3 May) (worldly name unknown).

The Kiev metropolitan Dionysii (Balaban) made him archdeacon of the Kiev Sophia cathedral, and then appointed him administrator of the metropolitan cathedral house. But soon he left Kiev and resettled at the distant Krutitsk monastery (in Chernigov diocese), near the locale Baturino, which was famed for its strict monastic life. He was consecrated there to the dignity of priestmonk. In the year 1662 Saint Theodosii was appointed hegumen of the Korsunsk monastery in Kiev diocese, and in the year 1664 - was made head of the ancient Kievo-Vydubitsk monastery. This monastery shortly before had fallen into the hands of the Uniates and was in complete ruin. But thanks to the energy and initiative of Saint Theodosii, the Vydubitsk Mikhailovsk monastery was quickly restored. He concerned himself in particular about the order of churchly property. He formed an excellent choir, which was famed not only in Little Russia, but also in Moscow, where Saint Theodosii in 1685 sent his singers. And concerning himself over the spiritual growth of the monastery inhabitants, being himself a strict ascetic, in 1680 the holy hegumen made on the island of Mikhailovschina, not far from the monastery, a small skete-monastery for brethren wishing solitude. He appointed there to organise and administrate it one of the most zealous monks of his monastery - the priestmonk Job (Opalinsky).

In his role as hegumen of the Kievo-Vydubitsk monastery, Saint Theodosii had to live through some quite difficult days. He was accused together with other hegumens by Methodii, bishop of Mstislavsk and Orshansk, of betraying the Russian governance in a supposed correspondence with those treasonous to Russia. On 20 September 1668 Saint Theodosii had occasion to give an explanation in the matter. And on 17 November 1668 the slander unraveled, and Saint Theodosii together with the other hegumens received a pardon. His Grace Lazar (Baranovich) esteemed the high spiritual qualities of Saint Theodosii and befriended him. He called him "a sheep of the flock of Christ, teaching by humility", and he prophetically expressed the wish, that the name of Saint Theodosii might be inscribed in Heaven. When His Grace Lazar in 1689 became locum tenens of the Kiev metropolitan see, he appointed Saint Theodosii as his vicar in Kiev, while he himself remained at Chernigov. In his capacity as vicar of the locum tenens of the Kiev metropolitan see, Saint Theodosii had an active role in many a churchly event. In 1685 he participated with the right of a decisive vote in the selection of bishop Gedeon (Chetverinsky) as metropolitan of Kiev, and he was sent to Moscow with news of this event together with the Pereyaslavl' hegumen Ieronim (Jerome) (Dubin). In Moscow both representatives were received with honour and esteem. And indeed, the result of this delegation was the re-uniting of the Kiev metropolitan see with the Russian Orthodox Church.

In 1688 Saint Theodosii was appointed archimandrite of the Chernigov Eletska monastery, replacing the deceased archimandrite Ioannikii (Golyatovsky). And from the time all the activity of the saint transferred over from Kiev to Chernigov. This appointment comprised primarily, in accord with the wishes of His Grace Lazar, that Saint Theodosii should spare no little toil over putting back the Eletska monastery in good order, since this monastery had not yet been set aright after the expulsion of the Jesuits and Dominicans, and it was very much in bad shape and disorder. Through the efforts of Saint Theodosii, good results were achieved over the course of two or three years, which then fully guaranteed its existence. The saint in his new position also rendered all kinds of assistance to His Grace Lazar in all kinds of important matters. He participated in composing a conciliar reply to the Moscow Patriarch Ioakim in response to his letters questioning the attitude of the Kiev metropolitan see to the Council of Florence, and its judgement on the question of the transformation of the Holy Gifts as accepted by this Florentine Council. When the Patriarch proved to be unsatisfied by these answers, there was dispatched to him at the beginning of 1689 the Baturinsk hegumen Saint Dimitrii (Tuptalo) (the future metropolitan of Rostov). Saint Theodosii journeyed with him in the capacity of representative of His Grace Lazar. He was entrusted to present the Patriarch a letter of reply and to clear up the misunderstandings. On 11 September 1692 Saint Theodosii was solemnly ordained an archbishop in the Uspenie (Dormition) cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin.

