

# 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

## Martyr Callinicus

29 July / 11 August

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 6:** The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; / the guards became as dead men. / Mary stood by Thy grave, / seeking Thy most pure Body. / Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it. / Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. / O Lord who didst rise from the Dead, / Glory to Thee!

**Tropar of St Callincus tone 3:** O Callincus, thou didst receive a worthy crown and Prize/ for thy victory over tyrants,/ for thou didst finish thy course and wast glorified as a noble athlete./ O glorious Martyr,/ entreat Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 6:** When Christ God the Giver of Life, / raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His Mighty Hand, / He bestowed resurrection on the human race. / He is the Saviour of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of All.

**Kondak of St Callincus tone 2:** Thou hast rightly inherited the joyful dwellings on high,/ for thou wast aflame with love for Christ, O Callincus./ Therefore thou didst bravely endure the fire./ As thou dost stand in God's presence intercede for us all.



### Vespers

Lord I have Cried: Tone 6, on 10: Octoechos 7; Martyr 3 (O divinely wise martyr Callinicus); G: Martyr (With hymns let us honor); N: Sunday Dogmatic in the tone of the week.

Aposticha: Octoechos; G/N: Theotokion in the Octoechos.

### Matins Gospel VII

#### **EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 15: 1-7**

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

#### **WE WHO ARE STRONG OUGHT TO BEAR THE FAILINGS OF THE WEAK**

In another place he also says, 'You who are spiritual restore such a one' (Gal.6:1). Have you become powerful? Render a return to God for making you so. You will duly render it if you set the weakness of the sickly right. For we too were weak, but by grace we have become powerful. And this we are to do not only in this case, but also in the case of those who are weak in other respects. For instance, if one is passionate, or insolent, or has any failing of this kind, bear with him. And how is this to be? Listen to what comes next ...What he says is this. Are you powerful? Let the weak have trial of your power. Let him come to know your strength; please him ...And so if you are rich or in power, do not please yourself but the poor and needy, because in this way you will at once have true glory to enjoy, and be doing much service. For glory from things of the world soon flies away, but that from things of the Spirit is abiding, if you do it to edification.

## **GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 9: 27-35**

When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

### **JESUS HEALS THE BLIND AND THE DUMB**

The first Sunday readings after Pentecost showed us the Commandments of God according to which all the saints of the universal Church and our Russian Church lived. These commandments were like steps into the Kingdom of Heaven. And the Kingdom of Heaven the Merciful God has prepared for all. This means that these steps are leading there; these commandments of God are a must for every one of us. So with such a purpose the Holy Church presented them to us. But now for the last several weeks the Holy Church has begun to show us not what we should cultivate in ourselves, but things which we should avoid, against which we should fight. These readings told about the power of evil, about being possessed by it, about passions, sins, slavery to sin, bodily paralysis which is the result of sin; and this pointed out to us our spiritual paralysis, which is always the result of sin. In the same way, today's Gospel tells us: "When Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him.... As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil" (Mt. 9:27,32). And Christ healed all of them. Yes, there is physical blindness, but there is also spiritual blindness. This is our unbelief, our stoniness of heart. Such a state may be temporary, as a storm cloud rushes in and goes away, with God's help. This is a terrible feeling of being forsaken by God, a horrible loneliness. And there is another condition: this is when we can talk about anything, but not about spiritual things, Godly things. Or when before us a brother is suffering, is living through some terrible grief, and we don't have even one word of comfort. Or again, a state of mind when we cannot even pray. Are these not states of spiritual dumbness? And Christ alone can heal us, heal our blind and dumb soul. But how does it happen? Well, in order to answer this question I would like to relate one example, one experience from my personal life. Here it is: I will tell just how this experience was inscribed on my heart. This was a very difficult period of my life. It seemed there was no way out. My church in the town of Romni was closed, I was exiled from Romni, my family was left to the mercy of fate. To be registered in any church in Kiev was impossible. I had to live from day to day, hiding out with friends, knowing that by doing this I could harm them. At church services I could only be present secretly, hiding somewhere in a corner of the altar. And not even in every church would they let in an unregistered priest. Before me there seemed to be impenetrable darkness. I was losing heart. I felt both blind and dumb, in a spiritual sense. Then came a bright thought: go to Lavra, to the cave Church of St. Anthony, to the early Liturgy. I wanted to believe that maybe there at the relics of the saints the veil would fall from my eyes and I would be able to see the Providence of God for me. I stopped for the night in Lavra and stayed with a close friend of mine. At three in the morning the gong was struck. We dressed quickly and went out. It was absolutely dark. But from all sides stretched lines of little lights; these were monks with lanterns going to the service in the caves. Everything was quiet, reverent, mysterious. And the two of us proceeded. Now we started to go down into the cave. And as we descended I grew more and more oppressed. The Liturgy started. I saw how everyone was praying. And I... I could not pray. Something terrible was happening to me; the ceiling of the cave pressed down on me. I was suffocating. And not so much physically, as spiritually. Anguish was simply tearing my chest apart. If I could have run away, I would have. But with an unbelievable effort of will I forced myself, at least outwardly, to remain at the service, which came over to me only automatically. I was both blind and dumb. Minutes seemed like hours. I felt that I was perishing, and as one who was dumb, without words. I cried out in my heart: "Lord have mercy!" not even understanding the meaning of these words. If the service had lasted for one more minute, I could not have stood it. But here was the end. I simply ran out onto the surface of the ground. And then a miracle happened to me. The sun was high already, the grass, the leaves, the trees, covered with morning dew, seemed to be strewn with diamonds. In the distance I could see the blue Dnieper River, and this blue was broken up by the bright reflection of the rising sun. This reflection was like gold which had fallen from heaven; and beyond the Dnieper were fields, forests — the world of God! I breathed deeply. Before me was hope. God had taken the stone away from my heart. I had been blind, but suddenly I recovered my sight: all these earthly beauties were now just symbols for me — symbols of unearthly beauty and Eternal Life. I wanted to live for eternity, and I wanted to share this joy with those around me. The dumbness passed and I began talking to people again who were all now near and dear to me. See how God heals our spiritual blindness and dumbness! So let us go in His Way. Let us endure. Let

