

9th Sunday After Pentecost

Martyrs Photius and Anicetas & Afterfeast of Transfiguration

12 / 25 August

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 8: Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! / Thou didst endure the three-day burial / to free us from our sufferings! / O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.

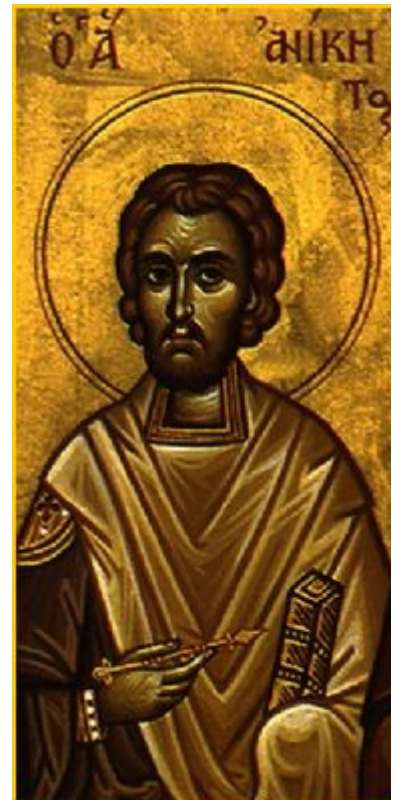
Troparion of the Feast Tone 7 : Thou wast transfigured on the mount, O Christ God,/ revealing Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it./ Let Thine everlasting light shine upon us sinners/ through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to Thee.

Troparion of the Martyrs Photius and Anicetas Tone 3 : United in the Faith, your nearness of kinship/ was made radiant by your divine struggles,/ O blessed Martyr Anicetas and Photius servant of Light./ Pray that those who hymn your holy contest/ may be granted the forgiveness of their sins.

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

Kontakion of the Feast Tone 7: Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God,/ and Thy disciples beheld Thy glory as far as they were capable,/ that when they should see Thee crucified,/ they might know that Thy suffering was voluntary/ and might proclaim to the world/ that Thou art indeed the reflection of the Father.

Kontakion of the Martyrs Photius and Anicetas Tone 3 : When godly Photius saw thee contesting in the stadium,/ O Athlete Anicetas,/ he joined thee in the struggle and victoriously suffered all the torments./ Together with him intercede with Christ our God/ that He deliver us from all dangers.



Vespers

Lord I have Cried - Tone 8, on 10: Octoechos 4; Feast: 3 (Let us zealously approach Mount Tabor—from the Vespers Aposticha); Martyrs 3 (Ye were not daunted); G: Feast (The cloud of the Law); N: Sunday Dogmatic in the tone of the week.

Aposticha: Octoechos; G/N: Feast (Disclosing a little of the radiance).

Matins Gospel IX

EPISTLE: Corinthians 3:9-17

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

WE ARE GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS... YOU ARE GOD'S BUILDING

His assertion that they are one, refers to their inability to do anything without 'God who gives the increase' ...Since this had a tendency to make men more indolent - I mean all being esteemed as one - whether they had laboured much or little, observe how he sets this right. He says, 'But each will receive

his own reward according to his own labour' ...Do you see how to them he has also assigned no small task, having before laid down that the whole is of God? ...For the field is not called the husbandman's, but the householder's .. Again, the building is not the workman's but the master's ...Upon this then let us build, and as a foundation let us cleave to it as a branch to a vine; and let there be no interval between us and Christ. For the branch by its adherence draws in the sustenance, and the building stands because it is cemented together ...Let us then not merely keep hold of Christ, but let us be cemented to Him (Cf. Ps.73:27)...Let us cleave to Him ...by our works ...He is 'the Head,' we are 'the body'...He is 'a foundation,' we are 'a building'; He 'a vine,' we 'branches'; He 'the Bridegroom' we 'the bride'; He 'the Shepherd,' we 'the sheep,' He is 'the Way,' we 'they who walk therein.' Again, we are 'a temple,' He 'the indweller,' He the 'first begotten,' we 'the brethren': He 'the Heir,' we 'the heirs together with Him' ...He 'the Resurrection,' we 'those who rise again'; He 'the light,' we 'the enlightened.' All these indicate unity, and they allow no void interval, not even the slightest. For he who removes but to a little distance will go on till he has become very far distant.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily VIII on I Corinthians III, 6, 7. B#56, pp. 46-47.

The Gospel According To St. Matthew 14: 22-34

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.

THE STORM ON THE TIBERIAN SEA

Last Sunday's Gospel reading told us of a great miracle: the feeding of an enormous crowd of many thousands with five loaves and two fish. The disciples of Christ themselves, through whose hands this miracle was performed, were dumbfounded. And as the Gospel says, Christ at once compelled them to enter a boat and go before Him to the other shore while He dismissed the crowd. "And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea" (Mt. 14:22-25).

