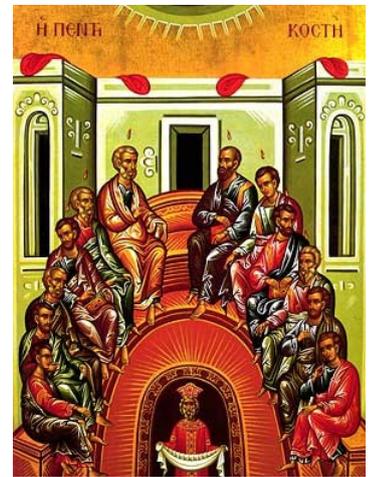


# Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles (Pentecost Sunday) 23 / 10 June



**Tropar Of Pentecost, Tone 8:** Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them, didst draw the world into Thy net. O Lover of mankind, glory be to Thee.

**Kondak Of Pentecost, Tone 8:** Once, when He descended and confounded the tongues, the Most High divided the nations; and when He divided the tongues of fire, He called all men into unity; and with one accord we glorify the All-Holy Spirit.

**Vespers: Num. 11:16-17, 24-29; Joel 2:23-32; Ezek. 36:24-28**

Lord I have Cried - Tone 1: Feast 10 (We celebrate Pentecost); G/N: Feast (Come, O ye peoples)

Aposticha: Feast (Being ignorant of the power of Thine All-holy Spirit); G/N: Feast (Of old the tongues were confounded).

Troparia: Feast (Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God) x3.

**Matins Gospel: St John 20: 19-23**

**EPISTLE - ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - 2: 1-11**

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, people from Crete and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

**AND THERE APPEARED TO THEM DIVIDED TONGUES AS OF FIRE... AND THEY WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

So that by gradual increase ...and progress from glory to glory, the light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated ...for this reason it was, I think, that He gradually came to dwell in the disciples. He measured Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him: at the beginning of the gospel, after the Passion, after the Ascension, making perfect their powers, being breathed upon them, and appearing in fiery tongues ...You see lights breaking upon us, gradually, and knowledge of such order of theology, as is better for us to maintain, neither proclaiming things too suddenly nor yet keeping them hidden to the end ...He said that all things should be taught us by the Spirit Himself, made clear at a later time, when such knowledge would be seasonable and capable of being received after our Saviour's restoration; when it would no longer be received with incredulity because of its marvellous character. For what greater thing than this did either He promise, or the Spirit teach ...If He is not to be worshiped, how can He deify me by baptism?... And indeed from the Spirit comes our new birth, and from the new birth our new creation, and from the new creation our deeper knowledge of the dignity of Him from whom it is derived ...Look at these facts: Christ is born; the Spirit is His forerunner. He leads Him up. He works miracles; the Spirit accompanies them. He ascends; the Spirit takes His place.

*St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Fifth Theological Oration, 26, 27, 28, 29. B#7, pp. 210 -211.*

## **GOSPEL - ST. JOHN 7:37-52 & 8:12**

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

### **IF ANYONE THIRSTS, LET HIM COME TO ME AND DRINK**

Those who come to the divine preaching and give heed to the faith must manifest the desire of thirsty men for water, and kindle in themselves a similar longing; so they will be able, very carefully, to retain what is said...For to show that men ought ever to thirst and hunger, He said 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness' (Matt.5:6) ... Elsewhere He calls it, 'eternal life,' but here, 'living water.' He calls that 'living' which ever works: for the grace of the Spirit, when It has entered into the mind and has been established, springs up more than any fountain, does not fail, never becomes empty ...He has represented its abundance by the expression 'springing' ...Consider the wisdom of Stephen, the tongue of Peter, the vehemence of Paul: how nothing bore, nothing withstood them, not the anger of multitudes, not the risings up of tyrants, not the plots of the devils, not daily deaths, but as rivers borne along with a great rushing sound, so they went on their way hurrying all things with them ...When He was about to send them (after the crucifixion) He said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (c.20:22) ...and then they wrought miracles.

*St. John Chrysostom, Homily LI on John VII, 1. 2. B#58, p. 184.*

O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because your loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips ...Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me. (Psalm 63:1-8).

**On this Sunday the Kneeling prayers are said at Vespers which follows immediately after the Liturgy - the three long prayers are:**

**The First Prayer:** Priest: O Lord most pure, spotless, who art from everlasting, invisible, ineffable, unsearchable, unchanging, unsurpassable, immeasurable, long-suffering, who alone hast immortality; who dwellest in light unapproachable, who hast made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that therein is; who grantest unto all men their petitions before they ask: We pray thee, and beseech thee, O Master who lovest mankind, the Father of our Lord, and God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of Mary the ever-virgin and exceeding-glorious birth-giver of God; who first did teach in words and afterwards did manifest himself in deeds, when he suffered his redeeming Passion; who hast given unto us, thy humble, and sinful, and unworthy servants, a command that we should offer supplications unto thee with bending; of the neck and of the knees, both for our own iniquities and for the ignorances of the people: Do thou, the same all-merciful God who lovest mankind, hear us in that day when we shall call upon thee, and more especially upon this day of Pentecost, whereon, after that our Lord Jesus Christ has ascended up into heaven, and had sat down at the right hand of thee, who art both his God and his Father, he did send down the Holy Spirit upon his holy disciples and apostles: which also did rest upon each one of them, so that they were all filled with its inexhaustible grace, and did declare thy majesty in divers unknown tongues, and did prophesy. Wherefore hearken now to us who pray unto thee, and remember us humble and condemned as we are, and turn again the captivity of our souls, exercising thy loving kindness toward us who now offer up our petitions unto thee. Accept us who fall down before thee, and who cry aloud unto thee, We have sinned! We have cloven unto thee even from our mother's womb: thou art our God. But because we

have passed our days in vanity, we have stripped ourselves of thine aid, we have deprived ourselves of every valid defence. But confidently trusting in thy bounties, we call unto thee. Remember not the sins of our youth and our ignorances; and cleanse thou us from our secret sins; and forsake us not in the days of our old age, when our strength faileth us. Even until we return again into the earth, abandon us not, vouchsafe us grace to have recourse unto thee; and receive us, because of thy favour and graciousness. Measure our wickedness according to the measure of thy bounties. Set over against the multitude of our transgressions the abyss of thy compassions. Look down from thy holiness on high, O Lord, upon thy people now present before thee, who await thy rich mercies. Visit us with thy loving-kindness: deliver us from the assaults of the Devil. Establish our life in thy holy and sacred commandments. Commit thy people unto an Angel, a faithful guardian. Gather us all into thy kingdom. Grant pardon unto those who put their trust in thee. Put away from them and from us all sins. Purify us by the operation of thy Holy Spirit; bring to naught the machinations of the enemy against us.

And thereto is added the following Prayer: Blessed art thou, O Lord, Master Almighty, who hast illumined the day with the light of the sun, and hast made bright the night with the brilliant flashes of the lightning; who hast graciously enabled us to pass through the long day, and to draw near to the beginning of the night. Hear our petitions, and the petitions of all thy people, and granting pardon unto us for all our sins, both voluntary and involuntary, accept our evening prayers, and send down the multitude of thy mercy and thy bounties upon thine inheritance. Guard us with thy holy Angels. Arm us with the armour of thy righteousness. Encompass us round about with the ramparts of thy truth. Guard us by thy might. Deliver us from every assault, and from every treacherous plot of the adversary. And grant unto us that this present evening and the approaching night, and all the days of our life, may be perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless, without stumbling, untroubled of dreams; through the prayers of the holy Birth-giver of God, and of all the Saints, who, in all the ages, have been acceptable in thy sight.