us imitate the blind men. After all, they did not see Christ. And what is more, they had never seen the image of a human being; but they knew that Christ was there, nearby, and believed that He could heal them. This is the classic image of prayer. The Orthodox Faith never forms any images, but only knows that Christ is, and He is near and can do anything. But let us be attentive, because He will ask us too: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" (Mt. 10:28). Then let our answer to Him be: "Yes, Lord! We believe."

### **Saints of the Week**

**July 29 / August 11 —The Holy Martyr Callinicus** - born in Cilicia and brought up in Christian piety, he left all and began to preach the Gospel. He was arrested in Ancyra by the pagan governor, Sacerdos. When the governor, in fury, threatened him with torture if he would not worship idols, St Callinicus replied: 'Every torture for my God is as welcome to me as bread is to a hungry man.' After harsh torture and beating, the governor shod him with iron shoes, with the nails sticking inwards, and ordered that he be driven out to the town of Gangra, for he did not dare to have him further tortured or killed in Ancyra, as many men, beholding the heroic endurance of the man of God, were turning to the Christian faith. On the way, the soldiers became thirsty and there was no water. St Callinicus prayed to God and brought forth water from a rock. When they arrived in Gangra, the torturers threw Callinicus into a fiery furnace. The saint prayed to God, saying: 'I thank Thee, O heavenly Father, that Thou makest me worthy in this hour to die for Thy holy Name ! ' He then went into the fire. When the fire was extinguished, his dead body was found whole and untouched by the flames. He suffered with honour, and was crowned with a wreath of eternal glory, in about 250.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Hieromartyrs Venerables Seraphim (Bogoslovsky) and Theognost (1921). New Hieromartyr Anatole (1930-1935). New Hieromartyr Alexis priest, and Martyr Pachomius (1938). Venerables Constantine and Cosmas, abbots of Kosinsk (Pskov) (13th c.). Martyr Daniel of Cherkassk (1776). Virgin-martyr Seraphima (Serapia) of Antioch (2nd c.). Martyr Theodota and her three sons, in Bithynia (304). St. Lupus the Confessor, bishop of Troyes (479). Martyr Michael (9th c.). Martyr Eustathius of Mtskheta in Georgia (589). St. Constantine, patriarch of Constantinople (676). The Nativity of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker from Myra in Lycia (4th c.) Venerable Romanus, abbot of Kirzhach (1392), disciple of St. Sergius of Radonezh. Translation of Velikoretsky Icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker from Viatka to Moscow (1555). St. Theodosius the New, emperor (450). Martyr Mamas in Darii. St. Olaf, king of Norway (1030). Martyrs Benjamin and Berius of Constantinople (Greek). oMartyr Basiliscus the Elder. Hieromartyr Bessarion of Smolyan, Bulgaria (1670).