Little in the way of an account of the governance by Saint Theodosii of the Chernigov diocese has been preserved. The saint directed special attention to the rousing and increase in the flock of a true Christian piety. With this end in mind he concerned himself with the upkeep of the old and the building of new monasteries and churches. At the very beginning of his episcopate, with his blessing, there was established the Pecheniksk women's monastery, and he himself consecrated the monastery church in honour of the Uspenie (Dormition) of the Most Holy Mother of God. In 1694, with his blessing, there was founded the Liubetsk skete-monastery, 2 versts from Liubech. In 1694 also the saint consecrated at the Domnitsk men's monastery a temple in honour of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God. And in the Summer of 1695 he consecrated a majestic temple in honour of the Most Holy Mother of God, built on the summit of Boldinsk Hill, near the ancient Il'insk monastery. Under Saint Theodosii may be noted an especial enthusiasm and strengthening of monasticism in the Chernigov diocese. The saint also devoted great attention to the clergy, and he was a strict questioner in the selection of candidates for priesthood. He gave especial patronage to the Chernigov clergy school, he invited learned monks from Kiev, among whom was Saint John (Maksimovich), the future metropolitan of Tobol'sk, but likewise an helper and successor of Saint Theodosii in organising the Chernigov clergy school. Strict uprightness in regard to clergy and flock, deep compassion, concern and Christian love of peace were distinguishing features in the activity of Saint Theodosii. To him often turned not only the Orthodox for aid and advice, but even persons of other confessions.

But Saint Theodosii could not long sustain the Chernigov flock. Sensing the approach of death, he summoned to him the administrator of the Bryansk Svenska monastery, Saint John (Maksimovich), and elevated him from priestmonk to archimandrite of the Chernigov Eletska monastery. In this new archimandrite he prepared beforehand his successor. On 6 February 1696 Saint Theodosii died and was buried in the Chernigov Borisoglebska cathedral church, beyond the right kleros-choir, in a special crypt made for this. His successor Saint John (Maksimovich) later built over his grave a brick arch with an eulogistic inscription in verse, in gratitude for a miraculous healing from a grievous illness. The special granting of grace to which Saint Theodosii attained, is testified to by his ascetic life and his hidden help to all, who recourse to him in prayer. The glorification of Saint Theodosii occurred on 9 September 1896.

Also commemorated on this day: New Martyrs Matushka Agatha (1938), and with her Schemamonk Eugene (1939) and Righteous Paramon (1941), of Belorussia. Virgin-martyr Alexandra, martyr Michael (1942). Martyr Theodoula of Anazarbus in Cilicia, and with her Martyrs Helladius, Macarius, Boethos, and Evagrius (304). "Eletska-Chernigov" (1060), "Sicilian" or "Divnogorsk" (1092) and "In Search of the Perishing" (17th c.) Icons of the Mother of God. St. Polyeuctus, patriarch of Constantinople (970) (Greek). New Martyr Anthony of Athens (1774) (Greek). St. Theodosius of Skopelos in Cilicia (ca. 421). St. Avitus, bishop of Vienne (525)

**6 / 19 February — St Bucolus, Bishop of Smyrna** - He was a disciple of St John the Theologian, who consecrated him bishop of the city of Smyrna. There were few baptised Christians in Smyrna, and St Bucolus shone like a lamp in the pagan darkness. He was adorned with all the virtues, especially

gentleness and meekness. Before his death, Bucolus named the famous Polycarp as his successor in the episcopate, then he peacefully departed this life and went to the Lord.

Tropar of St. Bucolus, Tone 4: Thou didst shine with the rays of virtue/ received from him who leaned on the Master's breast./ Resplendent, God-inspired Hierarch,/ thou didst lead thy flock to the pastures of Truth./ O Father Bucolus, entreat Christ our God for those who honour thee.

Kondak of St. Bucolus, Tone 2: He who was beloved of Christ/ saw the purity of thy life and made thee a shepherd of the Church/ and a radiant lamp of godliness;/ holy Father Bucolus,/ thou didst emulate his virtues.

**The Holy Virgin-martyr Fausta** - Fausta was martyred for Christ during the reign of Emperor Maximian between 305 A.D. - 311 A.D. By her heroism, Fausta astonished her persecutors and succeeded to convert them to Christianity: the eighty-year old pagan priest Evlasis and Maximus, the Eparch. When the judge threatened Fausta with more severe tortures, she asked him to make her an icon with the depictions of all those tortures with which he threatened her. When the icon was completed, it was shown to her and St. Fausta said: "As this icon does not feel any pain, so my body does not feel any pain from your punishments, for my soul is secure in the Lord." The judge then threw her into a vat of boiling hot water where this thirteen-year-old girl died with prayer on her lips and her soul entered Paradise.