**The Second Prayer:** Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ our God, who hast bestowed upon men thy peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit; who, while thou wast yet with us in the present life, didst give unto thy faithful people an inheritance which shall not be taken from them forever; who this day didst send down thy grace upon thy disciples and apostles, in manner most clear, and didst furnish their lips with fiery tongues; by whom now, we also, together with all mankind, having received, through the hearing of our own ears divine knowledge in our own tongues, have been illumined with the light of the Spirit, and have put away the delusion of darkness by the distribution of the material and visible tongues of fire, as also by the marvellous operation of the same, whereby we have been inspired with faith toward thee, and to glorify thee, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit in one Godhead and might, and have been enlightened with power: Do thou who art the Brightness of the Father, of his Essence and his Nature the Express and Immutable Image, the Fountain of Wisdom and of Grace, open the lips of me, a sinner and teach me in what manner and for what needs I ought to pray; for thou knowest the great multitude of my sins, but thy loving-kindness shall overcome the enormity thereof. For lo! I stand in awe before thee, and have cast into the great deep of thy mercy the despair of my soul. Govern my life, O thou who governest all creation by a word, with the unutterable might of thy wisdom, O tranquil Haven of the storm-tossed; and make known unto me the way in which I should walk. Grant unto my understanding the spirit of thy wisdom, bestowing upon my ignorance the spirit of thy understanding. Overshadow my deeds with the spirit of thy fear, and renew a right spirit within me; and by thy sovereign Spirit make stable the instability of my thoughts. That being daily guided by thy good Spirit in that which is profitable for me, I may be enabled to keep thy statutes, and ever bear in mind thy glorious Coming-again, and those things worthy of torment which I have committed. And give me not over to be led astray by the corrupt pleasures of this present world, but strengthen in me the desire to strive for the treasures to come. For thou hast said, O Master: whatsoever a man shall ask in thy Name, that shall be freely received from thy God and father, who is from everlasting. Wherefore, I, also, a sinner, at this descent of thy Holy Spirit, do entreat thy goodness, that thou wilt grant me whatsoever things I have asked which are unto salvation. Yea, O Lord, the bounteous Giver of every benefit; and the Distributor of blessings,—for its thou who givest most bountifully unto those who ask of thee,—thou art pitiful and gracious, and also wast made a partaker of our flesh, yet without sin, and doest incline thine ear with infinite loving-kindness unto those who bow the knee before thee; who, also, wast made the Propitiation of our sins. Wherefore, O Lord, grant thy bounties unto thy people. Harken unto us from thy holy heaven. Sanctify us by thy saving might of thy right hand. Cover us with the shelter of thy wings; and despite thou not the work of thy hands. Unto thee alone have we sinned, but thee alone so we serve. We know not to adore a strange god, neither have we stretched out our hands, O Lord, unto any other god. Pardon our iniquities, and accept this our prayer, which we make unto thee on bended knees. Extend unto us all the hand of thine aid. Receive our petitions of all men, as it were incense well-pleasing, acceptable before thine all-blessed kingdom. O Lord, Lord, who deliverest us from all the arrows that fly by day, deliver thou us, also, from all things that infest the darkness. Accept our evening sacrifice, even the lifting-up of our hands. Grant that we may pass through the course of the night without sin, untempted of evil things; and deliver us from every alarm and cowardice that cometh to us from the Devil. Grant unto our souls contrition, and

unto our minds anxiety concerning that strict searching out of the thoughts which shall come in the dread and just Day of Judgment. Nail our flesh to the fear of thee, and mortify our earthly members: that, in the quietness of sleep, we may be illuminated by the vision of thy judgments. Remove from us, also, every unseemly imagination and hurtful carnal passion. Raise us up again at the hour of prayer, fortified in the faith, and advancing in thy commandments.

**The Third Prayer:** Priest: O Fountain, ever-flowing, living, illumining; Power creative, coeternal with the Father, O Christ our God, who hast most excellently fulfilled all the plans for the salvation of mankind; who didst shatter the bonds indestructible of Death, and the bolts of Hell, and didst trample under foot a host of evil spirits; who didst offer thyself a blameless victim for us, giving thine all-holy Body for a sacrifice inviolate, and unassailed of every sin, and who, through that terrible and ineffable act of sacrifice, didst bestow upon us life eternal; who didst descend into Hell, and break the everlasting bars, and show a way up unto those who abode in the lower world; and having enticed, by divinely wise allurements, the origin of mischief and the serpent of the abyss, and bound him with cords of nethermost gloom and fire unquenchable in Tartarus, and confined him in outer darkness, by thine infinite and fettering might, O Wisdom greatly glorified by the Father, thou didst manifest thyself as a mighty helper of the assailed; and didst enlighten those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, Do thou, O Lord of the everlasting glory and Son beloved of the Father most high, Light Eternal of Light Eternal, the Sun of Righteousness, hear us, who now make our fervent supplications unto thee, and give rest to the souls of thy servants our fathers and brethren, and other kinsmen after the flesh, and of all of the household of faith, who have fallen asleep, and whom we now call to remembrance. For thou hast power over all things, and in thy hand thou upholdest all the ends of the earth. O Master Almighty, the God of our fathers and Lord of mercy, Creator of the race of mortals and immortals, and of every nature of man; of that which is brought together and is again put asunder; of life and death; of sojourn in the world that now is, and of translation to the world which is to come; thou meetest out the years of life, and appointest the time of death; thou bringest down to Hell, and again raisest up; thou bindest unto impotency and loosest unto power, ordering things present according to their necessity, and appointing things to come as is expedient, quickening with the hope of Resurrection those who were smitten with the sting of death. For thou art, of a truth, the Master of all men, O God our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those who are afar off upon the sea; Who, on this last, and great, and redeeming day of the Pentecost feast, didst reveal unto us the mystery of the Holy Trinity, one in Essence, coeternal, undivided and unmingled; and didst pour out the indwelling and descent of thy holy and life-giving Spirit, in the form of tongues of fire, upon thy holy apostles; and didst appoint the same to be the heralds of the glad tidings of our holy faith; and didst make them confessors and teachers of the true divine knowledge; who, also, on this all-perfect and saving Feast, art graciously pleased to accept propitiatory prayers for those who are imprisoned in Hell, promising unto us who are held in bondage great hope of release from the vileness that doth hinder us and did hinder them; and that thou will send down thy consolation. Hear us, thy humble ones, who make our supplications unto thee, and give rest to the souls of thy servants who have fallen asleep, in a place of light, a place of verdure, a place of refreshment whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away: and establish thou their souls in the mansions of the Just; and graciously vouchsafe unto them peace and pardon; for the dead shall not praise thee, O Lord, neither shall they who are in Hell make bold to offer unto thee confession. But we who are living will bless thee, and will pray, and offer unto thee propitiatory prayers and sacrifices for their souls. O God great and eternal, who art holy and lovest mankind; who hast vouchsafed unto us at this present hour to stand before thine ineffable glory, and to sing and to praise thy wonders: Purify us, thine unworthy servants, and grant us grace that, with a contrite heart, and without presumption, we may offer unto thee the Thrice-Holy hymn of praise and thanksgiving for thy great gifts, which thou hast bestowed and always dost bestow upon us. Remember, O Lord, our weakness, and destroy us not in our iniquity, but show great mercy upon our humility; that, fleeing from the darkness of sin, we may walk in the daylight of righteousness; and that, putting on the armour of light, we may remain unassailed by any despicable attack of the Evil One, and with boldness may glorify in all things thee, the only true God, who also lovest mankind. For thine, O Lord and Creator of all men, is that great and veritable mystery, the dissolution of thy creatures for a season, and thereafter their restoration to wholeness and their rest forever. We acknowledge thy grace in all things; for our coming into this world and our going out of it; for our hopes of resurrection and of the life immortal faithfully pledged unto us through thine unfailing promises, the which we shall receive hereafter in thy Second Coming. For thou art the Chieftain of our Resurrection, and the Judge impartial and gracious to the dead, and the Master and Lord of recompense, who didst become a partaker, on equal terms, of our flesh and blood, because of thine exceeding great condescension; and when, of thine own will, that thou mightest place thyself under temptation, thou didst accept our congenital passions, because of thy compassion, and didst suffer through them, being thyself tempted thereby, thou didst become for us who are tempted the helper which thou thyself hadst promised; and thereby hast thou led us to thy passionlessness. Wherefore, O Master, receive thou our prayers and supplications, and give rest unto the fathers, mothers, children, brothers, and sisters, blood-relations and kinsfolk of each and all of us, and unto all souls which have fallen asleep before us; and establish their spirits in the hope of Resurrection unto life eternal, and inscribe their names in the Book of Life, in the bosom of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and in the land of the living, in the kingdom