**July 30 / August 12 — The Holy Apostles Silas, Silvanus, Crescens, Epaeetus and Andronicus** - these are all among the Seventy. St Silas was sent from Jerusalem to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, to settle a quarrel among the faithful concerning circumcision: namely, whether or not it was necessary to circumcise pagans who had embraced Christianity (Acts 15:22). After that, Silas travelled with Paul around Asia and Macedonia, and was installed as Bishop of Corinth, where he died peacefully. Silvanus helped the two greatest apostles (I Pet. 5:12; II Cor. 1:19) . As bishop in Salonica, he laboured much and suffered much, until he exchanged the earthly life for the heavenly. Crescens was a fellow-worker with the Apostle Paul (II Tim. 4:10), and then bishop in Galatia and a missionary in Gaul, where he died a martyr for Christ under Trajan. St Epaeetus is mentioned by the Apostle Paul (Rom. 16:5), and became Bishop of Carthage. Andronicus (Rom. 16:7), Bishop of Pannonia, is also commemorated separately on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Martyr John the Soldier at Constantinople (4th c.). New Hiero-confessor Anatole II (Potapov, the "Younger") of Optina (1922). New Hieromartyr John deacon (1918). Uncovering of the relics (1484) of Venerable Herman of Solovki (1479). Hieromartyr Polychronius, bishop of Babylon (251), and Martyrs Parmenius, Helimenas (Elimas), and Chrysotelus presbyters, Luke and Mocius deacons, and Abdon, Sennen, Maximus, and Olympius. Hieromartyr Valentine, bishop of Interamna (Terni) in Italy (273), and Martyrs Proculus, Ephebus, Apollonius, and Abundius, youths. Synaxis of All Saints of Samara. "Okonsk" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. St. Angelina (Brancovich), despotina (princess) of Serbia (16th c.). St. Stephen (Vladislav) of Serbia (1243). Prince Tsotne Dadiani, the Confessor of Mingrelia (13th c.).

**July 31 / August 13 — Forefeast of the Procession of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord — Righteous Eudocimus** - born in Cappadocia of devout parents, Basil and Eudocia. In the time of the Emperor Theophilus (829-842), Eudocimus was a young army officer. Even as a soldier, he endeavoured with his whole heart to live according to the precepts of the Gospel. He kept his purity unstained and avoided converse with any woman except his mother. He was liberal to the poor, assiduous in the reading of holy books and yet more assiduous in prayer to God. He fled vain chatter and idle talk. 'Among all the chaos and vanity of the world, he was like a lily among thistles, and like gold in the furnace.' For his rare virtues, the Emperor made him military governor of Cappadocia. In this high

state, Eudocimus strove to be righteous before God and man . By God's providence, he died early, at the age of thirty-three, and his relics were found to have healing power. An insane man touched his tomb and was healed, and a paralytic child stood upright and was made whole. After eighteen months, his mother opened his coffin, and found his body as though still alive, with no mark of corruption—and a wonderful fragrance arose from the saint's body. His relics were later translated to Constantinople and buried in the new church of the holy Mother of God, built by Eudocimus's parents.

**Righteous Joseph of Arimathea** - a rich man, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin and a secret follower of Christ (Matt. 27:57; Jn 19:38), took Christ's body down from the Cross together with Nicodemus, and laid it in his own new tomb. For this, he was fettered by the Jews and cast into prison. The risen Lord appeared to him and brought him to belief in His Resurrection. The Jews then released him from prison and drove him from his fatherland. He travelled around the world, preaching the Gospel of Christ, and took this Good News to England, where he entered into rest in the Lord.

