

8th Sunday After Pentecost

Martyr Eusignius & Forefeast of the Transfiguration

5 / 18 August



Resurrection Tropar, Tone 7: By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death / to the Thief, Thou didst open Paradise / for the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy! / and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God / to proclaim that Thou art risen / granting the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Forefeast tone 4: Come, you faithful, let us welcome the Transfiguration of Christ/ and let us joyfully cry as we celebrate the forefeast:/ The day of holy gladness has come./ The Lord has ascended Mount Tabor/ to radiate the beauty of His Divinity.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 7: The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, / for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. / Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: / The Saviour has

come to those in faith, / enter, you faithful to the Resurrection.

Kontakion of the Forefeast tone 7: All mortal nature is shining today with the divine Transfiguration/ and is crying with exultation:/ Christ the Saviour of all is transfigured.

Vespers

Lord I have Cried: Tone 7, on 10: Octoechos 4; Forefeast: 3 (Come, let us go up with Jesus); Martyr 3 (Dyed in the blood of thy flesh); G: Forefeast (Come, let us ascend); N: Sunday Dogmatic in the tone of the week

Aposticha: Octoechos; G/N: Forefeast (O Christ God Who wast transfigured).

Matins Gospel VIII

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptised none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptised in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptised the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptised any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

IS CHRIST DIVIDED?

The emphatic force of the word 'schism,' I mean the name itself, was a sufficient accusation. For it was not that they had become many parts, each entire within itself, but rather the One Body ...had perished ...'That each one of you says,' for the corruption did not pervade a part, but the whole of the Church ...By a kind of divine art he does away with their swelling pride on this point, not with the efficacy of baptism, but with the folly of those who were puffed up at having been baptisers: first, by showing that the Gift is not theirs, and secondly by thanking God for it. For Baptism truly is a great thing, but its greatness is not the work of the person baptising, but of Him who is invoked in the Baptism ...Great

indeed is Baptism, and without baptism it is impossible to obtain the kingdom...But prove to me that Peter and Paul were eloquent. You cannot: for they were 'unlearned and ignorant men!'

St. John Chrysostom. Homily III on 1 Corinthians I, 1, 3, 6, 8. B#56, pp. 10-14

The Gospel According To St. Matthew 14: 14-22

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

"Give ye them to eat!" said Christ to His disciples. And He said this to them as if answering their advice: "This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals." But Christ insisted, "Give ye them to eat!" Then the disciples said to Him, "[Teacher], we have here but five loaves, and two fishes" (Mt. 14:15-17).

Let us put ourselves in their position: a tremendous crowd—the men alone were about five thousand, not counting women and children. With the approach of darkness, the places where bread was sold would be closed. So this crowd of many thousands faced a hungry night in the wilderness. With them were little children. While Christ spoke, all physical needs were silent; but now He fell silent and the people were already beginning to feel hungry. What would happen next? People would become weak, children would cry from hunger, and no one would be able to fall asleep. The result would be despondency, disillusionment, and maybe even murmuring. We believed Thee; we came in search of the Kingdom of God and its Truth. That's why we came to Thee here. Thou didst promise that everything else would be added to us. But here Thy promise has not been fulfilled. We don't even have the food necessary for our children; and night is approaching, a dark southern night.

Yes, it's possible to understand the attitude of the disciples. Even their love for their Teacher may have prompted them to warn Him. And He, when they mentioned the inadequacy of their food supply—five loaves of bread and two fish—He commanded the people to sit down on the grass in groups, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, looked upon heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, gave them to His disciples, and His disciples to the people. And they all ate and were filled and gathered the remaining pieces into twelve full baskets (Mt. 14:18-20). A great, unprecedented miracle. And this miracle is historic!

But the power hidden in these five words of Christ, "Give ye them to eat!" many times exceeds both the physical filling of the crowd of many thousands and the two thousand years which separate us from that time.