of heaven, in the Paradise of sweetness; by thy radiant Angels guiding all into thy holy mansions; raising up with thee, also, our bodies, in that day which thou hast appointed by thy holy and faithful promise. Because there is no death, O Lord, for thy servants when we depart from the body and come unto thee, our God, but a change from things very sorrowful unto things most salutary and most sweet, and unto repose and gladness. If, therefore, we have in aught transgressed against thee, be merciful unto us and unto them; because there is no one pure from stain in thy sight, even for a single day of his life, save thou alone, who didst manifest thyself sinless upon earth, O our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we all trust to receive mercy and the remission of our sins. Wherefore, in that thou art a gracious God and lovest mankind, do thou, both to them and to us, pardon, remit, forgive our sins, both voluntary and involuntary, which we have committed whether wilfully or through ignorance; whether those which are manifest or those which have escaped our notice; whether of deed, or of thought, or of word, whatsoever they may be, in all our acts and lives. And unto the departed also grant thou release and pardon; and bless us who are here present, granting unto us, and to all thy people, a good and peaceful ending, and opening unto us the tenderness of thy mercy and love toward mankind at thy dread and terrible Coming-again; and make us worthy of thy kingdom. O great and most high God, who alone hast immortality, and dwellest in light unapproachable; who hast made all creation in wisdom; who hast divided the light from the darkness, and hast appointed the sun to rule the day, the moon and stars also to rule the night; who hast vouchsafed unto us sinners at this present hour also to come before thy presence with confession, and to offer unto thee our evening sacrifice of praise: Do thou thyself, who lovest mankind, direct our prayer as a censer before thee, and accept it for a savour of sweet incense; and grant that we may pass this present evening and the coming night in peace. Endue us with the armour of light. Deliver us from the terror of the night, and from everything that walketh in darkness; and grant that the sleep, which thou hast appointed for the repose of our weakness, may be free from every imagination of the Devil. Yea, O Master, Bestower of all good things, may we, being moved to compunction upon our beds, call to remembrance thy holy Name in the night season: that, enlightened by meditation on thy statutes, we may rise up in joyfulness of soul to glorify thy goodness, offering up prayers and supplications unto thy tender love for our own sins and for those of all thy people: whom do thou visit in mercy, through the intercessions of the holy Birth-giver of God. For thou art a gracious God, and lovest mankind, and unto thee do we ascribe glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Holy Spirit provides every gift: He inspires prophecy, perfects the priesthood, grants wisdom to the illiterate, makes simple fishermen to become wise theologians, and establishes perfect order in the organisation of the Church. Wherefore, O Comforter, equal in nature and majesty with the Father and the Son, glory to You...

In the days of old, pride brought confusion of tongues to the builders of the tower of Babel, but now the diversity of tongues enlightened the minds and gave knowledge for the glory of God. There, God punished infidels for their sin, while here Christ enlightened fishermen through the Spirit; there the confusion of tongues was for the sake of vengeance, while here there was variety so that voices could be joined in unison for the salvation of our souls.

*Stichera of Pentecost for Vespers, B#10, pp. 891, 894.*

## **Saints of the Week**

### ***Fast Free Week***

**10 / 23 June — The Hieromartyr Timothy, Bishop of Prusa** - for his great spiritual purity, God gave him the gift of wonder-working, and he healed all manner of diseases and pains among the people. During the reign of the evil Emperor Julian, who had renounced Christ, holy Timothy was thrown into prison. The faithful visited him there to listen to the wise teaching of their bishop. When this came to his ears, Julian commanded that the executioner behead him in the prison. This was in 362, and his soul entered into Paradise while his relics remained, full of miraculous power, to help the people and declare the power of the Lord.

**Also commemorated on this day:** "Lesna" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (1696) (movable holiday on the Trinity Sunday). Holy Fathers and Mothers of Atchara (18th c.) (movable holiday on the Trinity Sunday) (Georgia). Finding of the relics (1609) of St. Basil, bishop of Ryazan. Synaxis of All Saints of Riazan. St. John Maximovitch, Metropolitan of Tobolsk. Synaxis of All Saints of Siberia: St. Innocent, bishop of Irkutsk; St. Macarius (Glukharev) of Altai; St. Macarius (Nevsky), metropolitan of Moscow, apostle to Altai; and others. Hieromartyr Metrophanes, the first Chinese priest, and the Chinese New Martyrs of the Boxer Uprising, at Peking and other places in 1900. New Hieromartyr Nicholas, Basil priests and Martyr Paul. New Hieromartyr Timothy priest. St. Tamara the Confessor. Venerable Silvanus of the Far Caves in Kiev. Martyr Alexander and Virgin-martyr Antonina at Constantinople. Venerable Theophanes, monk, of Antioch, and St. Pansemne, the former harlot of Antioch. St. Bassian, bishop of Lodi in Lombardy. St. Paul, metropolitan of Tobolsk. Martyr Neaniscus the Wise of Alexandria. St. Canides, monk, of Cappadocia. St. Apollo, bishop. St. Alexius of Bithynia, bishop. St. Asterius, bishop of Petra.

**11 / 24 June — Day of the Holy Spirit - The Holy Apostle Bartholomew** - one of the Twelve Great Apostles. It is generally agreed that Bartholomew and Nathaniel are one and the same person. He was a companion of the Apostle Philip and his sister, the virgin Mariamna—and for some time of St John the Theologian— preaching the Gospel in Asia, then in India and finally in Armenia, where he died a martyr. In Hierapolis, the holy apostles by their prayers killed a great snake which had been kept in a temple and deified by the pagans. In this same town, they restored the sight of one Stachius, who had been blind for forty years. This roused the mob against them, and Philip and Bartholomew were crucified, Bartholomew upside down. At this there was an earthquake, in which the evil judges and many of the people perished. Seeing this as a punishment from God, many ran to take the apostles down from their crosses, but Philip was already dead although Bartholomew was still alive. After that, Bartholomew went to India, where he preached and translated the Gospel of Matthew into the Indian language. After that, he moved to Armenia, where he cured the king's daughter of madness. But the king's envious brother, Astyages, took the apostle of God and crucified him, then had him flayed and beheaded in the Armenian town of Ourbanopolis. His body was buried by Christians in a leaden coffin. When many miracles had been wrought over his relics, pagans took the coffin and threw it into the sea. But the sea carried the coffin to the island of Lipara, where the bishop, Agathon, who had been warned by revelation in a dream, was waiting for it and buried it in the church. St Bartholomew appeared to St Joseph the Hymnographer in church one day, robed in white, and blessed him with the Gospels to sing spiritual songs, saying: 'Let streams of heavenly wisdom flow from thy tongue!' He also appeared to the Emperor Anastasius (491-518), and told him that he would protect the newly-built town of Dara. Later, the relics of this apostle were translated to Benevento, and then to Rome. Great and wondrous miracles have been wrought over them.