**St. Neot, hermit in Cornwall (c.877)** - the son of King Ethelwulf of Kent and Wessex. Like Zaccheus, who had to climb up in a tree in order to see our Saviour, St Neot was very short. When he was old enough to become a soldier, he was not allowed to join the army because he was too short, so he decided to become a soldier for Christ instead, and he became a monk. At first, Saint Neot lived in the Glastonbury monastery. Here, he was made a presbyter, but because he was so short, he had to stand on a little stool when he served the Divine Liturgy. The saint was a great struggler, fasting, praying and reading the Scripture all the time. Because of his great struggles and faith, God gave him many gifts of Grace. He healed people of both bodily and spiritual illnesses, and he had great wisdom. Soon, he became famous, and people from all over Britain came to see him. St Neot did not like for all these crowds of people to come to him. He no longer had time for his prayers, and besides, he was afraid that he might fall into pride. With the blessing of his elder, the saint took one other monk, Father Barrey, and went to a wild valley in the deep forests of Cornwall. Even here, however, the saint became famous, and people walked through the dense forests to see the saint, ask for his prayers and his help. Even the great King Alfred came to the saint and asked for a blessing. The saint did not bless the king, but began to chastise him for his proud harshness and sinful way of life. Then the saint prophesied that King Alfred would be beaten in war, "but if you repent of your sins and help the poor, God will help you and you will finally have victory over your enemies." This happened just as the saint foretold. King Alfred had to flee from his enemies, the Danes, but the saint (who had reposed the year before) appeared to him one night and comforted him. "Because you have wept for your sins, God will help you. You will be given victory on the Seventh Week after Pascha." Not only did King Alfred receive his victory, but his enemy, King Guthrum of Denmark was later baptised at Cirncester, as were many of his soldiers. The rest of King Alfred's reign passed in peace, justice and mercy. When the saint reposed in Christ, a wonderful fragrance came from his body.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Martyrs Benjamin, metropolitan of Petrograd, and those with him: Archimandrite Sergius and George and John of Petrograd (1922). Martyr Maximus (1928). New Hieromartyr Vladimir priest (1937). New Hieromartyr John priest, Martyr Constantine priest, Virgin-martyr Anna, and St. Elizabeth (after 1937). New Hieromartyr Nicholas priest (1941). New Hieromartyr Basil, bishop of Kineshma (1945) Martyr Julitta at Caesarea (304). St. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre (448). Martyr Dionysius of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos (1822). Twelve Martyrs of Rome. Translation of the relics of Apostle Philip to Cyprus. Consecration of the Church of the Most Holy Theotokos of Blachernae. St. John the Exarch of Bulgaria (900). St. Arsenius the Bishop of Ninotsminda (1082).

**August 1 / 14 — Procession of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord — (First of the three "Feasts of the Saviour" in August) Beginning of the Dormition Fast - Wine & Oil Allowed - Lesser Blessing of Water** (Epistle: 1st Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 14: 6-19; Gospel: St. Matthew 20: 17-28) Prayer: O Lord our God, who art mighty in counsel, and wonderful in deeds, the Creator of all things, who keepest thy covenant and thy mercy unto those who love thee and keep thy commandments, and receivest the contrite tears of all who are in distress: (For this cause thou didst come in the similitude of a servant, scorning not our image, but giving true health to the body, and saying, thou art healed, sin no more; and with clay thou didst make the man's eyes whole, and having commanded him to wash, didst make him, by thy word, to rejoice in the light, putting to confusion the floods of passion of enemies, and drying up the bitter sea of the life of the same, and subduing the waves of sensual desires heavy to be endured): Do Thou, the same King who lovest mankind, who hast granted unto us to clothe ourselves in the garment of snowy whiteness, by water and the Spirit, send down upon us thy blessing, through partaking of this water, and through sprinkling therewith, washing away the defilement of passions. Yea, we beseech thee, visit thou our weakness, O Good One, and heal our infirmities, both spiritual and bodily; by thy mercy; Through the prayers ...

**Holy Seven Maccabees, their Mother Solomonia and Eleazar the Priest** - they all suffered for the purity of the Israelite faith under King Antiochus, called by some 'Epiphanes'—God manifest—and by others, 'Epimanes'—mad. For the great sins of Jerusalem, and especially for the wresting-away of the

high-priestly power and the wickedness that ensued, the Lord let loose great calamity on the Holy City. Antiochus desired after that to bring the Jews to idolatry in place of their faith in the one, living God, and did all he could to this end. He was helped in his intention by several disaffected high priests and elders of Jerusalem. The king once came himself to Jerusalem and commanded that all Jews eat pork, which was against the Law of Moses and was therefore a recognisable sign of apostasy from the Jewish faith. The elder Eleazar, a priest and one of the seventy translators of the Old Testament into Greek, refused to eat pork. He was therefore tortured and burned. Returning to Antioch, the king took the seven young men, the Maccabees, and their mother Solomonia (II Macc. 6:18-7:41). The seven Maccabean brothers were called: Avim, Antonius, Eleazar, Gurius, Eusebon, Achim and Marcellus. Before their mother's eyes, the wicked king tortured her sons one after the other, flaying the skin from their faces and then throwing them into the flames. They all endured torture and death with courage, remaining steadfast in their faith. Finally their mother, when she saw her three-year-old son in the fire, threw herself into the flames and perished, giving her soul into God's hands. They all suffered with honour for their faith in the one, living God in about 167BC.

