

Sunday of the Dread Judgement

(Meatfare Sunday)

10 / 23 February



Resurrection Tropar, Tone 3: Let the heavens rejoice / let the earth be glad / for the Lord has shown strength with His arm! / He has trampled down death by death! / He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell / and has granted the world great mercy.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 3: On this day thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, / leading us from the gates of death / On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices. / With the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

Kondak to Meat-fare Sunday, Tone 1: When Thou, O God, shalt come to earth with glory, and all things tremble, and the river of fire floweth before the Judgement Seat and the books are opened, and the hidden things made public, then deliver me from the unquenchable fire and deem me worthy to stand at Thy right hand.

Matins Gospel III

Epistle: I Corinthians 8: 8 — 9: 2

8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. 9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Chapter 9: 1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

SHALL THE WEAK BROTHER PERISH, FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED?

If one of you sees something unedifying and so much as goes on to pass it on and put it into the heart of another brother, in doing so you not only harm yourself but you harm your brother by putting one more little bit of knavery into his heart. Even if that brother has his mind set on prayer or some other noble activity, and the first arrives and furnishes him with something to prate about, he not only impedes what he ought to be doing, but brings a temptation to him.

St. Dorotheos of Gaza. Discourses: On the Fear of God. B#45, pp. 114, 115.

Gospel: St. Matthew 25: 31-46

The Lord said: 31 When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory. 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was ahungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was ahungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD

And in return for what do they receive such things? For the covering of a roof, for a garment, for bread, for cold water, for visiting, for going to prison. For indeed in every case it is what is needed, and sometimes not even that. For surely, the sick and one who is in bonds do not seek only for this, but the one to be freed, the other to be delivered from his infirmity. But He, being gracious, requires only what is within our power ...leaving to us to exert our generosity in doing more...For even if they had done ten thousand things, the munificence would be of grace, since in return for services so small and cheap, such a heaven, and a kingdom and such great honour should be given them.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily LXXIX on Matthew XXV, 2. B#54, p. 476.

The two past Sundays spoke to us of God's patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our judge. 'Behold the goodness and severity of God' (Rom. 11:22). Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the end comes. In the words of the Great Canon: The end draws near, my soul, the end draws near; Yet thou dost not care or make ready. The times grows short, rise up: the judge is at the door. The days of our life pass swiftly, as a dream, as a flower. (Canticle Four, Tropar 2). This Sunday sets before us the 'eschatological' dimension of Lent: the Great fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Saviour, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come. (This is a theme that will be taken up in the first three days of Holy Week.) Nor is the judgement merely in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts towards others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgement upon ourselves.

Lenten Triodion

Dearly beloved, in today's Gospel, our Lord tells the multitudes gathered to hear Him, a surprising story about a group of people very similar to themselves. He tells them of the whole race of humanity gathered before Him in that final day of Judgment. He tells them of the surprised reactions of many of those gathered there, when they are finally assigned either to the right or to the left hand of God; either to eternal salvation or to eternal damnation. They are judged either for their willingness or unwillingness to help our Lord Jesus Christ in a variety of needy situations: in times of hunger, thirst, nakedness, imprisonment, etc. And we hear, beloved, that neither group is able to comprehend when they had ever encountered and either helped or refused to help the Lord.

And it really matters little that they find it hard to comprehend this message, because God is able to discern a good and dedicated heart even if they themselves cannot. Before our Lord came, those righteous people may have performed their works of mercy out of a sort of second sense; a kind of innate feeling that they were doing what was pleasing to God. Possibly their sacrifices may have been even more meaningful because they had never heard the life-giving counsels of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the age of "an eye for an eye" they had the foresight to anticipate the teachings of "love your enemy", "turn the other cheek" etc.

Consider the awesome responsibility, beloved, that we bear—to provide suitable dwelling places for Him to dwell in. Christ makes His abode in us and we must be certain that just as the ideal home today is one where peace, love and devotion to one another reign, the spiritual home we provide for Him is the same.