A wonderful image of the Church of Christ is drawn for us here. The boat, as it were, represents the Church: its sides are the rules and canons of the Church; the disciples are all of us Christians; and the stormy sea is the sea of our life. And now too Christ has ascended a mountain, which means He is sitting at the right hand of the Father. He sees our Church boat and directs it. The Gospel says that the disciples went to the other side, not of their own will, but "straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship and go before Him unto the other side" (Mt. 14: 22). This means they were doing it out of obedience to Christ. And when they found themselves in danger, He walked to them on the water.

"And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying. . . It is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus"(Mt. 14:26-29).

Notice this moment: Christ did not call Peter, but only permitted Peter. Here obedience changed to boldness, this came from Peter himself. He felt such a surge of faith, such elation, that everything seemed possible to him. But here something happened. A wave, a high wave for a second hid Christ from Peter. He found himself alone. At once cold reason set to work. It was as if he came to himself and thought, what was he doing? Foolishness. Reason took from him the lightness of faith in which he walked, and he started to drown. A desperate cry rang out: "Lord, save me." And immediately Christ stretched forth His hand to him (Mt. 14: 30-31).

What happened to Peter? Well, what happened to him can happen to each of us: he became frightened, his faith was shaken. And this happened because he stepped over the side of the boat. What a profound lesson is hidden for us here: in Christian living there should be evenness, there should be quiet. And for this to be so, we must never step over the side of the Church boat. We must keep the statutes of the Church, must live the life of the Church. And then, even if we find ourselves amid the stormy sea of

life, we will be able to cry out, "Lord, save me." And He, the Merciful One, will stretch out His saving hand to us, too, as He did to Peter, and we will find ourselves in the boat of the Church, and a great calm will come.

The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei.

Saints of the Week

12 / 25 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast - The Holy Martyrs Anicetas and Photius - the Emperor Diocletian at one time visited the city of Nicomedia with the evil intention of utterly exterminating the Christians there. But, when he began his merciless torture of the Christians, St Anicetas, one of the governors of the city, presented himself before him and courageously confessed before the Emperor his faith in Christ the Lord, God incarnate in the flesh for our salvation. Anicetas also denounced the worship of idols as that of deaf and dumb stones, unworthily worshipped by ignorant men. The furious Emperor commanded that his tongue be cut out, but Anicetas, by the power of God, continued to speak. Then a lion was let loose on him, which fawned about him. At that moment, the Temple of Hercules fell down. Photius, a kinsman of Anicetas', seeing the wonders and his kinsman's endurance, embraced him, confessed that he himself was a Christian and cried out to the Emperor: 'You should be ashamed, you idolater; your gods are nothing!' The Emperor ordered that he be beheaded immediately, but the executioner, lifting up his hand against St Photius, gave himself a blow with his sword and died. After harsh torture, the two of them were thrown into prison, where they remained for three years. They were then taken out and thrown into an enormous burning furnace. Many other Christians, men, women and children, went into the flames voluntarily after them, and the prayers of the Christians were heard rising from the flames, thanking God for their death by martyrdom. They all suffered in about 305. St Anicetas and St Photius are invoked in the prayers at the blessing of oil and water.

St. Muredach (Murtagh), first bishop of Killala & founder of Innismurray, of Ireland - Muredach was an "old man", perhaps a presbyter or priest, in Saint Patrick's household. At the conclusion of his mission to the West Patrick left his companion to be bishop in W. Sligo and Mayo. One tradition says that at the end of his life he went to live as a hermit on the island of Innismurray. We pray for companionship, for those who are lonely, and we give thanks for those who go to unfamiliar places in the service of Christ's mission. We pray also for the faithful members of the church in Co. Mayo and the north west of Co. Sligo especially as they welcome visitors at holiday time. Powerful God, whose power holds us and leads us in the service of Christ and whose ear hearkens to our needs: like Muredach of Patrick's household, may we find Christ in the hearts of all that love us and in the mouth of friend and stranger. We ask this in Jesus' Name.