**The Holy Virgin-martyr Dorothea** - Dorothea was a prominent and beautiful maiden from Caesarea in Cappadocia. Sappirius, the administrator of the province, turned Dorothea over to the two pagan sisters Christina and Kallista in order to dissuade her from Christ. But, the opposite occurred; Dorothea succeeded to convert both sisters to the Faith of Christ. Enraged, Sappirius ordered the two sisters bound back to back and threw them into a vat of pitch and set it on fire. He then sentenced Dorothea to death. She joyfully heard the sentence and cried out: "I give thanks to You, O Soul-loving Christ, that You are leading me into Your All-holy mansions!" Theophilus, a certain nobleman who was present, laughed at these words and cried out to Dorothea: "Listen, O bride of Christ, send me apples and flowers from the pomegranate tree from the Paradise of your Bridegroom." "Indeed, I will do that," replied the martyr. When Dorothea was at the place of execution, all at once a beautiful young man appeared with three beautiful apples and three red flowers from the pomegranate. That was an angel of God and it was winter. Dorothea asked the angel to bring them to Theophilus and to tell him: "Behold, this is what you desired!" When Theophilus received the message and saw the gift, he was thoroughly frightened. For him, everything turned upside down and he, a confirmed pagan, became a Christian. He was tortured and slain for Christ and his soul entered the Paradise of the Lord Jesus soon after St. Dorothea.

**St. Photius, patriarch of Constantinople** - Photius was a great beacon of the Church. He was the emperor's relative and a grandson of the glorious Patriarch Tarasius. He was a vigorous protector of the Church from the authority-loving pope and other Roman distortions of the Faith. In six days he went through all the ranks from a layman to patriarch. He was consecrated patriarch on Christmas day, 857 A.D. and died in the Lord in the year 891 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: New Hieromartyrs Demetrius priest and Martyr Anatolius (1921). New Hieromartyr Basil priest (1930). New Hieromartyr Priest Basil Nadezhnin of Moscow, (1937). New Hieromartyr Alexander priest (1938). Venerables Barsanuphius the Great and John the Prophet, monks of Palestine (6th c.). Martyr Julian of Emesa (312). Virgin-martyrs Martha and Mary, and their brother Martyr Lycarion, in Egypt. Venerable Dorothea, schemanun of Kashin (1629). St. Mael, bishop of Ardagh, disciple of St. Patrick (488) (Celtic & British). Martyrs Faustus, Basil and Silvanus of Darion in Constantinople (Greek). Venerable John of Thebes, monk (Greek). St. James, ascetic of Syria (ca. 460). St. Vedast, bishop of Arras (540). St. Amand, apostle of Maastricht (675) (Neth.). St. Arsen of Iqalto, Georgia (1127).

**7 / 20 February — St Parthenius, Bishop of Lampsacus** - He was the son of a deacon from the city of Melitopolis. He knew the words of the Gospel by heart from his early youth, and strove to fulfil them. Settling beside a lake, he caught fish, sold them and shared the proceeds with the poor. By God's providence, he was chosen as bishop of Lampsacus. He cleansed the city of paganism, closed the temples dedicated to idol-worship, built many churches and strengthened the faithful. He healed all manner of sickness through prayer, and was especially powerful over spirits. At one time when he was about to drive the evil spirit out of a madman, the evil spirit begged him not to. 'I will give you another man, into whom you can enter and in whom you can dwell', Parthenius told him. 'And who is that man?' 'I am he', replied the saint, 'come and make your abode in me'. Hearing this, the evil spirit fled as though burned by fire, crying out: 'How can I enter into the house of God?' St Parthenius lived long and showed in his deeds the greatness of his love for God and man. He entered into the eternal peace of Christ in the 4th century.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Luke of Mt. Steirion (953). New Hieromartyr Barlaam, archbishop of Perm (1937). New Hieromartyr Alexander priest (1938). New Hieromartyr Alexis priest (1942). The 1,003 Martyrs of Nicomedia (303). Venerable Mastridia of Jerusalem, woman ascetic of the desert (ca. 580). Six Martyrs of Phrygia (305) (Greek). Venerable Peter of Monombateia (Greek). St. Aprionus, bishop of Cyprus (Greek). New Martyr George of Crete (1861) (Greek). Martyr Theopemptus and Synodia (Greek). St. Avgul, bishop of Brittany, who suffered under Diocletian (ca. 305). St. Roman, bishop of Kilmaronen. St. Richard, father of Saints Willibald, Wunnibald and Walburga.