"Give ye them to eat!" Did this mean physical food only? No. It meant everything that the God-Man has brought to earth: salvation of the human race, spiritual food, all the sacraments which were established by the Lord, the entire Church of Christ, Catholic and Apostolic. But the Apostles were mortal and the Church is eternal. The Apostles would need successors: deacons, priests, bishops. In such a way the Church will exist eternally and feed believers. She will give them that which no one and nothing on earth can give. With the words: "Give ye them to eat!" Christ makes His Church Apostolic. And at that moment, when Christ commanded the people to sit down on the grass in groups—this is the great moment of the organisation of the Church. Remember Holy Russia. It consisted of separate groups—parishes—and they all merged into one great whole—the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

In this way the Church of Christ now exists and will exist until the end of the ages. Let us always strive for Her. And if for some reason we cannot always abide in Her physically, then let us always live psychologically within the Church cycle. And we will find food which leads us into Eternal Life. Only in the Church do we find the greatest Sacrament of Christ, the Sacrament of His Body and Blood which contains Life Eternal.

One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei

Saints of the Week

5 / 18 August - Forefeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast — The Holy Martyr Eusignius - he was a soldier under the Emperor Maximian, the Emperor Constantine the Great and Constantine's sons, and was present at the martyrdom of the holy martyr Basiliscus. He saw many angels, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as He received the soul of this holy martyr from the angel's hands. He was a general under Constantine, and saw the Cross that appeared to the Emperor. Spending a full sixty years in military service, he withdrew from it in the time of Constantine's sons and went to Antioch, his home town. There he lived a godly life of fasting, prayer and good works. In the time of Julian the Apostate, two men at variance in the street called him to judge between them. He adjudged right to the righteous, at which the one at fault became enraged, went to the Emperor and denounced Eusignius as a Christian. The Emperor summoned him to trial, at which he fiercely denounced the Emperor for his apostasy from the Faith and rebuked him by citing the shining example of the great Constantine. The proud Julian ordered that he be beheaded. Eusignius suffered in great old age, in the year 362, and went to the Kingdom of heaven.

St. Oswald, king and martyr (642) - In the year 617 the king of Northumbria was killed by King Redwald of the East Angles. His three sons, including Oswald, fled to Scotland, and there they became Christians. They were baptised at Iona. Two brothers soon lost their faith, Oswald's persisted. And when his brothers were killed by the British King Cadwalla, Oswald gathered an army and marched against him. The day before the battle he made his soldiers construct a wooden cross. Oswald, himself knelt down, holding the cross in position until enough earth had been thrown in the hole to make it stand firm. Then he prayed, summoning his army to join him with the words, "Let us all kneel together and ask the true, living and almighty God in his mercy to protect us from the arrogant savagery of our enemies, for He knows that we fight in a just cause to save our nation." Oswald defeated Cadwalla, recovered his father's throne, and asked the monks of Iona to send missionaries to his kingdom. St Aidan was sent, and King Oswald gave him the island of Lindisfarne as his episcopal see. "The king always listened humbly and readily to Aidan's advice," says venerable Bede, "And while the Bishop, who was not yet fluent in English, preached the Gospel, it was delightful to hear the King himself interpreting the word of God to his nobles and leaders." Oswald invited other Scots to missionise his kingdom. He gave money and lands to establish monasteries and churches. The pagan king of Mercia killed him at the battle of Maserfield, when he had reigned no more than seven years. His last prayer, as his enemies pressed around him, was "O God, be merciful to their souls." His head was placed in St. Cuthbert's coffin, and found there centuries later in 1827.

Also commemorated on this day: New Hieromartyr Stephen priest (1918). New Martyrs Eudocia and Novices Daria, Daria, and Maria (1919). New Hieromartyr Simon bishop of Ufa (1921). New Hieromartyr John deacon (1938). Venerable Job the Gorge-dweller on the Mezen River (Solovki) (1628). Hieromartyrs Fabian (250) and Antherus (Antheros) (257), popes of Rome. Martyr Pontius at Cimella in France (257). Martyrs Cantidius, Cantidian and Sibelius (Sobel), of Egypt. Righteous Nonna (374), mother of St. Gregory the Theologian. Venerable John (Jacob) of Neamp, the Chozebite (1960). New Martyr Chrestos of Preveza (1668). Uncovering of the relics (1967) of St. Arsenius the New of Paros (1877).