Also commemorated on this day: Synaxis of saints of Valaam Monastery (movable holiday on the Sunday after August 6th). Synaxis of saints of Kemerovo (movable holiday on the Sunday before August 18th). New Hieromartyrs Barlaam (Konoplev), archimandrite, Anthony (Arapov), abbot, Sergius (Vershinin), Elijah (Popov), Vyacheslav (Kosozhilin), Ioasaph (Sabintsev), and John (Novoselov), hieromonks, and Micah (Podkorytov), Bessarion (Okulov), Euthymius (Korotkov), and Matthew (Bannikov), hierodeacons; New Monk-martyrs Euthymius, Barnabas, Demetrius, Sabbas, Hermogenes, Arcadius, and Marcellus; and martyred novices John, James, Peter, James, Alexander, Theodore, Peter, Sergius, and Alexis" all of the Belogorsk St. Nicholas Monastery (Perm) (1918-1919). New Hieromartyr Basil priest (1918). New Hieromartyrs Leonidas, John and Nicholas priests (1937). Hieromartyr Alexander, bishop of Comana (3rd c.). Martyrs Pamphilus and Capito. Venerable Pallamon of Egypt, instructor of St. Pachomius the Great. St. Molaise of Devenish (563). St. Seigine, abbot of Iona (652). Sts. Sergius and Stephen, monks. Soldier-martyrs of Crete. Monk-martyrs Gerontius, Serapion, Germanus, Bessarion, Michael, and Simeon of Garesja, slain by the Lekians (1851). Translation of relics of St. Edwold, hermit of Cerne. St. Jambert, archbishop of Canterbury.

13 / 26 August - Apodosis of the Transfiguration- Dormition Fast - St Tikhon of Zadonsk- born in 1724 in the village of Korotsk, in the Novgorod region, into a simple, peasant family, he received the monastic habit at the age of thirty-four and very soon, because of his asceticism and spiritual wisdom, was given higher and higher service until he was consecrated Bishop of Voronezh. He served as bishop for a little under seven years and then, because of ill-health, retired to the monastery of Zadonsk and entered into rest there in 1783. His wonderworking relics are kept there to this day. A great ascetic of the Russian Church, he was a rare shepherd, a man of prayer and the writer of beautiful spiritual works. In his wisdom, his holiness and asceticism, he could be counted an equal of the great Fathers of the Orthodox Church of former times. Because of the many witnessed miracles that were performed over his relics, he was first proclaimed a saint by the people, and then officially by the Church in 1861.

Tropar, Tone 8: From thy youth thou didst love Christ, O blessed one, / and thou wast a model to all in word, life, love, spirit, faith, purity, and humility. / Wherefore, thou hast now taken up thy dwelling in the heavenly mansions / where, as thou standest before the throne of the Most Holy Trinity, / O Saint Tikhon, pray that our souls be saved.

Another Tropar, Tone 4: Instructor of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety, / preacher of repentance, zealot for Chrysostom, / most good shepherd, new luminary and wonderworker of Russia, / thou didst keep thy flock well, / and by thy writing hast thou instructed us; / wherefore being adorned by the Chief Pastor with the crown of incorruption, / do thou pray to Him that our souls be saved.

Kondak, Tone 8: O Successor of the apostles, / adornment of hierarchs, teacher of the Orthodox Church; / pray to the Lord of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy.

Read what St. Tikhon has to say on perpetual repentance and correction of life: Death walks invisibly behind us, and the end will overtake us when we least expect it. Abide in perpetual repentance, then, and be prepared for departure at all times and in every place. The wise servant always watches and waits till his master calls him. You, too, should watch and wait till Christ your Lord calls you, for He calls everyone through death. Then always be in your life what you wish to be at death. Always live piously and work out your salvation with fear and trembling (cf. Philip. 2:12). Always and everywhere proceed with caution and guard yourself, lest you be deprived of eternal salvation, which Christ our Lord obtained for us with His Blood and death, and so shall we have a blessed end.

The Holy Martyr Hippolytus - Hippolytus was a military supervisor and prison governor in Rome, born and brought up a pagan. When St Laurence the archdeacon was thrown into prison, Hippolytus was ordered by the Emperor to keep a strict eye on this prisoner. Hippolytus saw with his own eyes how Laurence restored the sight of the blind Lucillus and how he healed many other of the sick, and he became a Christian. When St Laurence baptised him, Hippolytus had a heavenly vision and said: 'I see innocent souls in great joy'. He then took Laurence into his own home, and all those in it were baptised, including his old nurse, Concordia; nineteen souls in all. When Laurence was slain for Christ, Hippolytus took the martyr's body by night, wrapped it in a winding-sheet and buried it. This somehow came to the ears of the Emperor Valerian, and, on the third day after Laurence's death, Hippolytus was arrested and taken before the Emperor. Refusing to deny the true Faith, he was struck on the mouth with stones. The Emperor then ordered that he be stripped and flayed. Naked before the Emperor, Hippolytus said to him: 'You have not stripped me, but have begun to clothe me!' They then threw him to the ground and flayed him mercilessly, but Hippolytus only cried out: 'I am a Christian!' The Emperor, hearing that Hippolytus and his whole household were Christians, ordered that they all be brought. Old Concordia said: 'We prefer to die in honour in the Christian faith with our master than to live in dishonour with you.' She was killed first, and then the other eighteen, all before Hippolytus' eyes. Finally, Hippolytus was bound behind a wild horse and dragged hither and thither, until the martyr gave his soul to God.