**8 / 21 February - Fast Day — The Holy and Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates** - There are martyrdoms that are more than costly. The costliness of a martyrdom depends on the greatness of the good things of this world that a Christian gives up, receiving suffering in its place; and it depends also on the greatness of the suffering which he endures for the sake of Christ. St Theodore, a Roman commander in the army of the Emperor Licinius and governor of the city of Heraclea, scorned his youth, his good looks, his military status and the goodwill of the Emperor, and in place of all this received terrible tortures for the sake of Christ. Firstly Theodore was flogged, receiving 600 lashes on the back and 500 on the stomach; then he was crucified and pierced through with arrows. Finally he was slain with the sword. Why all this? Because St Theodore loved Christ more than anything else in the world. He scorned the foolish idol-worship of the superstitious Emperor, shattered the silver and gold idols, giving the pieces to the poor, brought many to the Christian faith and urged the Emperor himself to reject idolatry and believe in the one God. During the whole of his torture, Theodore repeated unceasingly: 'Glory to Thee, my God, glory to Thee!' He suffered on February 8th, 319, at three o'clock in the afternoon, and entered into the Kingdom of Christ. He is regarded as the protector of soldiers, who turn to him for help. His wonderworking relics were taken from Euchaita to Constantinople and buried in the Church at Blachernae.

**The Holy Prophet Zechariah** - Zechariah was the eleventh of the Twelve Minor Prophets and together with Haggai, persuaded Prince Zerubbabel to restore the Temple of Jerusalem. Zechariah prophesied the solemn entrance of Christ into Jerusalem: "On a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9). He also prophesied Judas' betrayal for thirty pieces of silver: "And they counted out my wages, thirty pieces of silver" (Zechariah 11:12) and the abandoning of Christ by the apostles during the time of His passion: "Strike the shepherd that the sheep may be dispersed" (Zechariah 13:7). (\*) The Prophet Zechariah is called the "sickle-beholder" because he saw in a vision, a sickle coming down from heaven to mow down the unjust; especially thieves and blasphemers of the Name of God. Zechariah died in the latter half of the reign of Darius Hystapes about the year 520 B.C.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Lyubov of Ryazan, fool-for Christ (1921). New Hieromartyrs Simeon, Andrew, Sergius and Peter priests (1938). New Hieromartyr Alexander priest (1942). St. Sabbas II, archbishop of Serbia (1271). St. Macarius, bishop of Paphos in Cyprus (Greek). Martyr Conitus of Alexandria (249). St. Agathangelus, bishop of Damascus (ca. 325). Sts. John and Basil of the Kiev Caves. St. Kew, virgin of Cornwall. St. Cuthman, hermit of Steyning. Martyrs Nicephorus and Stephen (Greek). Martyrs Philadelphus and Polycarp (Greek). St. Pergetus (Greek)

**9 / 22 February — The Holy Martyr Nicephorus** - The biography of this martyr Nicephorus clearly demonstrates how God rejects pride and crowns humility and love with glory. There lived in Antioch two close friends, the learned priest Saprificus and the simple ordinary citizen Nicephorus. Somehow, their friendship turned into a terrible hatred for each other. The God-fearing Nicephorus attempted on many occasions to make peace with the priest. However, at no time did Saprificus desire to be reconciled. When the persecution of Christians began, the presbyter Saprificus was condemned to death and brought to the place of execution. The sorrowful Nicephorus followed after Saprificus beseeching him along the way to, at least, forgive him before his death that they might depart in peace. "I beseech you, O martyr of Christ," said Nicephorus, "forgive me if I have sinned against you!" Saprificus did not even want to look at his opponent but quietly and arrogantly walked toward his death. Upon seeing the hardness of the priest's heart, God did not want to accept the sacrifice of his martyrdom and to crown him with a wreath but He mysteriously withheld His grace. At the last moment, Saprificus denied Christ and declared before the executioners that he would bow down before the idols. So it is with blind hatred! Nicephorus implored Saprificus not to deny Christ saying: "O my beloved brother, do not do that; do not deny our Lord Jesus Christ; do not forfeit the heavenly wreath!" But, all was in vain. Saprificus remained adamant. Then, Nicephorus cried out to the executioners: "I, also, am a Christian; behead me in place of Saprificus!" The executioners informed the judge of this and he ordered the release of Saprificus and, in his place, beheaded Nicephorus. Nicephorus joyfully lowered his head on the block and was beheaded. Thus, he was made worthy of the kingdom and was crowned with the immortal wreath of glory. This occurred in the year 260 A.D. during the reign of Gallienus.