**The Holy Apostle Barnabas** - one of the Seventy, he was born in Cyprus, of wealthy parents of the tribe of Levi, and studied with Gamaliel together with Saul. He was first named Joseph, but the apostles called him Barnabas, Son of Consolation, because he had a rare gift for comforting men's souls. After Saul's conversion, Barnabas was the first to welcome him among the apostles. After that, with Paul and Mark, he preached the Gospel in Antioch and other places. All accounts agree that he was the first to preach in Rome and in Milan. He suffered at the hands of the Jews on the island of Cyprus and was buried by Mark at the western gate of the city of Salamis, holding a copy of the Gospel of Matthew which he had transcribed with his own hand. His grave remained unknown for several centuries, but when many people had been healed of sickness in that place, it became known as 'the place of healing'. In the time of the Emperor Zeno, the Apostle appeared three times, on three successive nights, to Archbishop Anthemius of Cyprus, and revealed the whereabouts of his grave. This revelation by the Apostle took place just at the time when Peter, the power-hungry Patriarch of Antioch, was seeking to bring the Cypriot Church under his jurisdiction. After the revealing and finding of the miraculous relics of the holy Apostle Barnabas, it was established that the Cypriot Church, as an apostolic foundation, should be independent, and thus the autocephaly of the Church of Cyprus was finally confirmed.

**The Feast of the Icon: 'It is meet ...'**, Within discussions of Orthodoxy, the Holy Mountain of Mt. Athos does get mentioned many times. Mt. Athos itself is what we call a "Spiritual Republic". It is an independent state which pledges allegiance only to Almighty God. Mt. Athos which is perched on a peninsula 20 miles long and seven miles wide is off the Macedonian Coast. The monasteries there are among the oldest in Christendom. Monks, hermits and holy men have lived there since the third century. During the Byzantine Era, the total population exceeded 50,000. No women have ever been allowed on Mt. Athos. The Blessed Ever-Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, is the "Patron Saint" of the Spiritual Republic of Mt. Athos. In one of the magnificent monasteries there is a huge icon on the Blessed Virgin Mary which has been titled "Axion Esti", meaning 'it is worthy to bless Thee, the Virgin'. This beautiful icon was painted in the seventh century and has since graced the sacred walls of the Cathedral of Mt. Athos. Today we commemorate the anniversary of the miracle which took place in front of this icon over 1,000 years ago, on June 11. During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy every Sunday, we hear the beautiful, and inspiring hymn called "Axion Esti" which follows the prayer (as we kneel) called the "Epiklesis". This hymn was written originally in the year 720 AD by St. Cosmas, one of the greatest hymnographers of the Christian Church. The hymn, however, began with the words 'Thee that art more honourable than the Cherubim (Tin Timioteran)'. It was well over one hundred years later that this hymn was added to the Divine Liturgy, but with an added beginning as the result of the following miraculous event: On June 11, 980 AD, as a group of monks were conducting an all-night vigil before the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary, they suddenly noticed a monk standing on the right of the icon whom they did not recognise at all. He was unknown to the monks, and no one could explain his abrupt presence. This unidentified monk began to chant the beautiful hymn written by St. Cosmas, but rather began with the words "Axion Esti os Alethos Makarizin Se Tin Theotokon", which means "It is very meet to bless Thee, Theotokos the ever blessed and most pure Virgin and Mother of God". The monk then explained to the others that he was the Archangel Gabriel and that these words should be added to the hymn. The Archangel then vanished from their sight, leaving the monks amazed at the power of God. Since that day on June 11, 980 AD, the additional words to the hymn of St. Cosmas have been sung by all Orthodox Christians around the world. The icon of the Blessed Mother Axion Esti is still venerated today in the Cathedral of Mt. Athos. "It is meet indeed to bless Thee, the ever-blessed and most pure and Mother of our God. Thee that art more honourable than the Cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, who without spot of sin didst bear God the Word; Thee, verily the Mother of God, we magnify".



**Hieromartyr Metrophanes, the first Chinese priest, and the Chinese New Martyrs of the Boxer Uprising, at Peking and other places, in 1900** - The Orthodox Church believes that the icon is a window into heaven. In other words the icon makes visible the very real but invisible reality of Christ and the saints. The Orthodox Church also believes that the icon is the word of God in visual form. In other words this icon is a visual sermon that speaks to us about the heroic faith of the Chinese Martyrs, their willingness to die for Jesus Christ. When I looked at this icon I asked myself: What are they doing? What are they looking at? What are they doing with their hands? What is their body posture like? Are there any writings in the icon? Starting from the bottom of the icon we see a large group of people looking at us. It is a mixed group. It is made up of clergy and laity, men and women, adult and children, boys and girls. All of them are wearing haloes, the haloes signifying their having attained sainthood. (In the Orthodox Church salvation -- that is, life in Jesus Christ -- is available to both adults and children.) The golden haloes represent the "crown of righteousness"<sup>[1]</sup> and the "crown of glory"<sup>[2]</sup> promised to those who keep the faith and who love the appearing of Jesus Christ. Notice that everyone in the icon has a cross. This represents the cross that Christ gives us when we

become his followers: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it." Bodily posture is also important. Their standing upright signify the fact that the Chinese martyrs are very much awake and conscious in heaven right now. It also symbolizes the Orthodox Church's belief that when we die we do not experience soul sleep but enter fully conscious into Christ's presence. One thing I like about this icon are the little details that carry much meaning. I see little details like the Chinese style clothing, the long braided pigtail worn by St. Paul (standing to the right of Fr. Metrophanes'), the distinctive Chinese style kung fu slippers on their feet, the Asian features on their faces. When I looked at the front row I expected to see the priest Fr. Metrophanes Tsi-Chung in the centre, instead I see the priest with his wife St. Tatiana. The fact that Metrophanes is of Chinese ancestry points to Orthodoxy's commitment to an indigenous clergy. Orthodoxy in China was not a foreign religion, but a religion with deep roots in Chinese culture. Also please note that the priest depicted in this icon is a married priest. More than that, he was a married priest with three sons. A

family man with three sons! All this point to a powerful affirmation of Chinese family values. But what really impresses me is that here is a family willing to die for Christ. Imagine! A whole family who loved Jesus Christ more than anything else in the world. A careful examination of the front row shows other signs of family affection. In the left corner we see a little boy clinging to his father's robe. In the middle we see a mother putting her hand on her son's shoulder in a gesture of love and protection. In the right corner we see two sisters holding hands together. As I look upwards I see two buildings in the background. On the left a Russian Orthodox Church building with the distinctive onion shaped dome. And on the right a building in the distinctive Chinese architecture. This represents the dignity and wisdom of Chinese culture. The Chinese martyrs standing between the two buildings shows them standing between the two cultures. Looking further up I see the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven extending both hands in the gesture of blessing. Christ's position at the very top of the icon points to Christ's Lordship over all creation, his transcendence over all cultures: East and West. So likewise his extending out both hands in the gesture of blessing points to Christ's extending his grace and mercy to the whole world. This brings to mind the words in John's Gospel: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..."<sup>1</sup> In closing I would like to bring to your attention that for the Orthodox Christian, the icon is more than just a reminder of the past. This icon is a spiritual bridge linking us Christians living today to the Chinese Martyrs who died a hundred years ago. This leads us to the ancient belief in the communion of the saints. From the beginning Christians have not only remembered the saints and the martyrs, they asked the saints to remember them in their prayers. This is the significant of the eyes. Do you notice that the eyes of the Chinese Martyrs are looking at you? This is an invitation for you to enter into fellowship with them. It is also an invitation for us to ask them to pray to Christ for our salvation and for the salvation of China to the glory of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Robert A. Arakaki*