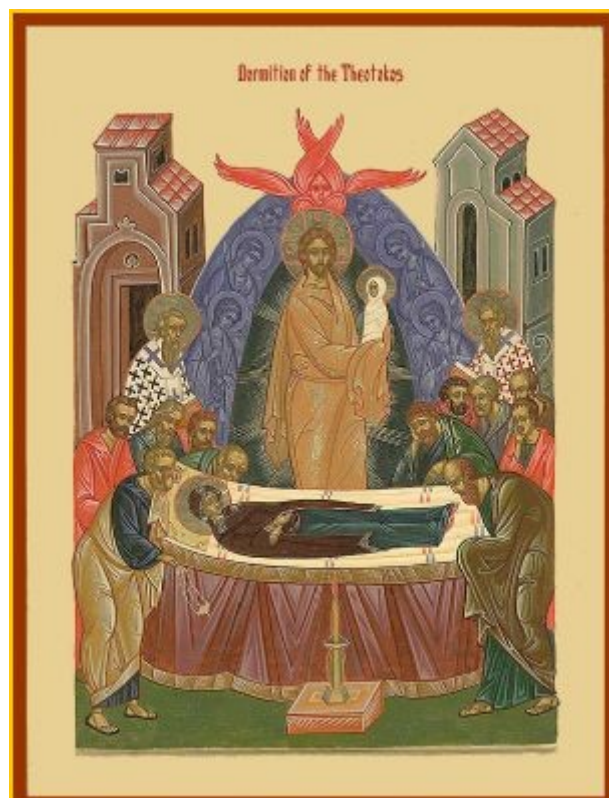
Venerable Maximus the Confessor - Maximus was a Constantinopolitan by birth and, at first, a high-ranking courtier at the court of Emperor Heraclius and, after that, a monk and abbot of a monastery not too far from the capitol. He was the greatest defender of Orthodoxy against the so-called Monothelite heresy which proceeded from the heresy of Eutyches. That is to say: As Eutyches claimed that there is only one nature in Christ [Monophysitism], so the Monothelites claimed that there is only one will in Christ [Monothelitism]. Maximus opposed that claim and found himself as an opponent of the emperor and the patriarch. Maximus did not frighten easily but endured to the end in proving that there were two wills as well as two natures in Christ. Because of his efforts, a council was held in Carthage and another in Rome. Both councils anathematized the teachings of the Monothelites. The suffering of Maximus for Orthodoxy cannot be described: he was tortured by princes, deceived by prelates, spat upon by the masses of the people, beaten by soldiers, exiled, imprisoned, until finally, with a severed tongue and hand, he was condemned to exile for life in the land of Skhemaris [near Batum on the Black Sea] where he spent three years in prison and gave up his soul to God in the year 666 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: Uncovering of the relics of St. Maximus of Moscow, fool-for-Christ (1547). New Hieromartyrs John, Ioasaph and Constantine priests (1918). New Hieromartyr Seraphim (Zvezdinsky), bishop of Dmitrov, Nicholas, Jacob priests and Alexis deacon (1937). New Hieromartyr Basil (1942). New Hieromartyr Basil (Preobrazhensky) bishop of Kineshma. "Minsk" (1500), "Seven Arrows" (1830) and "Of the Passion" (1641) Icons of the Most Holy Theotokos. Venerable Serid (Seridos), abbot, of Gaza (6th c.). Empress Irene, tonsured Xenia (12th c.). St. Eudocia the Empress (460), wife of Theodosius the Younger. Venerable Radegunde of Poitiers, nun (587). Venerable Abba Dorotheos of Gaza. St. Wigbert, abbot of Hersfeld, English missionary to Germany.

14 / 27 August - Forefeast of the Dormition - Dormition Fast - The Holy Prophet Micah - of the tribe of Judah and from the village of Morasth, from which he took the name 'the Morasthite', he was a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah, Amos and Hosea, and the Judean kings Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He denounced the vices of his people and denounced also the prophets who prophesied 'of wine and strong drink'. He foretold the fall of Samaria, which would come about because the city's elders take a bribe and the priests teach for hire, and prophets divine for money. 'Therefore shall Sion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps'. But, of all his prophecies, the most important are

those of the Messiah, and especially of the place of His birth. He named Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah, 'whose goings-forth have been from of old, from everlasting' (5:2). It is not known certainly whether this prophet was killed by the Jews or died peacefully (see Jeremiah 26:18-19), but it is known that he was buried in his village, and that his relics were found, together with the relics of the Prophet Habakkuk, in the time of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, by some mysterious revelation received by the Bishop of Eleutheropolis.