Also commemorated on this day: Uncovering of the relics (1805) of St. Innocent of Irkutsk (1731). Uncovering of the relics of St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus (1992). New Hieromartyr Basil

priest (1930). New Hieromartyr John priest (1938). Venerable Pancratius, hieromonk of the Kiev Caves (13th c.). Venerables Gennadius (1516) and Nicephorus (1557), monks, of Vazhe Lake (Vologda). Hieromartyrs Marcellus, bishop of Sicily; Philagrius, bishop of Cyprus; and Pancratius, bishop of Taormina; disciples of Apostle Peter (1st c.). Venerables Aemilianus and Bracchio of Tours (6th c.) (Gaul). St. Teilo, bishop (Llandaff in Wales) (6th c.) (Celtic & British). Martyr Apollonias of Alexandria (249). St. Romanus the Wonderworker of Cilicia (5th c.). Hieromartyr Peter Damascene, bishop of Damascus (743).

**10 / 23 February - Fast Day — The Hieromartyr Charalampus** - This great saint was bishop in Magnesia, and suffered for Christ at the age of 113. When a violent persecution broke out under the Emperor Septimus Severus, the aged Charalampus did not hide from his persecutors, but freely and openly preached the Christian faith. He endured all tortures as though not in the body, and when they flayed the living flesh from him, the godly saint said to the Emperor's soldiers: 'Thank you, my brethren, for scraping off the old body and renewing my soul for new and eternal life.' He performed many wonders and brought many to the Faith. Even the Emperor's daughter, Gallina, repudiated the paganism of her father and became a Christian. Condemned to death and led to the place of execution, St Charalampus raised his arms to heaven and prayed for all men, that God would give them bodily health and salvation of soul, and that He would grant them the fruits of the earth in abundance: 'Lord, Thou knowest that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Thy blessing on all.' After praying thus, the saintly elder gave his soul to God before the executioner had laid his sword to his neck. He suffered in 202. Gallina took his body and buried it.

**Russian New Martyr Anatole, metropolitan of Odessa (1938)** - He should be especially glorified for his spiritual courage in the grievous years of 1928-1937. He lived in the South of Russia and was respected for his spiritual deeds and his fearless professing of the true Russian Faith. Metropolitan Anatole suffered a slow martyrdom from the hands of the communists, who cruelly persecuted and humiliated him. Even before entering high school he dedicated his life to the service of God. After high school he was accepted by the Academy of Kiev, and while studying there, took the vows of monkhood. Soon after graduating from the Academy, the Rev. Anatole was ordained bishop. Bishop Anatole, young and inspired, won the hearts of his spiritual children. His ever increasing popularity was noted, of course, by the usurpers of power of the Russian government.

Bishop Anatole was one of the first to be arrested by the communists. For a long time he languished in the prisons of the GPU(pre-KGB). During the hours of questioning the mild prelate was outrageously beaten by magistrates, to the point that his jaw was permanently injured, so that his speech at times was not quite distinct. Two of his ribs were also injured. Bishop Anatole spent a long time in the prison hospital. His wounds had hardly healed when he was exiled to Solovky to the harsh conditions of a labour camp for the most dangerous political "criminals", especially for the clergy. Severe frosts, lack of satisfactory nourishment, and very heavy labour broke the health of the already not too robust bishop. He suffered this oppressive life for seven years. He owed his survival there only to the most unselfish care of his younger sister, whom he had raised as a daughter. She had left everything to follow her brother into exile.

Upon release from exile, Bishop Anatole was promoted to the rank of Archbishop of Saratov and Samara. Shortly after this, he was taken ill with an ulcer of the stomach—the result of hardships suffered while at the labour camp. Upon recovery, he was appointed head of the Odessa-Kherson diocese in the South. He arrived in Odessa in the darkest hour of its existence. All religious affairs were in the hands of the NKVD inspector-of-the-cults, Vishnegorodsky at first, and later Baranovich. Both of them fully enjoyed using their power to inconvenience and humiliate the head of the local churches. The Archbishop was frequently ordered to get out of bed in the middle of the night and report to the NKVD headquarters. Sometimes the inspectors would appear in church during solemn services on an important holiday, and issue the same order. In such instances, the otherwise meek and humble Archbishop Anatole would curtly tell them that under no circumstances would he stop the church ritual; that he would come only after officiating in the church. His refusals were so positive that even the NKVD messengers gave up, inwardly furious.