**St. Nicholas (Kassatkin), Enlightener of Japan** - Born in Russia in 1836, he became one of the great Orthodox missionaries of modern times. As a boy, he resolved to become a missionary in the far East. With the counsel and blessing of Bishop Innocent of Siberia and Alaska, he went to Japan in 1861 and joined a small Russian mission there. Though the mission's official purpose was to minister to the Russian consular community, the consul-general who invited Hieromonk Nikolai hoped to bring the light of the Orthodox Faith to the Japanese people as well. Realizing that he could only hope to convert the Japanese people if they understood one another well, Fr Nikolai immersed himself in the study of Japanese thought, culture and language. Over the course of his life he translated most of the Bible and most of the Orthodox services into Japanese, and became a fluent speaker of the language. He encountered much resistance: Preaching of Christian doctrine was officially banned in Japan, and a Samurai once approached him with the words "Foreigners must die!" It was this same Samurai who later became his first Japanese priest. In 1880 he was elevated to Bishop of Japan. During the Russo-Japanese war he remained in Japan and labored successfully to overcome nationalist strife that might have harmed or destroyed the Church in Japan. He encouraged all his Japanese faithful to pray for the Japanese armed forces, though he explained that as a Russian he could not do so, and excluded himself from all public services for the duration of the war. He sent Russian-speaking Japanese priests to the prison camps to minister to Russian prisoners of war. At the time of his repose in 1912, after forty-eight years in Japan, St Nikolai left a Cathedral, eight churches, more than 400 chapels and meeting houses, 34 priests, 8 deacons, 115 lay catechists, and 34,110 Orthodox faithful. The Church of Japan is now an autonomous Orthodox Church under the care of the Moscow Patriarchate.

**St. Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester (984)** - born there of good parentage in the early years of the tenth century; d. 1 Aug., 984. After a youth spent at the court of King Athelstan, Ethelwold placed himself under Elphege the Bald, Bishop of Winchester, who gave him the tonsure and ordained him priest along with Dunstan. At Glastonbury, where he was dean under Saint Dunstan, he was a mirror of perfection. In 955 he became Abbot of Abingdon; and 29 November, 963, was consecrated Bishop of Winchester by Dunstan, with whom and Oswald of Worcester he worked zealously in combating the general corruption occasioned by the Danish inroads. At Winchester, both in the old and in his new minster, he replaced the evil-living seculars with monks and refounded the ancient nunnery. His labours extended to Chertsey, Milton (Dorsetshire), Ely, Peterborough, and Thorney; expelling the unworthy, rebuilding and restoring; to the rebellious "terrible as a lion", to the meek "gentler than a dove". The epithets "father of monks" and "benevolent bishop" summarize Ethelwold's character as reformer and friend of Christ's poor. Though he suffered much from ill-health, his life as scholar, teacher, prelate, and royal counsellor was ever austere. He was buried in Winchester cathedral, his body being translated later by Elphege, his successor. Abingdon monastery in the twelfth century had relics of Ethelwold.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Hieromartyr Basil, archbishop of Chernigov (1918). New Hieromartyr Demetrius priest (1937). Uncovering of the relics of Venerable Sophia of Suzdal (1995). Nine Martyrs of Perge in Pamphylia: Leontius, Attius, Alexander, Cindeus, Minsitheus (Mnesitheus), Cyriacus, Mineon (Menaeus), Catanus, and Eucleus (3rd c.). Martyrs Menas, Menais, and others of England. Martyr Elessa of Cythera. St. Timothy the Wonderworker, archbishop of Priconissus of Peloponnesus. Martyr Papas the New. Martyr Eleazar. Martyr Cyricus. Martyrs Theodore and Polyeuctus. Virgin-martyr Sidwell of Exeter.

**August 2 / 15 – Dormition Fast –The Finding and Translation of the Relics of St Stephen** - when the wicked Jews stoned St Stephen to death, they left his body for the dogs to eat. But God's providence disposed otherwise. The martyr's body lay in an open place outside the town a night and two days, then, on the second night, Gamaliel, Paul's teacher and a secret follower of Christ, came and took his body to Caphargamala, and there buried it in a cave on his own land. Gamaliel buried his friend Nicodemus, who died lamenting over Stephen's grave, in the same cave. He also buried his godson Abibus there and, in accordance with his wishes, was buried there himself. Centuries passed, and no-one

living knew the whereabouts of Stephen's grave. But in 415, in the time of Patriarch John of Jerusalem, Gamaliel appeared three times in a dream to a priest, Lucian, in Caphargamala, and told him in minute detail about the burial of all the above-mentioned, indicating precisely the forgotten place of their burial. Moved by this dream, Lucian informed the Patriarch and, with his blessing, went with a group of men and dug up the four graves, Gamaliel having already told him in the dream which grave was which. A strong and fragrant odour from the relics of these saints filled the cave. St Stephen's relics were solemnly translated to Sion and there buried with ceremony, and the relics of the others were taken to a hill above the cave and laid to rest in a church there. Many healings of the sick were performed in those days over the relics of St Stephen. Later, they were taken to Constantinople. Thus the Lord crowned with great glory him who first shed his blood for His name.