6 / 19 August - Dormition Fast - The Holy Transfiguration Of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ - the second "Feast of the Saviour" in August - Blessing of Grapes & Other Fruits —
Epistle: The Second Letter of Peter : 1:10-19 & The Gospel According to St. Matthew 17:1-9

In the Orthodox tradition today is reckoned as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. The Transfiguration is par excellence the feast of Christ's divine glory. Like Theophany, it is a feast of light: 'Today on Tabor in the manifestation of Thy Light, O Word, Thou unaltered Light from the Light of the unbegotten Father, we have seen the Father as Light and the Spirit as Light, guiding with light the whole creation' (exapostilarion). Nor is this the only parallel between the two feasts. Like Theophany, although less explicitly, the Transfiguration is a revelation of the Holy Trinity. On Tabor, as at the baptism in Jordan, the Father speaks from heaven, testifying to the divine Sonship of Christ: and the Spirit is also present on this occasion not in the likeness of a dove, but under the form of dazzling light, surrounding Christ's person and overshadowing the whole mountain. This dazzling light is the light of the Spirit.

The Transfiguration, then, is a feast of divine glory - more specifically, of the glory of the Resurrection. The ascent of Mount Tabor came at a critical point in Our Lord's ministry, just as he was setting out upon His last journey to Jerusalem, which He knew was to end in humiliation and death. To strengthen His disciples for the trials that lay ahead, He chose this particular moment to reveal to them something of His external splendour, 'as far as they were able to hear it' (Troparion of the feast). He encouraged them - and all of us - to look beyond the suffering of the Cross to the glory of the Resurrection. The light of the Transfiguration, however, foreshadows not only Christ's own Resurrection on the third day, but equally the Resurrection glory of the righteous at His Second Coming. The glory which shone from Jesus on Tabor is a glory in which all mankind is called to share. On Mount Tabor we see Christ's human nature - the human substance which He took from us - filled with splendour, 'made godlike' or 'deified'. What has happened to human nature in Christ can happen also to the humanity of

Christ's followers. The Transfiguration, then, reveals to us the full potentiality of our human nature: it shows us the glory which our manhood once possessed and the glory which, by God's grace, it will again recover at the Last Day.

This is a cardinal aspect of the present feast, to which the liturgical texts frequently revert. At His Transfiguration, it is said, the Lord 'in His own person showed them the nature of man, arrayed in the original beauty of the Image' (Great Vespers, postiche). 'Today Christ on Mount Tabor has changed the darkened nature of Adam, and filling it with brightness He has made it godlike' (Small Vespers, aposticha). 'Thou wast transfigured upon Mount Tabor, showing the exchange mortal men will make with Thy glory at Thy second and fearful coming, O Saviour' (Matins, sessional hymn).

The feast of the Transfiguration, therefore, is not simply the commemoration of a past event in the life of Christ. Possessing also an 'eschatological' dimension, it is turned towards the future - towards the 'splendour of the Resurrection' at the Last Day, towards the 'beauty of the Divine Kingdom' which all Christians hope eventually to enjoy.

It is the custom to bring grapes and fruit to the church on this day. They are placed on a table in the centre of the church and blessed by the priest at the end of the Liturgy.

Priest: O God our Saviour who wast pleased to call Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Vine, and in Him hast granted us the fruit of immortality: do Thou now bless this fruit of the vine lying here, and make us Thy servants, who eat of it, partakers of the True Vine. Keep our lives from harm and ever give us peace, and adorn us with the eternal gifts of grace that none can take away: at the intercessions of our most pure Lady, the Theotokos and ever Virgin Mary, and all of Thy saints who have pleased Thee down the ages. For Thou art a good God who lovest mankind, and unto The Father without beginning, together with Thine Only-begotten Son and Thy most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, do we ascribe glory, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Also commemorated on this day: New Hieromartyrs Dimitry (Lyubimov), archbishop of Gdov (1938) and Priest Nicholas Prozorov (1930), priest Andrew (Zimin), priest Sergius (Tikhomirov), Domnik, Lidia and Mary (Zimins). New Martyr Abbacum of Thessalonica (1628). St. Theoctistus, bishop of Chernigov (1123).