**Also commemorated on this day:** "Tupichevsk" and "Cyprus" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (movable holiday on the Day Of the Holy Spirit). Venerable Barnabas, abbot of Vetluga. Uncovering of the relics of Venerable Ephraim, abbot of New Torzhok. Translation of the relics of Venerable Arcadius, monk of Vyazma and New Torzhok. St. Niphont patriarch of Constantinople. Commemoration of the appearance of the Archangel Gabriel (10th c.) to a monk on Mt. Athos, and the revelation of the hymn "It Is Truly Meet". St. Barnabus of Basa near Limasol in Cyprus. Martyr Theopemptus and four others.

**12 / 25 June — Third Day of Holy Trinity - Our Holy Father Onuphrius the Great** - this holy ascetic had been living a whole sixty years in the desert when the monk Paphnutius visited him. His hair and beard reached down to the ground, and long hair, as white as snow, had grown all over his body during his years of nakedness. His appearance was cadaverous, unearthly and awe-inspiring. Seeing Paphnutius, he called him by name and then recounted to him his life in the desert. His guardian angel had appeared to him and taken him to that place. He had for a long time only eaten earth, which it was hard to find in the desert, and, after that, when he had survived an intensive struggle with diabolical temptations and when his heart had become utterly established in love for God, an angel had brought him bread to eat. And besides that, through God's gracious providence, a palm tree grew up at one side of his cell, that gave good dates, and a spring of water began to flow there. 'But especially,' said Onuphrius, 'my food and drink are the sweet words of God.' To Paphnutius's question about his receiving of Communion, the hermit answered that the angel of God brought him Communion every Saturday. On the next day, the old man told Paphnutius that it was the day of his departure from this world; then he knelt down, prayed to God and gave his spirit into God's hands. Then Paphnutius saw a heavenly light that illumined the body of the departed saint, and heard a choir of the angelic hosts. He buried Onuphrius's body with honour and returned to his own monastery, there as a living witness to narrate to the brethren, for their edification, the wonderful life of the man of God and the greatness of God's providence towards those who give themselves wholly to His service. Onuphrius died in the year 400.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable Peter of Mt. Athos. Opening of the relics of St. Anna of Kashin. Venerable Arsenius, abbot of Konevits. Venerable Onuphrius, abbot of Malsk. Venerables Bassian and Jonah, monks, of Petroma. Venerables Onuphrius and Auxentius, monks, of Vologda. Venerable Stephen of Komel, abbot of Ozersk Monastery, Vologda. Venerables John, Andrew, Heraclemon, and Theophilus, hermits of Egypt. St. John the Soldier of Egypt. Venerable Onuphrius, abbot of Katrom Monastery. St. Julian of Dagouta at Constantinople. New Martyrs Onuphrius, bishop (1938), and with him: Anthony, Barsanuphius and Joseph, and bishop Alexander Kharkovsky. St. Olympius, bishop and confessor who suffered in Thrace. St. Timothy the Hermit of Egypt. St. Cunera, virgin-martyr of Rhenen. Venerable John (Tornike) of Mt. Athos. Finding of the relics of St. John of Moscow, fool-for-Christ. Synaxis of All Saints of St. Onuphrius Monastery at Jablechna. Miracle-working icons of the Theotokos and St. Onuphrius at St. Onuphrius Monastery.

**13 / 26 June — The Holy Martyr Aquilina** - born in the Palestinian town of Biblos of Christian parents, little Aquilina was already, at the age of seven, living as a true Christian, and by the age of ten was so filled with divine understanding and the grace of the Holy Spirit that she used to preach Christ with

great power and zeal to her girl friends. When Diocletian's persecution began, Aquilina was handed over to the imperial governor, Volusianus, who was more like a beast than a man. He ordered that she first be flogged and then that a heated rod be passed through her ears and brain. Until the last moment, the virgin Aquilina freely and clearly confessed Christ the Lord; but when her brains started flowing with her blood from her head, she fell as if dead. Believing her to be indeed dead, the governor ordered that her body be taken outside the city and thrown onto a dungheap for the dogs to eat. But, during the night, an angel of God appeared to her and said: 'Arise and be healed!', and the maiden arose and was restored to health, and stood a long time expressing her gratitude and praise to God and begging Him not to deny her a martyr's death. A voice was heard from heaven: 'Go; and it shall be to thee as thou desirest', and Aquilina went into the city. The city gates opened of their own accord for her, and she passed through them and went to the governor's palace like a ghost, standing before his bed and showing herself to him. The governor was seized with unspeakable terror when he saw the maiden whom he had thought dead. On the following day, he ordered the executioner to take Aquilina out and behead her with the sword. Before her execution, she knelt in prayer and surrendered her spirit into God's hands, leaving her dead body to be beheaded by the executioner. Her relics gave healing to many of the sick. St Aquilina was twelve years old when she suffered for the Lord; she endured her Passion and was crowned with a wreath of martyrdom in the year 293.

**Also commemorated on this day:** St. Triphyllius, bishop of Leucosia (Nicosia) in Cyprus. St. Alexandra, foundress of Diveyevo Convent. New Hieromartyr Alexis priest. New Hieromartyr Demetrius priest. Virgin-Martyr Pelagea. Venerable Andronicus, disciple of Venerable Sergius of Radonezh, and St. Sabbas, abbots of Moscow. Martyr Antonina of Nicaea. Venerable Anna, and her son St. John of Constantinople. St. Antipater, bishop of Bostra in Arabia. Finding of the relics of Martyr Nicholas the Deacon of Lesbos. St. Eulogius, patriarch of Antioch. Martyr Diodorus of Emesus who was crucified. St. Anthimus, Metropolitan of Wallachia.

**14 / 27 June — The Holy Prophet Elisha** - lived nine hundred years before Christ. When the Lord willed to take the aged prophet Elias to Himself, He revealed to him that He had set aside Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of the tribe of Reuben and from the city of Abel-Menolah, to inherit his prophetic calling. Elias made the Lord's will known to Elisha and draped him in his mantle, asking God for a double portion of the grace of prophecy for him. Elisha at once left his home and his people and followed after Elias. When the Lord took Elias in the fiery chariot (A.V. II Kings 2:11), Elisha remained to carry on the work of prophecy with yet greater power than Elias. In his purity and zeal, he was equal to the greatest prophets, and surpassed all the others with the wondrous power given to him by God. He divided the waters of the Jordan as Moses once divided the Red Sea; he made the bitter waters in Jericho drinkable; he brought water down into the trenches in the war against the Moabites; he caused the widow's jars to fill to the brim with oil; he raised the dead son of the Shunammite woman; he fed a hundred people with twenty small loaves; he healed Naaman, captain of the hosts of Syria, of leprosy; he blinded an entire Syrian army and put another to flight; he foretold many events both for the nation and for individuals, and went to his rest at a very great age.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos "Surety of Sinners" in Korets (movable holiday on Thursday of the 1-st week of the Pentecost). St. Methodius, patriarch of Constantinople. Finding of the relics of New Hieromartyr Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kiev. New Hieromartyr Joseph priest. New Hieromartyrs Nicholas, Alexander, Paul priests and Nicholas deacon. St. Mstislav-George, prince of Novgorod. Venerable Methodius, abbot of Peshnosh. Venerable Elisha, monk, of Suma. Synaxis of All Saints of Diveyevo. Venerable Niphon, monk of Kapsokalyvia, Mt. Athos. Venerable Julitta (Julia) of Tabenna in Egypt. St. John (Mavropos), metropolitan of Euchaita. St. Joseph, bishop of Thessalonica, brother of St. Theodore of the Studion. St. Sabbas the Fool-for-Christ of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos. St. Dogmael, monk of Pembrokeshire. St. Cyril of Gortyne.