**Blessed Basil the Fool for Christ of Moscow** - Basil's father was named Jacob and his mother Anna. At age sixteen, he dedicated himself to a life of asceticism as a "Fool for Christ" and in this difficult mortification persevered for seventy-two years. Altogether, he lived to be eighty-eight years old. He traveled barefooted, bareheaded and in rags. He did not have any permanent dwelling place. He admonished sinners, reprimanded the noblemen, prophesied the truth and had visions of distant places. Having suffered greatly from hunger, frost and from the insults of men, Blessed Basil presented his holy soul to God. Tsar Ivan, with the Metropolitan, attended his funeral. He is buried in Moscow in the Church of the Most-holy Birth-giver of God, later named after him.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Martyr Athanasius (1918). New Hieromartyr Platon (1937). Blessed Basil of Kuben Lake (1472). Hieromartyr Stephen, pope of Rome (257). Achair Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (21 c.). St. Marco of Belavinsk (Vologda) (1492). St. Friardus of Vindumitta (573). Translation of the relics of Martyrs Maximus (286), Dada, and Quinctilian at Dorostolum in Moesia. New Martyr Theodore of the Dardanelles (1690). Martyr Phocas.

**August 3 / 16 — Dormition Fast — Holy Salome the Myrrh-Bearer** - the mother of the holy Apostles James and John, the wife of Zebedee and daughter of Joseph, the betrothed of the most holy Mother of God, she served the Lord during His earthly life, and was made worthy to be among the first bearers of the tidings of His Resurrection; Our Holy Fathers Isaac, Dalmatus and Faustus - - Isaac is commemorated separately on May 30th. St Dalmatus was first an officer under the Emperor Theodosius the Great, who held him in great honour, but, when his spirit awakened within him, he scorned all that is of this world, abandoning his rank, and took his only son Faustus off to the outskirts of Constantinople, to St Isaac's community, where they were both tonsured as monks. Dalmatus consecrated himself utterly to please God in his life, which was a joy to the elder, Isaac. When Isaac came to the hour of death, he installed Dalmatus as abbot in his place, and the community later came to be called after Dalmatus. He sometimes fasted for forty days at a time, conquering by his fasting the invisible power of the demons. He took part in the Third Ecumenical Council in 431, and battled against the Nestorian heresy. Being pleasing to God, he entered peacefully into rest in the 5th century. His son Faustus supported his father in everything and, after a godly life, died peacefully in that community.

**Venerable Anthony the Roman** - The Monk Anthony the Roman was born at Rome in the year 1067 of rich parents, keeping to the Orthodox confession of faith, and he was raised by them in piety. As an orphan having lost his parents at age 17, he took up the study of the fathers in the Greek language. Afterwards he distributed part of his inheritance to the poor, and the other portion he put into a wooden box and threw it into the sea. And then he took monastic vows at one of the wilderness skete-monasteries, where he lived for 20 years. A persecution of the Latins against the Orthodox forced the brethren to separate. The Monk Anthony wandered about, going from place to place, until he came upon a large rock upon the solitary shore of the sea, where he lived for a whole year in fasting and prayer. A terrible storm, happening on 5 September 1105, tore away the stone on which the Monk Anthony was situated, and threw him into the sea. On the Feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God the stone halted 3 versts from Novgorod on the banks of the River Volkhov near the village of Volkhovsk. This event is testified to in the Novgorod Chronicles. At this place the monk, with the blessing of Sainted Nikita the Hermit (+ 1109, Comm. 14 May), founded a monastery in honour of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God. In another year fishermen fished out the box with the inheritance of the Monk Anthony, cast into the sea many years before. Having declared what was in the box, the monk took the box and bought land for the monastery. Spiritual asceticism was combined at the monastery with intense physical work. The Monk Anthony was concerned, that from the monastery income help should be rendered for the needy, and for orphans and widows. In the year 1117 the monk began construction with stone at the monastery. Up until our own day there has been preserved a cathedral in honour of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God - built during the lifetime of the monk in the years 1117-1119 by the reknown Novgorod architect Peter, and with wall-frescoes in the year 1125. In the year 1131 Sainted Niphont of Novgorod made the Monk Anthony hegumen of the monastery. He died on 3 August 1147 and was buried by Sainted Niphont.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerables Isaac, Dalmatus, and Faustus, ascetics of the Dalmatian Monastery, Constantinople (5th c.). New Hieromartyr Viacheslav deacon (1918). New Hieromartyr Nicholas priest (1938). Protomartyr Rajden of Tsromi and Nikozi, Georgia (457). Venerable Cosmas, eunuch and hermit of Palestine (6th c.). Venerable John, confessor, abbot of Patalaria Monastery. Venerable Theoctistus the Wonderworker of Optimaton. Venerable Theodora of Thessalonica. Nine Kherkheulidze brothers, their mother and sister, and 9,000 others, who suffered on the field of Marabde, Georgia (1625).