What, then, must we do to make those homes exemplary dwellings for our Lord? We must follow the very counsels He set down for us. We must follow to the letter His perfect example. He was compassionate to the sick, the crippled, the poor, the sinner. So too, if we wish to have a suitable repository for our Lord, we must open it to admit all those other children of His with whom He concerns Himself.

If Christ comes to our hearts and sees that we hold them exclusively for Him and cannot bring ourselves to admit His needy children. He will know that He could not dwell in peace there. He came to serve and if we provide Him with a dwelling place which stifles His activity. He will pass by our spiritual homes.

What He wishes to see are spiritual hospitals, old-age homes, orphanages, etc., within us, where He knows that He can dwell and dispense His love to all in need of it. If we close the doors of our hearts to our brothers in Christ, He will pass by our door and our splendour will fall into decay. Remember, then, beloved, that it is not poverty, disease or any other earthly, human infirmity that will prevent our Lord from dwelling in a man, but rather sin. But, even in the case of sin, our Lord continues to knock and hope that we will expel it and accept Him back.

Beloved, all of mankind was created in the Image and Likeness of God and all share in Christ's humanity. Therefore it is not possible for us to call ourselves His followers and not recognize Him in our neighbour. And for this reason our Lord tells us in today's Gospel lesson, *inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me* (Matt. 25:40). Amen.

The Living Word

Anon.

Saints of the Week

Cheesefare Week during which all foods **except meat** may be eaten.

10 / 23 February — The Hieromartyr Charalampus - This great saint was bishop in Magnesia, and suffered for Christ at the age of 113. When a violent persecution broke out under the Emperor Septimus Severus, the aged Charalampus did not hide from his persecutors, but freely and openly preached the Christian faith. He endured all tortures as though not in the body, and when they flayed the living flesh from him, the godly saint said to the Emperor's soldiers: 'Thank you, my brethren, for scraping off the old body and renewing my soul for new and eternal life.' He performed many wonders and brought many to the Faith. Even the Emperor's daughter, Gallina, repudiated the paganism of her father and became a Christian. Condemned to death and led to the place of execution, St Charalampus raised his arms to heaven and prayed for all men, that God would give them bodily health and salvation of soul, and that He would grant them the fruits of the earth in abundance: 'Lord, Thou knowest that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Thy blessing on all.' After praying thus, the saintly elder gave his soul to God before the executioner had laid his sword to his neck. He suffered in 202. Gallina took his body and buried it; Our Holy Father Prochorus the Orach-eater (1107);