Also comemorated on this day: Translation of the relics of Venerable Theodosius of the Kiev Caves (1091). New Hieromartyr Basil bishop of Chernigov and with him Hieromartyr Mathew and Martyr Alexis (1918). New Hieromartyr Vladimir priest (1920). New Hieromartyrs Vladimir and Nicholas priests, Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Virgin-Martyr Eudokia and Martyr Theodore (1937). New Hieromartyr Schema-archimandrite Eleutherius of Chimkent. Venerable Alexander confessor (1961). Venerable Arcadius, monk, of Vyazma and New Torzhok (1077). Hieromartyr Marcellus, bishop of Apamea (389). "Converser" (1383) and "Narva" (1558) Icons of the Most Holy Theotokos. Martyr Ursicius at Nicomedia. St. Fachanan, abbot of Ross Carbery, Cork, Ireland. Hieromartyr Nazarius, metropolitan of Kutaisi, Georgia, with Priest-martyrs Herman, Hierotheus, and Simon, and Archdeacon Bessarion. Synaxis of the New Martyrs of Georgia who suffered under the Atheist Yoke (20th c.). New Martyr Simeon of Trebizond (1653). Martyr Luke the Soldier.



15 / 28 August - The Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary - The Lord Who, on Mt. Sinai, commanded by His Fifth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12), showed by His own example how one should respect one's parent. Hanging on the Cross in agony, He remembered His mother and indicating to the Apostle John, said to her: "Woman behold your son" (St. John 19:26). After that, He said to John: "Behold your mother" (St. John 19:27). And so providing for His mother, He breathed His last. John had a home on Zion in Jerusalem in which the Theotokos settled and remained there to live out the end of her days on earth. By her prayers, gentle counsels, meekness and patience, she greatly assisted the apostles of her Son. Primarily, she spent her entire time in Jerusalem often visiting those places which reminded her of the great events and of the great works of her Son. She especially visited Golgotha, Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives. Of her distant journeys, her visit to St. Ignatius the Theophorus [God-bearer] in Antioch is mentioned, as well as her visit to Lazarus (whom our Lord resurrected on the fourth day), the Bishop of Cyprus, her visit to the Holy Mountain [Athos] which she blessed and her stay in Ephesus with St. John the Evangelist [The Theologian] during the time of the great persecution of Christians in Jerusalem. In her old age, she often prayed to the Lord and her God on the

Mount of Olives, the site of His Ascension, that He take her from this world as soon as possible. On one occasion, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and revealed to her that within three days she will find repose. The angel gave her a palm-branch to be carried at the time of her funeral procession. She returned to her home with great joy, desiring in her heart once more to see in this life, all of the apostles of Christ. The Lord fulfilled her wish and all of the apostles, borne by angels in the clouds, gathered at the same time at the home of John on Zion. With great rejoicing, she saw the holy apostles, encouraged them, counselled them and comforted them. Following that, she peacefully gave up her soul to God without any pain or physical illness. The apostles took the coffin with her body from which an aromatic fragrance emitted and, in the company of many Christians, bore it to the Garden of Gethsemane to the sepulchre of [her parents], Saints Joachim and Anna. By God's Providence, they were concealed from the evil Jews by a cloud. Anthony, a Jewish priest, grabbed the coffin with his hands with the intention of overturning it but, at that moment, an angel of God severed both his hands. He then cried out to the apostles for help and was healed since declaring his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Thomas was absent, again according to God's Providence, in order that a new and all-glorious mystery of the Holy Theotokos would again be revealed. On the third day, Thomas arrived and desired to venerate [kiss] the body of the Holy All-pure one. But when the apostles opened the sepulchre, they found only the winding sheet and the body was not in the tomb. That evening, the Theotokos appeared to the apostles surrounded by a myriad of angels and said to them: "Rejoice, I will be with you always". It is not exactly known how old the Theotokos was at the time of her Falling Asleep but the overwhelming opinion is that she was over sixty years of age.

Troparion tone 1: In giving birth thou didst keep thy virginity,/ and in thy dormition thou didst not forsake the world, O Mother of God./ Thou didst pass on to life, since thou art the Mother of Life,/ and by thine intercessions thou redeemest our souls from death.

Kontakion tone 2: The grave and death could not hold the Mother of God,/ who is sleepless in her intercessions and an unchanging hope in her mediations./ For as the Mother of Life she was transferred to life/ by Him Who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb.