7 / 20 August - The Venerable Martyr Dometius - born in Persia as a pagan during the reign of Emperor Constantine. He became acquainted with the Faith of Christ as a young man, abandoned paganism and was baptized. So much did Dometius love the True Faith that he left everything worldly and was tonsured a monk in a monastery near the town of Nisibis. He lived for some time among the brethren and then withdrew to a life of silence to be with an a certain elder Archmandrite Urbel, about whom it is said that he did not eat anything cooked for sixty years. The elder Urbel ordained Dometius a deacon and when he wanted to compel him to receive the rank of a priest, Dometius withdrew to an isolated mountain and settled in a cave. He attained such a high degree of perfection through fasting, prayer, all night vigils and godly-thoughts that he cured the sick. When Julian the Apostate came to those regions, he heard of Dometius and sent men, who sealed him alive in the cave along with two of his disciples. Thus, this saint of God died and took up habitation in the Kingdom of God in the year 363 A.D.

The Venerable Or, Hermit of Thebaid - Or attained great perfection through the greatest mortification. When he firmly established himself and attained holiness in solitude, he then gradually established several monasteries and was a superb spiritual leader and teacher of many monks. Rufinus, who visited him describes Or in the following way: "In his dress [habit], he resembled an angel of God; a ninety-year old elder with a long beard, as white as snow; externally was very pleasant. His gaze shone with something super human." Often times, he saw the angels of God. He especially endeavoured never to speak an untruth. He had great temptations from the demons but overpowered them all soberly and courageously. He received Holy Communion daily. On one occasion, one of his disciples reminded him that the Feast of the Resurrection had come and that it should be celebrated. Hearing this, Or came out, raised his hands to heaven and spent three days in prayer without rest. He explained to his disciple: "For the monk, this is the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ: to elevate his mind and to unite it with God." He rested in deep old age about the year 390 A.D.

The Holy Martyrs Marinus and Asterius - Marinus was a soldier and Asterius was a Roman senator. At the time of Emperor Gallienus, St. Marinus served as a soldier in Caesarea in Palestine. Marinus was beheaded for the sake of the Faith of Christ. Asterius, the senator, also a Christian, was present at his martyrdom. He removed his dolman and, with it, wrapped the body of the martyr, placed it on his shoulders, took it and honourably buried it. Seeing this, the pagans beheaded him also. They both died honourably for Christ about the year 260 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: Translation of the relics (1832) of St. Metrophanes, first bishop of Voronezh (1703). Venerable Anthony of Optina (1865). New Hieromartyrs Alexander, Peter, Michael, John, Demetrius and Alexis priests, Elisey deacon and Hieromartyr Athanasius (1937). New Hieromartyr Basil priest (1938). Venerable Poemen (Pimen) the Much-ailing of the Kiev Caves (1110). Venerable Pimen, faster of the Kiev Caves (13th c.). Venerable Mercurius, bishop of Smolensk (Kiev Caves) (1239). Virgin Potamia of Alexandria. Venerable Theodosius the New, healer of Peloponnesus (862). St. Hierotheus of Hungary (10th c.). St. Stephen I king of Hungary (1038). Venerable Dometius of Philotheou, Mt. Athos (16th c.). St. Theodora of Sihla (18th c.). Holy Ten Thousand Ascetics of Thebes. Hieromartyr Narcissus, patriarch of Jerusalem (213). Venerable Hyperechius of The Paradise. Venerable Sozon of Nicomedia. Venerable Nicanor, wonderworker of Mt. Callistratus (1519). Martyr Afra of Augsburg (304).