Russian New Martyr Anatole, metropolitan of Odessa (1938) should be especially glorified for his spiritual courage in the grievous years of 1928-1937. He lived in the South of Russia and was respected for his spiritual deeds and his fearless professing of the true Russian Faith. Metropolitan Anatole suffered a slow martyrdom from the hands of the communists, who cruelly persecuted and humiliated him. Even before entering high school he dedicated his life to the service of God. After high school he was accepted by the Academy of Kiev, and while studying there, took the vows of monkhood. Soon after graduating from the Academy, the Rev. Anatole was ordained bishop. Bishop Anatole, young and inspired, won the hearts of his spiritual children. His ever increasing popularity was noted, of course, by the usurpers of power of the Russian government. Bishop Anatole was one of the first to be arrested by the communists. For a long time he languished in the prisons of the GPU (pre-KGB). During the hours of questioning the mild prelate was outrageously beaten by magistrates, to the point that his jaw was permanently injured, so that his speech at times was not quite distinct. Two of his ribs were also injured. Bishop Anatole spent a long time in the prison hospital. His wounds had hardly healed when he was exiled to Solovky to the harsh conditions of a labour camp for the most dangerous political "criminals", especially for the clergy. Severe frosts, lack of satisfactory nourishment, and very heavy labour broke the health of the already not too robust bishop. He suffered this oppressive life for seven years. He owed his survival there only to the most unselfish care of his younger sister, whom he had raised as a daughter. She had left everything to follow her brother into exile. Upon release from exile, Bishop Anatole was promoted to the rank of Archbishop of Saratov and Samara. Shortly after this, he was taken ill with an ulcer of the stomach—the result of hardships suffered while at the labour camp. Upon recovery, he was appointed head of the Odessa-Kherson diocese in the South. He arrived in Odessa in the darkest hour of its existence. All religious affairs were in the hands of the NKVD inspector-of-the-cults, Vishnegorodsky at first, and later Baranovich. Both of them fully enjoyed using their power to inconvenience and humiliate the head of the local churches. The Archbishop was frequently ordered to get out of bed in the middle of the night and report to the NKVD headquarters. Sometimes the inspectors would appear in church during solemn services on an important holiday, and issue the same order. In such instances, the otherwise meek and humble Archbishop Anatole would curtly tell them that under no circumstances would he stop the church ritual; that he would come only after officiating in the church. His refusals were so positive that even the NKVD messengers gave up, inwardly furious. At the end of four or five hours of Church service, the Archbishop would hurry to the NKVD, without time to rest or eat. There he was kept waiting for one or two hours more, just to repay him for the delay. When he was finally received, Baranovich would stamp his feet and shout at the Archbishop, just as if he were a disobedient slave. Such were the conditions under which this highly respected priest carried on his spiritual work. The hardest trial for him was the arrest of almost all the clergy and the best preachers of Odessa in 1931. All of them (more than 20), were exiled during the same year, when the sacrilegious closing and destroying of the churches started. The majestic Cathedral of the Transfiguration was blown up before the eyes of the Archbishop, as was the beautiful Church of the Archangel Michael in the Devichy Monastery; the military Cathedral of St. Serge, and the churches of the port and many others. The repressions and persecutions of the clergy increased, leaving clergymen without food and lodgings. They found refuge in the Archbishop's home, while he himself went about to different government organisations pleading humbly for assistance and mercy for his unfortunate colleagues. But he was met only with mockery and insults. In 1932, Archbishop Anatole was promoted to the rank of Metropolitan. He remained head of the Odessa-Kherson diocese until his arrest in August, 1936. Before his arrest, Metropolitan Anatole had to suffer the humiliation of being dismissed by Baranovich and forbidden to perform church services. Upon his arrest, Metropolitan Anatole was removed to Kiev where he was kept under severe conditions for about six months. He again suffered from ulcer of the stomach with complications which affected his legs. Metropolitan Constantine, Exarch of the Ukraine, succeeded in obtaining permission for him to see his sister before he left for exile. The poor woman later told, with sobs, how Metropolitan Anatole was led into the room of their meeting supported on both sides—having nearly lost the complete use of his legs. In spite of his condition, Metropolitan Anatole was taken into exile by "etape". He was purposely placed among the gangs of the worst criminals, who systematically robbed him on the way. The sick prelate was actually forced by gun-butts to walk from one stop to another, farther and farther to the North, with no time to rest. When he collapsed in a dead faint, he was lifted onto a truck; but as soon as he regained consciousness he was forced again to walk. Men who witnessed the tortures of the saintly man, later declared with tears, that it would have been more merciful to have shot him on the spot. On the way, Metropolitan Anatole caught croupous pneumonia, but even this did not stop his tragic march. By winter he had reached his place of exile and, in the Far North, dying he pleaded for permission to see his sister, who had managed to reach his place of exile. The sister had received only postcards from him on which he had written: "I beg you to do everything you can. Plead, pray, implore, but obtain the permission for our meeting. I yearn before my death to see your dear face and bless you." But the meeting was not to be; the

permission was refused. When Metropolitan Anatole was on the point of dying, the communists came to him and demanded his Gospel and his priest's cross. The Gospel was snatched from out of his weakened hands, but he clung to his cross. Protecting it on his chest with numbed hands, he fell back and died (1938). His body was thrown into a common grave in the frozen earth of the far North.