Also commemorated on this day: Icon of Sophia, the Wisdom of God (Novgorod). Venerable Macarius the Roman, abbot (1550), and his disciple St. Chariton. New Hieromartyr Andrew (Voliansky) priest. St. Christos of Ioannina. St. Stephen, elder of Vyatka (1890). New Martyrs Priest Paul Szwajko and Presbytera Joanna, of Grabowiec (1943).

16 / 29 August - Afterfeast of the Dormition - Translation of The Icon of the Lord Jesus Christ Not-Made-With-Hands - in the time that our Lord was preaching the Gospel and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people, there was in the city of Edessa, on the banks of the Euphrates, a certain Prince Avgar, who was riddled with leprosy. He heard of Christ, the Healer of every pain and sickness, and sent a portrait-painter, Ananias, to Palestine with a letter to Christ, in which he begged the Lord to come to Edessa and heal him of his leprosy. In the event of the Lord's not being able to come, the prince commanded Ananias to paint His likeness and bring it, believing that the portrait would heal him. The Lord replied that he could not come, as the time of His Passion was at hand, and He took a napkin and wiped His face, leaving a perfect reproduction of His most pure face on the napkin. The Lord gave this napkin to Ananias, with a message to say that the prince would be healed by it, but not entirely, and He would therefore send him later an envoy who would rid him of the remainder of the disease. Receiving the napkin, Avgar kissed it and the leprosy fell from his body, with just a little remaining on his face. Later, the Apostle Thaddaeus, preaching the Gospel, came to Avgar, healed him secretly and baptised him. Then the prince smashed the idols that stood at the city's gateway and placed the napkin with the face of Christ above the entrance, stuck onto wood, surrounded with a gold frame and ornamented with pearls. The prince also wrote above the icon on the gateway: 'O Christ our God, no-one who hopes in Thee will be put to shame'. Later, one of Avgar's great-grandsons restored idolatry, and the Bishop of Edessa came by night and walled-in the icon above the gateway. Centuries passed. In the time of the Emperor Justinian, the Persian King, Chozroes, attacked Edessa, and the city was in great affliction. The Bishop of Edessa, Eulabius, had a vision of the most holy Mother of God, who revealed to him the secret of the icon, walled-in and forgotten. The icon was found, and by its power the Persian army was defeated.

Also comemorated on this day: Martyr Diomedes the Physician of Tarsus in Cilicia (298). Martyrs of Palestine. New Hieromartyr Stephen priest (1918). New Hieromartyrs priest Vladimir and his brother Boris (1931). New Hieromartyr Alexander priest, Virgin Martyr Anna and Martyr Jacob (1937). Venerable Cherimon (Chaeremon) of Egypt (4th c.). Martyr grand prince Constantine (1714). Icons of the Most Holy Theotokos of St. Theodore ("Feodorovskaya") (1239) and "Triumph of Holy Theotokos" (Port Artur) (1904). Venerable Joachim, monk, of Osogovo and Sarandapor (11th c.). New Martyr Nicodemus of Meteora (1551). New Martyr Stamatius of Volos, Thessaly (1680). Venerable Anthony the Stylite of Martq'ophi, Georgia (6th c.). Holy Martyr Kristepore Guruli. New Martyrs King Constantine Brancoveanu of Wallachia and his four sons Constantine, Stephen, Radu, and Matthew, and his counsellor Ianache (1714). Venerable Gerasimus the New Ascetic of Cephalonia (Mt. Athos) (1579). Venerable Nilus, brother of Emperor Theodore Laskaris, who rebuilt the monastery of the Mother of God at Epirus. St. Timothy of Chalcedon, archbishop, founder of the monastery of Pendeli. Great New Martyr Apostolos of the town of St. Laurence, martyred in Constantinople (1686). Translation of the relics of Martyrs Seraphim, Dorotheus, James, Demetrius, Basil and Sarantis of Megaris. Martyr Alcibiades. St. Raphael of Banat, Serbia (17th c.). St. Roman the Sinaite of Djunisa, Serbia (14th c.). St. Eustathius II, archbishop of Serbia (1309).

17 / 30 August -Afterfeast of the Dormition -The Holy Martyr Myron of Cyzicus - he was a priest in Achaia, of rich and eminent parents, by nature kind and meek, and loving towards God and man. In the time of the Emperor Decius, on the Feast of the Nativity itself, pagans rushed into the church, dragged Myron away from the service and put him to torture. While he was being tortured by fire, an angel appeared to him and strengthened him. They then cut off his skin in strips from head to foot. The martyr took one of these strips and, with it, struck the torturer on the face. The torturer, as though possessed, took a sword and killed himself. Myron was finally taken to the town of Cyzicus and there killed with the sword, in 250.