**15 / 28 June — The Holy Prophet Amos** - born in the village of Tekoa, close to Bethlehem, he was of simple birth and lived a simple life. Amos was a herdsman for rich men in Jerusalem. But God, who never looks into 'Who's Who', and judges a man by the purity of his heart and not by his external appearance, the same God who took Moses and David from their sheep to make them leaders of the nation; this same God also took Amos to be His prophet. Amos rebuked King Uzziah and his pagan priests for their idolatry and turned the people from the worship of the golden calves, teaching them to worship the one, only and living God. When Amaziah, the chief of the pagan priests, began to persecute him, he prophesied the triumph of the Assyrians over Israel, the slaying of King Jeroboam and Amaziah's sons and the defiling of his wife by the Assyrian soldiers before his own eyes, because Amaziah had led the nation into adultery with idols. And so it all came to pass. The son of the priest struck the prophet on the forehead with a staff so forcefully that he fell down. He was carried, barely alive, to his village of Tekoa, where he surrendered his holy soul to God. He lived in the 8th century before Christ.

**St. Jonah, metropolitan of Moscow** - Sainted Jona, Metropolitan of Moscow and WonderWorker of All Russia, was born in the city of Galich into a pious Christian family. The father of the future saint was

named Feodor. At twelve years of age the youth took monastic vows in one of the Galich monasteries, from which he transferred to the Moscow Simonov monastery, where for many years he fulfilled various obediences. One time Sainted Photii, Metropolitan of Moscow (Comm. 27 May and 2 July), visited at the Simonov monastery and after the molieben, having blessed the archimandrite and brethren, wanted also to bless the monks fulfilling obedience at the monastery tasks. When he came to the bakery, he saw then the monk Jona asleep from much work, and the right hand of the fatigued monk was bent in a gesture of blessing. Sainted Photii asked not to wake him; he blessed the sleeping monk and prophetically predicted to those present, that this monk would be a great hierarch of the Russian Church and would guide many on the way to salvation.

The prediction of the Saint was fulfilled. After several years Saint Jona was made bishop of Ryazan and Murom. In 1431 Saint Photii died. Five years after his death, Saint Jona was chosen Metropolitan of All Russia for his virtuous and holy life. When the newly chosen metropolitan journeyed to Patriarch Joseph II (1416-1439) in Constantinople, in order to accept confirmation as metropolitan, it turned out then, that shortly before this the nefarious Isidor, a Bulgarian by descent, was already established as Russian metropolitan. Spending a short while at Kiev and Moscow, Isidor journeyed to the Council of Florence (1438), - where he accepted Uniatism. A Sobor / Council of Russian hierarchs and clergy deposed metropolitan Isidor, and he was compelled to flee secretly to Rome (where he died in 1462). Saint Jona was unanimously chosen Metropolitan of All Russia. His consecration by the blessing of the Constantinople Patriarch Gregory III (1445-1450) - was the first time that it was done by Russian hierarchs in Moscow. On 15 December 1448 Saint Jona became Metropolitan and with arch-pastoral zeal he began to assert piety among the flock, encouraging the Orthodox faith in the land by word and by deed. And beneath his exalted dignity he continued as before with his personal monastic efforts.

In 1451 the Tatars unexpectedly advanced on Moscow; they burned the surroundings and prepared for an assault on the city. Metropolitan Jona with clergy made procession along the walls of the city, with tears beseeching God for the salvation of city and people. Beholding the dying monk Antonii of the Chudov monastery, - who was noted for his virtuous life, Saint Jona said: "My son and brother Antonii! Pray to the Merciful God and the All-Pure Mother of God for the deliverance of the city and all Orthodox Christians". The humble Antonii replied: "Great hierarch! We give thanks to God and His All-Pure Mother, - She hath heard thy prayer and hath besought Her Son, - the city and all Orthodox Christians wilt be saved through thine prayers. The enemy will soon take flight. Only I alone am destined by the Lord to be killed by the enemies". Just as the elder said this, an enemy arrow struck him.

The prediction of Starets Antonii occurred: on 2 July, on the feast of the Placing of the Robe of the Most Holy Mother of God, confusion broke out in the ranks of the Tatars, and in unexplained fear and terror they turned to flight. Saint Jona built in his courtyard a temple in honour of the Placing of the Robe of the Most Holy Mother of God, - in memory of the deliverance of Moscow from the enemies.

The blessed end of Saint Jona followed in the year 1461. By the grave of the Saint began to occur numerous healings.

In 1472 the relics of holy Metropolitan Jona were opened undecayed and placed in the Uspensky Sobor / Cathedral of the Kremlin (the feast of Transfer of the holy Relics is celebrated 27 May). A Sobor of the Russian Church in 1547 established the individual day of memory to Sainted Jona, Metropolitan of Moscow. In 1596 Patriarch Job established the celebration to Sainted Jona in the Sobor / Assemblage of other Moscow Hierarchs, on 5 October.

**Also commemorated on this day:** St. Michael, first metropolitan of Kiev. Venerables Gregory and Cassian, abbots of Avnezh. Martyrs Vitus, Modestus, and Crescentia at Lucania. Martyr Dulas of Cilicia. Venerable Dulas the Passion-bearer of Egypt. Venerable Jerome (Hieronymus) of Stridonium. Translation of the relics of Theodore the Sykeote. Great-martyr Tsar Venerable Lazar of Serbia. St. Ephraim, patriarch of Serbia. Blessed Augustine, bishop of Hippo, and his mother Monica. Voronin Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. Venerable Orsiesius of Tabenna, disciple of St. Pachomius the Great. Virgin Martyrs Leonis, Libye, and Eutropia, and their mother, who suffered in Palmyra of Syria. St. Symeon, archbishop of Novgorod. Venerable Abraham, abbot, of Auvergne. Apostles Fortunatus, Achaicus, and Stephen. Venerable Joseph, monk, of Bethlehem. Martyr Grace. St. Cedronus, patriarch of Alexandria. Martyr Hesychius the Soldier of Dorostolum and two others in Moesia. St. Spyridon, patriarch of Serbia. All New Martyrs of Serbia. St. Trillo, abbot of Llandrillo.