**4 / 17 August - Dormition Fast — The Seven Holy Youths of Ephesus - the "Seven Sleepers"- Maximilian, Iamblicus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodian (Constantine), and Antoninus**

- There was a great persecution of Christians under the Emperor Decius. The Emperor himself went to Ephesus, and there prepared a riotous festival in honour of dead idols and also a vicious slaughter of Christians. Seven youths, all of them soldiers, held themselves apart from the foul offering of sacrifice, and wholeheartedly begged the one God to save the Christian people. They were the sons of the most eminent administrator in Ephesus, and their names were: Maximilian, Iamblichus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodianus and Antoninus. When they were accused before the Emperor, they hid on a hill called Ochlon outside Ephesus, concealing themselves in a cave. When the Emperor discovered this, he commanded that the cave be walled-in. God then, in His far-seeing providence, let a miraculous and long-lasting sleep fall on the young men. The imperial courtiers Theodore and Rufinus, secret Christians, caused a copper catafalque with leaden plaques to be made, on which were written the names of these young men and their death by martyrdom under the Emperor Decius. More than two hundred years then passed. In the time of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450), there arose a great dispute about the resurrection of the dead, for there were some who doubted the resurrection. Emperor Theodosius was greatly grieved at this dispute among the faithful, and prayed God that He would in some way reveal the truth to the people. At that time of altercation in the Church, some shepherds of a certain Adolius, who owned Ochlon, began building pens for their sheep and took stone after stone from this cave. Then the youths awoke from their sleep, young and in full health as they had fallen asleep. This marvel was noised abroad on all sides, and Theodosius himself came with a great retinue and spoke apart with the young men. After a week, they again entered into sleep, the sleep of death, to await the General Resurrection. The Emperor wanted to place their bodies in golden coffins, but they appeared to him in a dream and told him to leave them in the earth, as they had been.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Hieromartyr Nicholas (Prozgorov) (1930). New Hieromartyr Michael, Martyrs Simeon and Demetrius (1937). Uncovering of the relics of St. Alexis, priest of Bortsumany, Nizhni-Novgorod (2000). Martyr Eudocia of Persia (362). Martyr Eleutherius of Constantinople (4th c.). Uncovering of the relics of St. Arsenius of Elasson. "Kazan-Penza" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. New Hieromartyr Cosmas of Aitolia, Equal to the Apostles (1779). Martyr Ia and 9,000 with her in Persia. Martyr Tathuil.

**‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡**

**Monday** - 1 Corinthians 9:13-18; Matthew 16:1-6

**Tuesday** - Matthew 10:16-22 (Matins Gospel); 1 Corinthians 10:5-12; Matthew 16:6-12; 1 Corinthians 10:12-22; Matthew 16:20-24; Romans 8:28-39 (Martyr Benjamin and those with him); Luke 21:12-19 (Martyr Benjamin and those with him)

**Wednesday** - 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 (Epistle, Cross); John 19:6-11; 13-20; 25-28; 30-35 (Gospel, Cross); Hebrews 11:33-12:2 (Epistle, Martyrs); Matthew 10:32-36; 11:1 (Gospel, Martyrs); Hebrews 2:11-18 (Epistle, At the Lesser Blessing of Waters); John 5:1-4 (Gospel, At the Lesser Blessing of Water)

**Thursday** - 1 Corinthians 10:28-11:7; Matthew 16:24-28; Galatians 5:22-6:2 (Blessed Basil); Matthew 11:27-30 (Blessed Basil); Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60 (Protomartyr); Matthew 21:33-42 (Protomartyr)

**Friday** - 1 Corinthians 11:8-22; Matthew 17:10-18; Galatians 5:22-6:2 (Saints); Luke 6:17-23 (Saints)

**Saturday** - Romans 13:1-10; Matthew 12:30-37



## The Dormition Fast

The Dormition fast was established as preceding the great feasts of the Transfiguration of the Lord and of the Dormition of the Mother of God. It lasts two weeks—from August 1/14–August 14/27 (old style/new style).

The Dormition fast comes down to us from the early days of Christianity.