At the end of four or five hours of Church service, the Archbishop would hurry to the NKVD, without time to rest or eat. There he was kept waiting for one or two hours more, just to repay him for the delay. When he was finally received, Baranovich would stamp his feet and shout at the Archbishop, just as if he were a disobedient slave. Such were the conditions under which this highly respected priest carried on his spiritual work. The hardest trial for him was the arrest of almost all the clergy and the best preachers of Odessa in 1931. All of them (more than 20), were exiled during the same year, when the sacrilegious closing and destroying of the churches started. The majestic Cathedral of the Transfiguration was blown up before the eyes of the Archbishop, as was the beautiful Church of the Archangel Michael in the Devichy Monastery; the military Cathedral of St. Serge, and the churches of the port and many others. The repressions and persecutions of the clergy increased, leaving clergymen without food and lodgings.



They found refuge in the Archbishop's home, while he himself went about to different government organisations pleading humbly for assistance and mercy for his unfortunate colleagues. But he was met only with mockery and insults. In 1932, Archbishop Anatole was promoted to the rank of Metropolitan. He remained head of the Odessa-Kherson diocese until his arrest in August, 1936. Before his arrest, Metropolitan Anatole had to suffer the humiliation of being dismissed by Baranovich and forbidden to perform church services. Upon his arrest, Metropolitan Anatole was removed to Kiev where he was kept under severe conditions for about six months. He again suffered from ulcer of the stomach with complications which affected his legs. Metropolitan Constantine, Exarch of the Ukraine, succeeded in obtaining permission for him to see his sister before he left for exile.

The poor woman later told, with sobs, how Metropolitan Anatole was led into the room of their meeting supported on both sides—having nearly lost the complete use of his legs. In spite of his condition, Metropolitan Anatole was taken into exile by "etape". He was purposely placed among the gangs of the worst criminals, who systematically robbed him on the way. The sick prelate was actually forced by gun-butts to walk from one stop to another, farther and farther to the North, with no time to rest. When he collapsed in a dead faint, he was lifted onto a truck; but as soon as he regained consciousness he was forced again to walk. Men who witnessed the tortures of the saintly man, later declared with tears, that it would have been more merciful to have shot him on the spot. On the way, Metropolitan Anatole caught croupous pneumonia, but even this did not stop his tragic march. By winter he had reached his place of exile and, in the Far North, dying he pleaded for permission to see his sister, who had managed to reach his place of exile. The sister had received only postcards from him on which he had written: "I beg you to do everything you can. Plead, pray, implore, but obtain the permission for our meeting. I yearn before my death to see your dear face and bless you." But the meeting was not to be; the permission was refused. When Metropolitan Anatole was on the point of dying, the communists came to him and demanded his Gospel and his priest's cross. The Gospel was snatched from out of his weakened hands, but he clung to his cross. Protecting it on his chest with numbed hands, he fell back and died (1938). His body was thrown into a common grave in the frozen earth of the far North.

Also commemorated on this day: New Hieromartyrs Peter and Valerian priests (1930). St. Anna of Novgorod, wife of Yaroslav I (1050). Venerable Prochorus of the Kiev Caves (1107). Venerable Longinus, monk, of Koryazhemka (Vologda) (1540). St. Galina (III). Martyrs Ennatha, Valentina, and Paula of Palestine (308). Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos of Areovindus ("Fiery Vision"). Synaxis of Novgorod Hierarchs: Sts. Joachim (1030), Luke the Jew (1058), Germanus (1095), Arcadius (1162), Gregory (1193), Martyrius (1199), Anthony (1232), Basil (1352), Moses (1362), Symeon (1421), Gennadius (1504), Pimen (1571), and Athonius (1648). St. Anastasius II, archbishop of Jerusalem (706) (Greek). Martyr Charalampus (another) and three women companions (Greek). St. Scholastica of Italy, sister of St. Benedict (543).

St. John Chimchimeli of Bachkovo and Gremi (13th c.) (Georgia). St. Merwinna, abbess of Romsey.