**16 / 29 June — St Tikhon, Bishop of Amathus** - a wonderworker, Tikhon was chosen unanimously as bishop on the death of blessed Mnemonius, and consecrated by the renowned Epiphanius for the diocese of Amathus. The purity of his life and his zealous adherence to Orthodoxy recommended him for this rank. There were still pagans in Cyprus at that time, and Tikhon undertook with apostolic zeal to turn the unbelievers into believers, and he had great success in this. After lengthy toil in the Lord's vineyard, he entered into the eternity of the blessed in about 425. He is named a wonderworker because of the many miracles that he performed during his lifetime. His father was a baker, and whenever his father left him

alone in the shop, he would distribute the bread to the poor without payment. His father reproached him once for doing this, so he prayed to God and their storehouse became so full of grain that they could open the door only with difficulty. Another time he planted a dry slip from a vine and the vine grew green and bore fruit in its season.

**The Holy Martyrs Tigrius and Eutropius** - among the clergy of St. John Chrysostom. When evil men banished Chrysostom from Constantinople, the cathedral church [Hagia Sophia] was set on fire and a flame rose from it and fell upon the houses of the persecutors of this beacon of the Church. The people saw the finger of God in that but the enemies of Chrysostom attributed this fire to his adherents. Many of those who were accused suffered bitterly because of that, among them Tigrius, the presbyter and Eutropius, the reader. Optatius, the mayor of the city, an unbaptized Greek with particular malice, began a pursuit for Chrysostom's followers. Tigrius, in his youth, was a slave of a wealthy man who castrated him. Freeing himself of slavery, he dedicated himself completely to the service of the Church and in this service shone as a shining ray. Optatius subjected this "meek, humble, charitable and hospitable" man to great tortures and then banished him into exile to Mesopotamia where he died in prison. Eutropius, chaste from birth, pure, blameless and kind was beaten by oxen whips and by canes and finally hanged. When Christians took his body to bury it, sweet angelic singing was heard in the air.

**St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco the Wonderworker** - Archbishop John was born on June 4, 1896 in Kharkov province, to the pious aristocrats Boris and Glafira Maximovitch; at baptism he was given the name Michael. Even in childhood Michael displayed a certain striving toward holiness, similar to that displayed by his distant relative, the renowned Siberian missionary Holy Hierarch John of Tobolsk, who was glorified by God through his working of miracles and the witness of his incorrupt relics. Michael was a sickly child with a poor appetite. He would take his toy soldiers and make them into monks, and the fortresses into monasteries. The Sviatogorsk Monastery, not far from the Maximovitch estate, provided the impetus for young Michael to take a seriously contemplative attitude toward life. Under the influence of the youth Michael, his governess converted to Orthodoxy.

In 1914, Michael completed the Poltava Military Academy, and entered the Kharkov Imperial University school of law. He was an excellent student, although he devoted part of his time to studying saints' lives and other religious literature. In the religious life of Kharkov, the young Michael was provided with the first step along the path of piety. In the crypt under the Kharkov cathedral church lay the relics of the Miracle-Worker Archbishop Melety Leontovitch, who spent his nights standing, with arms uplifted in prayer. Michael came to love this saint, and began to emulate his podvig [spiritual struggle] by staying awake all night. Thus, gradually, young Michael began to develop the desire to dedicate himself fully to God, and as a concomitant, began to manifest exalted spiritual qualities: abstinence and strictness toward himself, profound humility, and compassion for the suffering.

Even before his departure from Russia, young Michael made the acquaintance of the Most-blessed Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovistky), founder of the Russian Church Abroad. At the close of the civil war, Michael and his entire family emigrated to Yugoslavia, where he enrolled in the Department of Theology of Belgrade University, from which he graduated in 1925. Metropolitan Anthony came to greatly love Michael, and kept the youth near him. In 1926, Metropolitan Anthony tonsured Michael to the monastic rank with the name John (after St. John, Metropolitan of Tobolsk), and soon thereafter ordained him a hierodeacon. On the Feast of the Entry of the Most-holy Theotokos into the Temple, monk John became a hieromonk. In 1929 he began to teach at the Serbian high school, and soon, with his capacity for inspiring lofty Christian ideals in his students, won their love.

As a hieromonk, John continued to practice the podvig of strict asceticism, to which he joined a podvig of all-night prayer, a podvig beyond the capacity of most people. It was during this time that, at the request of local Greeks and Macedonians, he began to serve in Greek for them. Like Holy Righteous John of Kronstadt, Vladyka served the Liturgy daily, acquiring thereby great spiritual strength, and having fanned within him the flame of love for God and for men. Hieromonk John began to visit hospitals and to search out the sick, those in need of prayer, consolation, and Communion. Inasmuch as Hieromonk John's renown was constantly growing, the bishops abroad resolved to elevate him to the episcopate. Wishing to decline such a lofty calling, Hieromonk John emphasized the fact that he had a speech impediment; the bishops remained unmoved, pointing out to him that the Prophet Moses had also had a speech impediment.

Hieromonk John's consecration, and his assignment to the Diocese of Shanghai, China, took place in May 1934. The newly-consecrated Vladyka arrived in Shanghai at the end of November, and immediately made efforts to restore church unity. He established ties with the local Orthodox Serbs, Greeks, and Ukrainians. At the same time, he began the work of erecting a huge cathedral church dedicated to Surety of Sinners Icon of the Mother of God, as well as a three-storey parish house and bell tower. Gifted with boundless energy, Vladyka John served as the inspiration for the building of churches, hospitals, and orphanages, and played an active part in many benevolent undertakings in Russian Shanghai.

But despite such frenetic activities, Vladyka John continued to live as if in another world. In order to avoid secular glory and human praise, he from time to time pretended to act the fool. He remained in constant prayer, and if he did not serve in the church, then he would read the daily cycle of services himself. Often Vladyka would walk barefoot, even on the coldest of days. He would eat once a day, and during the fasts of the church would eat nothing but prosphoras. Each morning, to quicken his spirit, he would pour cold water over himself. He did not make social visits, but those in need of help he would visit, at unpredictable times and in bad weather. He would visit those he knew to be sick on a daily basis, taking with him the Holy Gifts. He possessed the gift of clairvoyance, and the gift of powerful prayer. There is documented a multitude of instances in which miraculous help came through the prayers of Vladyka John.

In 1939, a certain parishioner, beset by a number of tribulations, began to lose her faith. Once, upon entering the Church while Vladyka was serving, she witnessed a flame, shaped like a large tulip, descend into the Chalice during the consecration of the Holy Gifts. After seeing this miracle, her faith returned to her, and she repented of her faint-heartedness.

It once happened that as the result of constantly being on his feet, Vladyka's leg became very swollen, and the physicians, fearing the possibility of gangrene, prescribed that he be hospitalized. After much pleading with him, they succeeded in talking Vladyka into entering the Russian Hospital. But he did not remain there long. The same evening, he secretly left and went to the cathedral, where he served the All-night vigil. By the next day, the swelling had completely gone.

Vladyka used to visit prisons, and he served the Liturgy for those under St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, Mural, NW side of our cathedral arrest. Often, upon seeing Vladyka, the spiritually ill would become calm, and would piously receive Communion. Once, Vladyka John was asked to commune a dying patient at the Russian Hospital in Shanghai. On that occasion, Vladyka took a priest along with him. Upon their arrival, he noticed a gregarious young man of about 20, playing a harmonica. The lad was to be discharged the following day. Vladyka John called to him and said: "I want to give you Communion right now." The young man immediately confessed his sins and received Communion. The astonished priest asked Vladyka why he had tarried with an apparently healthy young man instead of going to the one who was dying. Vladyka answered: "He will die tonight, and the other one, who is seriously ill, will live for many years." And so it came to pass.