8 / 21 August - Dormition Fast - Saint Emilian the Confessor, Bishop of Cyzicus - Emilian served as bishop in Cyzicus during the reign of the nefarious Emperor Leo the Armenian, the iconoclast. Since he did not want to submit to the decrees of the emperor concerning the removal of icons from the churches, Emilian and other Orthodox bishops were banished into exile. He spent five years in exile, enduring much pain and humiliation for the sake of Christ. Emilian died in the year 820 A.D. and took up habitation among the citizens of heaven.

Saint Myron Miracle-Worker and Bishop of Crete - At first, Myron was married and engaged in farming. Myron, gladly and abundantly distributed the fruits of his land to needy people. At one time, he encountered unknown thieves stealing wheat from his threshing floor. Not telling them who he was, St. Myron helped the thieves fill the sacks, lift them on their backs and to escape. Because of his exceptional virtues, Myron was ordained a presbyter and after that consecrated a bishop. He was a great miracle-worker and performed many good and mighty works in the name of the Lord Jesus. Myron died about the year 350 A.D. in the hundredth year of his life.

The Holy Neo-Martyrs Triandaphyllus and Spaso- Triandaphyllus was born in Zagora and Spaso was born in Radoviste in the Diocese of Strumica. They were both Slavs. Both were young and simple men. But their love for Christ was more precious to them than this world or this life. They gave their lives and did not betray Christ. They suffered at the hands of the Turks for the Faith of Christ: Triandaphyllus in Constantinople in the year 1680 A.D. and Spaso in Thessalonica in the year 1794 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Philaret of Ichalka, Ivanovo (1913). New Hieromartyr Joseph (1918). New Hieromartyr Nicholas priest (1937). New Hieromartyr Nicodemus (Krotov) archbishop of Kostroma and Galich (1938). Venerable Gregory, iconographer of the Kiev Caves (12th c.). Translation of the relics (1566) of Venerables Zosimas (1478) and Sabbatius (1435) of Solovki. Second translation of the relics (1992) of Venerables Zosimas, Sabbatius, and Herman of Solovki. Martyrs Eleutherius and Leonides of Constantinople, and many infants with them. Venerable Gregory of Sinai (Mt. Athos) (1346). "Tolga" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (1314). Martyr Gormizdas of Persia (418). Twelve Ascetics of Egypt. Two Martyrs of Tyre. Martyr Styrcius. St. Gregory, wonderworker of the Kiev Caves (14th c.). St. Zosimas the Sinaite of Tumana Monastery, Serbia (14th c.). Monk-martyr Euthymius, abbot of the Monastery of St. John the Baptist at Garesja, Georgia (1804).

9 / 22 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast - Wine & Oil Allowed – The Holy Apostle Matthias - Epistle: The Acts of St. Apostles 1:12-17 & The Gospel According to St. Luke 9:1-6

Tropar of St. Matthias, Tone 3: Thy divine Spirit choose thee to fill the twelve-numbered rank of the apostles, O glorious one. And with them thou didst proclaim the kenosis of the Word, and wast made wondrous, O Apostle Matthias. Therefore, intercede for them that honour thee, that they be granted forgiveness of sins and great mercy.

Kondak of St. Matthias, Tone 4: Like the rays of the sun hast thy word gone forth unto all the world, and it enlighteneth with grace the Church of the nations, O wondrous Apostle Matthias.

Born in Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah, he was a pupil of St Simeon the Host of God in Jerusalem. When the Lord began preaching the Kingdom of God, Matthias was among those who loved the Lord with all their hearts, heard His words and saw His works with delight. Matthias was at first included among the seventy, lesser apostles of Christ, but, after the Lord's Resurrection, because the place of Judas the betrayer fell vacant, the apostles chose this Matthias by lot in Judas's place as one of the twelve Great Apostles (Acts 1: 23) . Receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Matthias began to preach the Gospel, first in Judea then in Ethiopia, where he suffered greatly for the sake of Christ. It is held that he preached also in Macedonia, where they tried to bind him, but he became invisible to his tormentors and thus escaped danger. When he was imprisoned, the Lord appeared to him, gave him courage and set him free. He finally returned to work in Judea. There he was arrested and taken for trial before Ananias the High

Priest, before whom he fearlessly witnessed to Christ. Ananias (the same who had earlier killed the Apostle James) condemned Matthias to death. They took Matthias out and stoned him to death, then cut off his head with an axe (the Roman way of executing those condemned to death. The hypocritical Jews used this method on the dead man, to prove to the Romans that he had opposed Rome). So died this great apostle of Christ, and went to the eternal joy of his Lord.