We find a clear reference to the Dormition fast in a conversation of Leo the Great from around the year 450 A.D. “The Church fasts are situated in the year in such a way that a special abstinence is prescribed for each time. Thus, for spring there is the spring fast ]—the Forty Days[Great Lent; for summer there is the summer fast... [the Apostles’

fast]; for autumn there is the autumn fast, in the seventh month [Dormition fast]; for winter there is the winter fast [Nativity fast].”

St. Symeon of Thessalonica writes that, “The fast in August [Dormition fast] was established in honor of the Mother of God the Word; Who, foreknowing Her repose, ascetically labored and fasted for us as always, although She was holy and immaculate, and had no need for fasting. Thus, She especially prayed for us in preparation for being transported from this life to the future life, when Her blessed soul would be united through the Divine spirit with Her Son. Therefore, we also should fast and praise Her, emulating Her life, urging Her thereby to pray for us. Some, by the way, say that this fast was instituted on the occasion of two feasts—the Transfiguration and the Dormition. I also consider it necessary to remember these two feasts—one which gives us light, and the other which is merciful to us and intercedes for us.”

The Dormition fast is not as strict as the Great Fast, but it is stricter than the Apostle’s and Nativity fasts.

On Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays of the Dormition fast, the Church rubrics prescribe *xerophagy*, that is, the strictest fast of uncooked food (without oil); on Tuesdays and Thursdays, “with cooked food, but with no oil”; on Saturdays and Sundays wine and oil are allowed.

Until the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, when grapes and apples are blessed in the churches, the Church requires that we abstain from these fruits. According to the tradition of the holy fathers, “If one of the brethren should eat the grapes before the feast, then let him be forbidden for obedience’s sake to taste of the grapes during the entire month of August.”

On the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the Church rubrics allow fish. After that day, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the fruits of the new harvest would always be included in the meals.

The spiritual fast is closely united with the bodily, just as our soul is united with the body, penetrates it, enlivens it, and makes one united whole with it, as the soul and body make one living human being. Therefore, in fasting bodily we must at the same time fast spiritually: “Brothers, in fasting bodily let us also fast spiritually, severing all union with unrighteousness,” the Holy Church enjoins us.

The main thing in fasting bodily is restraint from abundant, tasty and sweet foods; the main thing in fasting spiritually is restraint from passionate, sinful movements that indulge our sensual inclinations and vices. The former is renunciation of the more nourishing foods for fasting food, which is less nourishing; the latter is the renunciation of our favorite sins for exercise in the virtues which oppose them.

The essence of the fast is expressed in the following Church hymn: “If you fast from food, my soul, but



are not purified of the passions, in vain do we comfort ourselves by not eating. For if the fast does not bring correction, then it will be hateful to God as false, and you will be like unto the evil demons, who never eat.”

The Great fast and the Dormition fast are particularly strict with regard to entertainment—in Imperial Russia even civil law forbade public masquerades and shows during these fasts.

**The Dormition fast begins on the feast of the  
“Procession of the Wood of the Life-Giving  
Cross of the Lord.”**

In the Greek horologion of 1897, the origin of this feast is explained: “Because of the illnesses that occur very often during August, the custom was established in Constantinople of processing the Precious Wood of the Cross through the roads and streets to sanctify places and prevent disease. On the eve of the feast it was carried out of the royal treasury and placed upon the holy table of the Great Church (the Hagia Sophia, dedicated to the Holy Wisdom of God). From that day until the Dormition of the Most Pure Theotokos, lityas were served throughout the city, and the Wood of the Cross was then offered to the people for veneration. This was the procession of the Precious Cross.”



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In the Russian Orthodox Church, this feast was linked with the remembrance of the Baptism of Russia in 988. The memory of the day of the Baptism of Russia was preserved in the Chronologies of the sixteenth century, which state that, “Grand Prince Vladimir of Kiev and All Rus was baptized on August 1.” In the *Discussion of active rites of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church on the Dormition*, written in 1627 at the request of Patriarch Philaret of Moscow and All Russia, the feast on August 1 is described: “During the procession on the day of the Precious Cross, there is a blessing of the waters for the enlightenment of the people, throughout the cities and villages.”

On this day, a feast was established of the All-Merciful Savior Christ God, and of the Most Pure Virgin, in honor of the victory of Grand Prince Andrei Bogolubsky over the Volga Bulgars, and of the Greek Emperor Michael over the Saracens.

According to Orthodox Church tradition, on this day the Cross is venerated (according to the rubrics of the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross during Great Lent), and a lesser blessing of the waters is served. Together with the blessing of the waters, new honey is also blessed. (This is where the Russian folk name for the feast, “Savior of the honey,” comes from.)

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