An enormous feat of charity was Vladyka's building in Shanghai of an orphanage to serve orphans and needy children. At first, there were only 8 orphans living there, but over the years, the orphanage gave shelter to hundreds of children, with an overall total of 1,500. Vladyka himself gathered up ailing and starving children from the streets of the Shanghai slums.

It once happened that during the war, there was not enough food in the orphanage to feed the children. Vladyka prayed all night, and in the morning, the doorbell rang. The representative of some charitable organization had brought a substantial donation to the orphanage. During the Japanese occupation, Vladyka declared himself to be the temporary head of the Russian colony, and showed great courage in defending Russians before the occupying Japanese powers.

In Shanghai, there was a voice teacher named Anna Petrovna Lushnikova who taught Vladyka proper breathing and enunciation, thereby improving his diction. At the end of each lesson, Vladyka paid her \$20.00. During the war, in 1945, she was gravely wounded, and happened to be in a French hospital. Sensing that she might die during the night, Anna Petrovna begged the nurses to call Vladyka John, so that he might give her Communion. Because, as the result of war-time conditions the hospital was locked up at night, the nurses refused. On that stormy night, Anna Petrovna was beside herself, and kept calling upon Vladyka. Suddenly, about 11:00 PM, Vladyka appeared in the ward. Unable to believe her eyes, Anna Petrovna asked Vladyka whether she was dreaming or whether he had actually come to her. Vladyka smiled, prayed, and administered Holy Communion. Afterwards, she calmed down and slept. The next morning she felt healed. As the hospital had been tightly secured, no one believed Anna Petrovna's report that Vladyka had visited her during the night. However, a patient in a neighboring bed confirmed that she had also seen Vladyka. The greatest surprise was the discovery of a \$20 bill under Anna Petrovna's pillow. In this way, Vladyka left material evidence of his visit.

Archpriest George Larin, who had been an altar boy of Vladyka's in Shanghai, relates: "Despite Vladyka's strictness, all of the altar boys loved him very much. To me, Vladyka was an ideal, one which I wanted to emulate in every way. Thus, during Great Lent, I would not sleep in bed, and instead lay on the floor. I would not eat my usual meals with the family, but instead would partake of bread and water in solitude....My parents became worried and took me to Vladyka. Hearing them out, the prelate asked the guard to go to the store and bring a sausage. In response to my tearful cries that I did not wish to violate Lent, the wise prelate admonished me to eat the sausage and to always remember that obedience to parents is more important than personal accomplishment. "How then should I proceed, Vladyka?" I asked, hoping nonetheless to "especially" apply myself. "Go to church as you always did, and at home, do

what your mother and father ask." I remember how grieved I was that Vladyka did not assign to me some "special" deeds to accomplish."

With the coming of the Communists to power, the Russians in China were once again forced to flee, most through the Philippine Islands. In 1949, approximately 15,000 refugees from the Chinese mainland were living in a camp on the island of Tubabao. Every night, he made a circuit of the island, and by his prayers and the sign of the Cross, protected the island from the seasonal typhoons, something acknowledged by the Filipinos themselves. By the lobbying efforts of Vladyka in Washington, a law regarding Russian refugees was amended, with the result that many Russians were permitted to enter the United States. It was during this trip to Washington in 1949, that on September 11th, the Feastday of the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner, Vladyka founded our parish.

In 1951, Vladyka was appointed to head the Diocese of Western Europe, with his cathedra in Paris. Vladyka expended great efforts to unite to the Church Abroad parishes of the French Orthodox Church, and he helped establish the Orthodox Church of Holland. Vladyka turned his attention to the existence of local saints who had lived in antiquity but who were heretofore unknown to the Orthodox Church. At his initiative, the Synod passed a resolution with respect to veneration of a host of saints who had lived in the West prior to the schism of 1054. Vladyka was constantly travelling across Europe, and he sometimes would celebrate the Divine Liturgy in Dutch, in French; later he also served in English. Many revered him as an unmercenary-healer.

E.G. Tchhertkoff reminisces about the time during which Vladyka was in Western Europe: "On several occasions, I visited Vladyka while he was living in the Cadet Corps building near Paris. He occupied a small cell on the top floor. In the cell, there was a table, an armchair and several chairs, and in the corner, icons and a lectern with books upon it. There was no bed in the cell, as Vladyka did not lie down to sleep, but rather prayed while leaning on a staff topped with a cross-bar. Sometimes he prayed on his knees. It was likely that when he prostrated himself, he would fall asleep for a little while in that position on the floor. That is how he brought himself to exhaustion! Sometimes during our conversation, he appeared to doze. But whenever I stopped talking, he would immediately say, "Continue, I hear you!"

"Whenever he did not serve, but remained home, he usually walked barefoot (to mortify the flesh) even on during the hardest frosts. He would be walking barefoot in the cold, along the rocky road from the military school, which was on a hill inside a park, to the church at the gate. Once he happened to injure his foot. The doctors were unable to heal it, and they feared the possibility of sepsis. They were forced to hospitalize Vladyka, but he refused to lie down in the bed. However, at the urging of the administration, Vladyka finally acceded, and lay down in the bed, but only after placing a boot under himself to make himself uncomfortable. The French hospital nurses said "You have brought us a saint!" Each morning, a priest would come to serve a Liturgy, and Vladyka would receive Communion."

"Since for a long time our church did not have a permanent priest, once a priest from another parish came to us to celebrate Vespers. The whole service lasted only 45 minutes (usually it takes 2 and a half hours)! We were horrified! So many parts of Vespers were skipped that we decided to tell about this to Vladika. We hoped that he will influence the priest to follow the established order of Orthodox services. But Vladika pleasantly smiling said to us: 'How difficult is to please you people. I celebrate too long and he too short!' With such kindness and meekness he taught us not to judge."

Vladika's reputation for holiness, too, spread among the non-Orthodox as well as the Orthodox population. In one of the Catholic churches of Paris, a priest strove to inspire his young people with these words: "You demand proofs, you say that now there are neither miracles nor saints. Why should I give you theoretical proofs, when today there walks in the streets of Paris a Saint - Saint Jean Nus Pieds (Saint John the Barefoot)." Many people testify to the miracles worked by the prayers of Archbishop John in Western Europe.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable Tikhon of Kaluga or Medin. Venerable Tikhon of Lukhov. Venerable Moses of Optina, founder of the Optina Skete. New Martyr Hermogenes (Germogen), bishop of Tobolsk, Euphremius, Michael and Peter priests and Martyr Constantine. Translation of the relics of St. Theophan the Recluse, bishop of Tambov. Venerable Tikhon of Krestogorsk. St. Mark the Just of Apollonias, nephew of the Apostle Barnabas. Five Martyrs of Nicomedia. Forty Martyrs of Rome. St. Kaikhosro the Georgian. St. Ismael, bishop of Menevia.

**‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡**

**Monday** - Ephesians 5:8-19; Matthew 18:10-20

**Tuesday** - Romans 1:1-7, 13-17; Matthew 4:25-5:13; Galatians 5:22-6:2 (Venerables);  
Matthew 11:27-30 (Venerables)

**Wednesday** - Romans 1:18-27; Matthew 5:20-26

**Thursday** - Romans 1:28-2:9; Matthew 5:27-32

**Friday** - John 10:1-9 (Matins Gospel); Romans 2:14-29; Matthew 5:33-41; Hebrews 7:26-8:2  
(St. Jonah); John 10:9-16 (St. Jonah)

**Saturday** - Romans 1:7-12; Matthew 5:42-48

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**JOHN 20 HE BREATHED ON THEM, AND SAID TO THEM,**

**"RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT."**

19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 Now when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Then Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."