The Holy Martyr Antony - Anthony was a citizen of Alexandria. Brought before the pagan prince, he freely confessed his faith and was tortured, flogged and scrapped but he would not deny Christ. Finally, he was thrown into a fire and, from the midst of the fire, he spoke to the people: "My beloved brethren, do not be a slave to the body but rather concern yourself more about the soul which is given to you by God and is kindred to God and to the heavenly hosts." And so, instructing his people and burning in the fire, Anthony gave up his holy soul to God.

Also commemorated on this day: Synaxis of All Saints of Solovki. St. Philaret, archbishop of Chernigov (1866). New Martyr Margaret (1918). Venerable Psoes of Egypt (4th c.). Martyrs Julian, Marcian, John, James, Alexius, Demetrius, Photius (Phocas), Peter, Leontius, and Mary, of Constantinople (726). Venerable Macarius, abbot of Oredezh (1532). St. Alexis Medvedkov, archpriest of Uzine (1934). The Restoration of the Temple of the 40 Martyrs.

10 / 23 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast — The Holy Martyrs Laurence the Archdeacon (who was broiled to death under Decius) and Pope Sixtus, and others with them - When Pope Stephen was killed, St Sixtus was installed in his place. Sixtus was an Athenian, first a philosopher and later a Christian. At that time, the Roman bishops were being killed one after the other in such quick succession that to be made Bishop of Rome was tantamount to a death sentence. The Emperor Valerian was determined to stamp out Christianity, and Pope Sixtus was quickly brought to trial with two of his deacons, Felicicius and Agapitus. When they were being taken off to prison, Laurence said to the Pope: 'Where are you going, Father, without your son? Whither, O Bishop, without your archdeacon?' The Pope consoled him with the prophecy that he would undergo yet greater suffering for Christ, and follow him very soon. And indeed, as soon as Sixtus and the two deacons had been beheaded, Laurence was arrested. He had been inspired to set in order both his own affairs and those of the Church. As treasurer, he had taken all the Church's valuables to the house of a widower, Cyriacus. At that time, he healed. Cyriacus of terrible pains in the head by the touch of his hand, and restored the sight of a blind man, Crescention. Thrown into prison, Laurence there healed an elderly prisoner, Lucillus, of blindness and baptised him. Seeing this, the warder, Hippolytus, also received baptism, and later suffered for Christ. As Laurence would not deny Christ, but strongly counselled the Emperor Valerian to abandon his false gods, he was beaten on the face with stones and on his body with scorpions (chains with poisoned teeth). A soldier, Romanus, who was present at the torture, came to belief in Christ and was immediately beheaded. They finally put Laurence on an iron grid and lit a fire underneath. Roasting in the fire, Laurence gave thanks to God, and mocked the Emperor for his paganism. When he had given his pure and heroic soul to God, Hippolytus took his body by night, first to the house of Cyriacus and then to a cave, where he buried it. St Laurence suffered, together with the others, in 258.

Also commemorated on this day: Blessed Laurence, fool-for-Christ at Kaluga (1515). New Hieromartyr Viacheslav priest (1918). New Hieromartyr Athanasius priest (1937). Synaxis of the Saints of Solovki Monastery. Uncovering and Translation of the relics of Venerable Sabbas of Storozhev or Zvenigorod (1998). Martyr Romanus, soldier, of Rome (258). Six Martyrs of Bizin. Synaxis of New Martyrs and Confessors of Solovki.