The Holy Martyr Patroclus - Patroclus was a citizen of the city of Trychasia, present day Troyes in France [Gaul]. He inherited great wealth from his parents and, from this, as a true Christian, performed daily acts of mercy for the less fortunate while he himself lived a life of mortification taking food only once a day, after the setting of the sun. Because of his sanctity of life, the Lord granted Patroclus the power of healing and he was known throughout as a miracle-worker. Emperor Aurelian, arriving in Gaul, ordered that Patroclus be brought before him. St. Patroclus proclaimed his faith in Christ before the

emperor and did not conceal anything. "O Emperor, if you desire something of my wealth, I will give it to you, for I see you as poor" said St. Patroclus to the emperor. To that, the emperor replied: "How is it that you call me the emperor, poor who has countless riches? St. Patroclus then said: "You have only transient earthly treasures but you are poor for you are not in possession of yourself nor do you possess the Faith of Christ in your heart." He was condemned to death and handed over to the soldiers to be taken to a bog near a river to be slain there and to leave his body in the mud. But the saint of God prayed to God that his body not remain in the mud and by the power of God he suddenly became invisible to the soldiers and was translated to the other side of the river. After a long search, the soldiers found him and slew him on a dry spot. Two beggars, to whom Patroclus often gave alms, came along this road, recognized the body of their benefactor and buried it with honors.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Pimen, archimandrite of Ugresh (1880) New Hieromartyr Alexis priest (1918). New Hieromartyr Demetrius priest (1937). Venerable Alypius the Iconographer of the Kiev Caves (1114). Martyrs Paul and his sister Juliana of Syria (273). Martyrs Thyrsus, Leucius, and Coronatus, with others at Caesarea in Bithynia (250). Martyrs Straton, Philip, Eutychian, and Cyprian of Nicomedia (303). "Svensk" ("of the Kiev Caves") (1288) Icon of the Mother of God. The Armatian Icon of the Mother of God. Venerable Leucius, abbot of Volokolamsk (1492). Venerable Philip, monk of Sukhonsk, Yankovsk (Vologda) (1662). Blessed Theodoretus, enlightener of the Laps (Solovki) (1571). Venerable Ellas of Calabria (903). St. Jeroen, hieromartyr of Noordwijk (857) (Neth.). New Martyr Demetrius of Samarina in Epirus (1808). New Hieromartyr Archilleus Sirotin. St. Tbeli Abuseridze of Khikhuni, Adjara (13th c.).

18 / 31 August -Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Venerable John of Rila - This great ascetic and saint of the Orthodox Church was born near Sophia, Bulgaria in the town of Skрино during the reign of King Boris. He was of poor but honourable parents. After the death of his parents, John was tonsured a monk and withdrew to a mountain wilderness and, began to live a life of strict asceticism in a cave. There, he endured many assaults, both from demons and men, from robbers and his relatives. After this, he moved to the Rila mountain and settled in a hollow tree. He fed only on herbs and broad beans, which, according to God's Providence began to grow in the vicinity. For many years, he did not see a man's face until again, by God's Providence, he was discovered by shepherders who were seeking their lost sheep. Thus, the saint was heard of among the people and they began to come to him seeking help in sickness and in sufferings. The Bulgarian King Peter himself visited John and sought counsel from him. Many who were zealots for the spiritual life settled in the proximity of John. There, a church and monastery was quickly built. St. John rested peacefully in the Lord on August 18, 946 A.D. at the age of seventy. After his death, he appeared to his disciples. At first, his relics were translated to Sophia, then to Hungary, then to Trnovo and finally to the Rila monastery where they repose today. Throughout the centuries, the Rila monastery was a beacon of light, a place of miracle-working power and a spiritual comfort for the Christian people of Bulgaria especially during the difficult times of bondage under the Turks.

The Holy Martyrs Florus and Laurus - Florus and Laurus were brothers in the flesh, and in spirit and in vocation. Both were zealous Christians and, by occupation, stonemasons. They lived in Illyria. A pagan prince hired them for the building of a temple to the idols. It happened that during their work, a piece of stone flew and struck the eye of the pagan priest's son who was observing the work of the builders with curiosity. Seeing his son blind and bloody, the pagan priest began to shout at Florus and Laurus and wanted to beat them. Then, the holy brothers said to him that if he would believe in the God in whom they believed, his son would be healed. The pagan priest promised. Florus and Laurus prayed with tears to the one, living, Lord God and traced the sign of the Cross over the child's injured eye. The child was immediately healed and his eye became whole just as it had been. Then the pagan priest Merentius and his son were baptized and, shortly after that, both suffered for Christ by fire. When they completed the temple, Florus and Laurus placed a cross on it, summoned all Christians and consecrated it in the name of the Lord Jesus with an all-night vigil of hymn singing. Hearing of this, the Illyrian deputy burned many of those Christians and threw Florus and Laurus alive in a well and then filled it with dirt. Later, their relics were revealed and translated to Constantinople. These two wonderful brothers suffered and were martyred for Christ and were glorified by Christ in the second century.