**11 / 24 February — The Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste** - born in Cappadocia, Blaise was meek and God-fearing from early childhood. He was chosen for his virtues as bishop of Sebaste, and was a great spiritual and moral light in that pagan town. During a period of violent persecution of Christians, Blaise encouraged his flock and visited the martyrs in prison, among whom was the famous Eustratius. When the city of Sebaste was left entirely denuded of Christians—some killed and others fled—Blaise, by then an old man, retired to the mountain of Argeos and lived there in a cave. Ferocious wild beasts, recognising a holy man, came to him and he gently tamed them. But the persecutors found the saint in that hidden spot and took him for trial. On the way there, Blaise healed a boy who had a bone stuck in his throat and, at the petition of a poor widow, made the wolf that had taken her pig return it to her. The benighted judges tortured him, flogging him terribly. By his steadfastness in the Christian faith, Blaise brought many unbelievers to the Faith. Seven women and two children were thrown into prison with him; the women were slain first, then Blaise and the two children. He suffered and was glorified in 316. Blaise's prayers are sought for the health and well-being of domestic animals and for protection from wild beasts. In the West, he is also invoked against sore throats.

**St. Theodora** - Theodora, a Greek empress, was the wife of the nefarious Emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast. After the death of Theophilus, Theodora became the ruling empress and reigned together with her son Michael III. At the Council in Constantinople (842 A.D.), she immediately restored the veneration of icons. On this occasion, the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy was instituted which is still celebrated today on the First Sunday of the Honorable Fast [First Sunday in Lent]. This holy and meritorious woman of the Church gave up her soul to God on February 11, 867 A.D. It was at that time, by the divine and wonderful Providence of God, at the solemn triumph of Orthodoxy over all heresies, that St. Cyril and St. Methodius were sent as Christian missionaries to the Slavs.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Vsevolod (in holy baptism Gabriel), prince and wonderworker of Pskov (1138). Venerable Demetrius, monk of Priluki (Vologda) (1392). Venerable Cassian the Barefoot (in

the world 'Kosmas'), ascetic of the Joseph-Volokolamsk Monastery (1532) St. Gobnait, abbess of Ballyvourney, Cork (Ireland) (7th c.) (Celtic & British). Venerable Caedmon of Whitby, monk (680) (Celtic & British). Venerable George (Kratovac) the Greatmartyr of Serbia (Greek). Hieromartyr Lucius of Adrianopolis in Thrace (348). St. Benedict of Aniane (821) (Gaul).

### ‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡

**Monday** - 1 Peter 2:21-3:9; Mark 12:13-17

**Tuesday** - 1 Peter 3:10-22; Mark 12:18-27

**Wednesday** - 1 Peter 4:1-11; Mark 12:28-37

**Thursday** - 1 Peter 4:12-5:5; Mark 12:38-44

**Friday** - 2 Peter 1:1-10; Mark 13:1-8

**Saturday** - 2 Timothy 2:11-19; Luke 18:2-8

### Hymn of Praise

#### ***The veneration of icons***

*To what, in such a manner, do you my Christian bow,  
When you, O my Christian, venerate the icons?  
Before the Living God the Creator, I am bowing down,  
With all my soul, heart and mind, I bow down to Him.  
Mortal am I and, am unable upon Him to gaze,  
Therefore, before His image I bow;  
What, my Christian, do you so fervently reverence,  
When, the icon O my Christian, you kiss?  
Christ the God and Savior, I am kissing,  
The choirs of angels, the saints and the Mother of God.  
Mortal am I and, therefore am unable them to touch,  
But when their images I kiss, my heart is at ease.*

### Words of Wisdom

God often permits virtuous men to be tried by some thing: He permits temptations to rise up against them on all sides ...Whether these trials come from men, demons or flesh, let it be a cause for thanksgiving. For God cannot show His favor to a man who desires to dwell with Him, except by sending him trials for the sake of truth; just as no man can become worthy of this greatness ...without the grace of Christ ...St. Paul plainly calls it a gift . For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake' (Phil. 1:29). St. Peter also 'But even if you suffer for righteousness sake, happy are you' (I Peter 3:14) for you are given to share in the passion of Christ ...The way of God is a daily cross. No one has ascended to heaven through easy life.

*St. Isaac of Syria. Directions on Spiritual Training. Text 67. B#%*

Available on the net at <http://www.saintjonah.org/bltn/> or at <http://www.roq.org.au/bulletins.html> where you can subscribe to the email list.