11 / 24 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast - The Holy Martyr Euplus - a deacon from Catania in Sicily. The Emperor Diocletian sent a commander, Pentagurus, to Sicily to exterminate any Christians that he found there. Pentagurus did not find a single Christian, for they had hidden from the persecutor and did not show themselves. Then someone accused Euplus of taking a book to some secret Christians and reading to them. This book was the holy Gospel. He was therefore soon taken for trial, and, with the book hung round his neck, put in prison. After seven days of imprisonment and hunger, he was put to torture. When they whipped him with iron flails, Euplus mockingly said to the torturing judge: 'You fool; don't you see that these tortures are, to me, like a cobweb? If you can, find other, harsher tortures, as these are like playthings.' Finally, they led Christ's martyr to the scaffold. Then St Euplus opened the holy Gospel and read from it to the people for a long time. Many turned to the Christian faith, and St Euplus was beheaded, in the year 304, and went to the heavenly Kingdom. His wonderworking relics lie in a village near Naples called Vico della Batonia.

The Holy Martyr Susanna the Virgin, and others with her - the daughter of a Roman presbyter Gavinius and the niece of Pope Gaius. Gaius and Gavinius were of royal lineage and kinsmen to the then Emperor Diocletian. Emperor Diocletian had an adopted son Maximian Galerius, whom he [Diocletian] wanted to marry Susanna. But Susanna, completely dedicated to Christ the Lord, did not want to hear at all about marriage and particularly not about marriage with an unbaptized man. Those who asked her to

marry the emperor's son, the aristocrats, Claudia and Maxima, Susanna converted to the Christian Faith along with their entire household. Enraged by this, the emperor ordered that the executioners take Claudia and Maxima, with their families to Ostia where they were burned alive and their ashes thrown into the sea. However, Susanna was beheaded in the home of Gavinius. The emperor's wife Serena, secretly a Christian, removed Susanna's martyred body at night and honourably buried it, and Pope Gaius converted that house where Susanna was slain into a church and celebrated services there. Shortly following the suffering of this bride of Christ, her father Gavinius and her uncle Pope Gaius also suffered. They all suffered honourably for the Lord and received the wreath of glory in the years 295 A.D. and 296 A.D.

St Niphon, Patriarch of Constantinople - born in Greece. He was tonsured a monk in his youth and, at first, lived a life of asceticism outside the Holy Mountain [Athos] and, after that, on the Holy Mountain in various monasteries, remaining the longest in Vatopedi and Dionysiou. He was loved by all the holy Agiorites as much for his rare wisdom, as well as for his unusual meekness. He became the Bishop of Thessalonica against his will. Two years later, he journeyed to Constantinople on business and there, was elected to the vacant throne of the patriarchate. He was banished by the Sultan to Jedrene where he lived in exile. The Wallachian [Romanian] Prince Radul besought him from the Sultan and named Niphon as archbishop of the Wallachians. Because of Radul's transgressions, Niphon departed Wallachia and returned to Mount Athos to the community of Dionysiou where he lived a life of asceticism until his ninetieth year, when he took up habitation in the Kingdom of God in the year 1460 A.D. He composed the "Prayer of Absolution" read at the Burial Service: [O Lord Jesus Christ, by His divine grace, as also by the gift and power vouchsafed unto His holy Disciples and Apostles, that they should bind and Loose the sins of men: (For He said to them: Receive you The Holy Spirit: whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins you retain they are retained. And whatsoever you shall bind or loose upon earth shall be bound or loosed also in Heaven. By the same power, also, transmitted to us from them, this my spiritual child, [Name], is absolved through me, unworthy though I be, from all things wherein, as mortal [He-She] have sinned against God, whether in word or deed or thought and with all [His-Her] senses, whether voluntary or involuntary; whether with knowledge or through ignorance. If [He-She] be under the ban or excommunication of a bishop or if a priest; or has sinned by any oath; or has been bound, as a man, by any sins whatsoever, but has repented him thereof, with contrition of heart: [He-She] is now absolved from all those faults and bonds. May all those things which have proceeded from the weakness of [His-her] mortal nature be consigned to oblivion and be remitted to [Him-Her]: Through His loving-kindness; through the prayers of our Most-holy and Blessed and Glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary; of all the holy, glorious and all-laudable Apostles and all of the Saints. Amen.]