The Priestly Martyr, Emilian of Trevi - Emilian was born in Armenia. According to his wishes and seeking martyrdom, he traveled to Italy to preach Christ during the reign of Diocletian. He was elected bishop of Trevi. As a result of the many miracles during the time of his torture, approximately one thousand pagans believed in Christ. He was slain by the sword together with Hilarion, his spiritual father and two brothers, Dionysius and Hermippus.

Also commemorated on this day: New Martyrs Archimandrite Augustine of Orans Monastery, Prot-priest Nicholas of Nizhni-Novgorod, and 15 people with them (1918). New Hieromartyr Gregory priest and Martyr Eugene and Michael (1937). Martyrs Hermes, Serapion, and Polyaenus of Rome (2nd c.). Sts. John (674) and George (683), patriarchs of Constantinople. Venerable Macarius the Monk of Pelekete (830). The Hodigitria Icon of the Mother of God. Venerable Barnabus and his nephew Venerable Sophronius, monks of Mt. Mela near Trebizond (412). Venerable Christopher, abbot of Mt. Mela Monastery (1694). Venerable Sophronius of St. Anne's Skete on Mt. Athos. Venerable Arsenius the New of Paros (1877). Martyr Juliana near Strobilus. Martyr Leo, drowned near Myra in Lycia. St. Christodoulos the Philosopher, called the Ossetian, of Georgia (12th c.).

‡ **Daily Scripture Readings** ‡

Monday - John 10:9-16 (Matins Gospel); 1 Corinthians 15:12-19; Matthew 21:18-22; Hebrews 7:26-8:2 (St. Tikhon); Matthew 5:14-19 (St. Tikhon)

Tuesday - 1 Corinthians 15:29-38; Matthew 21:23-27; 1 Corinthians 16:4-12; Matthew 21:28-32; Galatians 5:22-6:2 (St. Theodosius); Luke 6:17-23 (St. Theodosius)

Wednesday - Luke 1:39-49, 56 (Matins Gospel); Philippians 2:5-11 (Epistle, Theotokos); Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (Gospel, Theotokos)

Thursday - 2 Corinthians 1:1-7; Matthew 21:43-46; Colossians 1:12-18 (Image); Luke 9:51-56; 10:22-24 (Image)

Friday - 2 Corinthians 1:12-20; Matthew 22:23-33

Saturday - Romans 15:30-33; Matthew 17:24-18:4

HYMN OF PRAISE

THE MOST-HOLY BIRTH-GIVER OF GOD [THE THEOTOKOS]

Thus spoke the Lord Most High From your heart, Virgin pure, Living water, to flow, That, those who thirst, drink Christ - Life-bearing Source, We are all boastful of you! So that the thirsty, drink Christ: By Him, the bitter to be sweetened, By Him, the blind to be washed And by Him, the sorrowful, to heal their grief Life-bearing Source We are all boastful of you! Beverage, from eternity arrived, The arid time, the brook filled, And again, toward the heavens raised; The world exhausted, became refreshed- Life-bearing source, We are all boastful of you! O All-pure One, glory to You, O Mother of God, glory to You! For us, to the Living Christ, You gave birth The living water of grace - Life-bearing source We are all boastful of you!

REFLECTION

Each one of the faithful can learn much, indeed very much, from the life of the Virgin Theotokos. However, I would like to mention here only two things. First, she had the habit to frequently on Golgotha, on the Mount of Olives, in the Garden of Gethsemane, to go to Bethlehem and to other places famous because of her Son. At all of these places, especially Golgotha, she prayed on bended knees. By this, she gave the first example and incentive to the faithful to visit the holy places out of love toward Him Who, by His presence and by His passion and glory, made these places holy and significant. Second, we learn how she, in her prayer, prayed for a quick departure from this life that her soul, at the time of her separation from the body, not see the prince of darkness and his horrors, and hidden from the dark regions not encounter the power of Satan. Do you see how terrible it is for the soul to pass through the toll-gates [mitarstva]! When she, who gave birth to the Destroyer of Hades and, who herself has frightening power over demons prayed thusly, what then is left for us? Out of very great humility, she commended herself to God and did not trust in her own deeds. So much less should we trust in our deeds and even more we should commend ourselves into the hands of God, crying out for His mercy, especially for mercy at the time of the departure of the soul from the body.