St. Blane, bishop of Bute (Dunblane) - Bishop and Confessor in Scotland, born on the island of Bute, date unknown; d. 590. His feast is kept on 10 August. He was a nephew of St. Cathan, and was educated in Ireland under Sts. Comgall and Kenneth; he became a monk, went to Scotland, and eventually was bishop among the Picts. There can be no doubt that devotion to St. Blane was, from early times, popular in Scotland. His monastery became the site of the Cathedral of Dunblane. There was a church of St. Blane in Dumfries and another at Kilblane. The saint died in 590. The ruins of his church at Kingarth, Bute, where his remains were buried, are still standing and form an object of great interest to antiquarians; the bell of his monastery is preserved at Dunblane.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Basil and Theodore of the Kiev Caves (1098). Venerable Theodore (in monasticism Theodosius) of the Kiev Caves, prince of Ostrog (1483). St. John, recluse of Svyatogorsk Monastery (1867). Venerable Passarion of Palestine. Commemoration of the Miracle (1816) of St. Spyridon (348) on Kerkyra (Corfu) with the Hagarenes. New Martyrs Anastasius of Asomaton in Asia Minor and Demetrius of Lesbos (1816). St. Taurinus, first bishop of Evreux, Gaul (2nd c.). Martyrs Neophytus, Zeno, Gaius, Mark, Macarius, and Gaianus.

‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡

Monday - Luke 9:28-36 (Matins Gospel); 2 Peter 1:10-19; Matthew 17:1-9

Tuesday - John 10:1-9 (Matins Gospel); 1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Matthew 18:18-22; 19:1-2; 13-15; Hebrews 7:26-8:2 (St. Metrophanes); John 10:9-16 (St. Metrophanes)

Wednesday - 1 Corinthians 13:4-14:5; Matthew 20:1-16

Thursday - John 21:15-25 (Matins Gospel); 1 Corinthians 14:6-19; Matthew 20:17-28; Acts 1:12-17, 21-26 (Apostle); Luke 9:1-6 (Apostle)

Friday - 1 Corinthians 14:26-40; Matthew 21:12-14, 17-20

Saturday - Romans 14:6-9; Matthew 15:32-39

HOMILY

-About how God whitens the repentant sinners-

"Though your sins be like scarlet, they may be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

O, the boundless mercy of God! In His greatest wrath upon the faithless and ungrateful people, upon the people "laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters" (Isaiah 1:4), as "princes [rulers] of Sodom" (Isaiah 1:10) and upon the people who have become as the "people of Gomorrah" (Isaiah 1:10) - in such wrath, the Lord does not abandon mercy but rather calls them to repentance. Just as after terrible lightnings, a gentle rain falls. Such is the Lord long-suffering [patient] and full of mercy and "neither will He keep His anger forever" (Psalm 103:9). Only if sinners cease to commit evil and learn to do good and turn to God with humility and repentance they will become "white as snow." The Lord is mighty and willing. No one, except Him, is able to cleanse the sinful soul of man from sin and, by cleansing, to whiten it. No matter how often linen is washed in water with ashes and soap, no matter how often it is washed and rewashed, it cannot receive whiteness until it is spread under the light of the sun. Thus, our soul cannot become white, no matter how often we cleanse it by our own effort and labor even with the help of all legal means of the law until we, at last, bring it beneath the feet of God, spread out and opened wide so that the light of God illumines it and whitens it. The Lord condones and even commends all of our labor and effort, i.e., He wants us to bathe our soul in tears, by repentance to constrain it by the pangs of the conscience to press it, to clothe it with good deeds and in the end of ends, He calls us to Him: "Come now," says the Lord, "and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18). That is, I will look at you and I will see if there is Me in you and you will look upon Me as in a mirror and you will see what kind of person you are. O Lord, slow to anger, have mercy on us before the last wrath of that Dreadful Day.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