11 / 24 February — The Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste - born in Cappadocia, Blaise was meek and God-fearing from early childhood. He was chosen for his virtues as bishop of Sebaste, and was a great spiritual and moral light in that pagan town. During a period of violent persecution of Christians, Blaise encouraged his flock and visited the martyrs in prison, among whom was the famous Eustratius. When the city of Sebaste was left entirely denuded of Christians—some killed and others fled—Blaise, by then an old man, retired to the mountain of Argeos and lived there in a cave. Ferocious wild beasts, recognising a holy man, came to him and he gently tamed them. But the persecutors found the saint in that hidden spot and took him for trial. On the way there, Blaise healed a boy who had a bone stuck in his throat and, at the petition of a poor widow, made the wolf that had taken her pig return it to her. The benighted judges tortured him, flogging him terribly. By his steadfastness in the Christian faith, Blaise brought many unbelievers to the Faith. Seven women and two children were thrown into prison with him; the women were slain first, then Blaise and the two children. He suffered and was glorified in 316. Blaise's prayers are sought for the health and well-being of domestic animals and for protection from wild beasts. In the West, he is also invoked against sore throats. The Holy Martyr George of Kratov; St Theodora; St. Gobnait, abbess of Ballyrouney, Cork, Ireland (5th c); St. Caedmon of Whitby, monk (c.680)

12 / 25 February — St Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch - this great and holy man was an outstanding interpreter and defender of Orthodoxy. The whole of his life was devoted to the fight against the Arian heresy, which did not recognise the Son of God and blasphemed against the Holy Trinity. He was three times removed from his archiepiscopal throne by the heretics, and driven off into Armenia. The struggle between the Orthodox and the heretics became so bitter that once, while St Meletius was preaching to the people in church on the divine Trinity in unity, his own deacon, a heretic, ran up to the bishop and shut his mouth with his hand. Being unable to preach with words, Meletius preached by signs. Thus, he raised his arms on high, opened three fingers to their fullest extent and showed them to the people, then closed his hand and raised the one fist. He took part in the Second Ecumenical Council in 381, where the Emperor Theodosius showed him specially great honour. At that Council, God showed a mystery through His archbishop. When Meletius was propounding the doctrine of the Holy Trinity to the Arians, he first raised three fingers, separated one by one, then brought them together; and at that moment lightning flashed from his hand before the gaze of all present. At that Council, Meletius established Gregory the Theologian in the seat of Constantinople. While the Council was still in session, St Meletius finished his earthly course in Constantinople. His relics were taken to Antioch.

St Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow - a great hierarch of the Russian Church in a difficult period of Tartar oppression of the Russian people. Once in childhood he went bird-hunting, then went to sleep and in a dream heard a voice that said: 'Alexis, why rush around so fruitlessly? I will teach you to catch men!' He became a monk at the age of twenty, and in time became Metropolitan of Moscow. He twice went among the 'Golden Horde' of the Tartars, once to sooth the wrath of Verdevir Khan against the Russian people, and the second time at the invitation of Amurat Khan, to cure his wife's blindness. This woman had been blind for three years, but was healed and her vision restored when Alexis prayed and anointed her with holy water. After a life of great endeavour and fruitfulness, Alexis entered into rest in 1378 at the age of 85, and went to the court of the Lord.

New Martyr Alexis (Bui) - in 1926, he took over administration of Voronezh diocese. He was tall and thin, an inspired preacher, a great father and true monk. He did not have a theological education, and had been superior of a monastery in Kozlov. He celebrated the Divine services with heedful concentration. In mid 1927 the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius was published, and Voronezh was divided like all of Russia. All eyes were on Bishop Alexis, and he responded with a bold rejection of the Declaration and his announcement that he had chosen to be a follower of Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. For his epistle Bishop Alexis was suspended, and then on February 21, 1930 he was arrested by the GPU, dying in prison. Soviet researchers have made Bishop Alexis out to be the founder of a 'sect' called the "Buevtsy" (Bui-ites). It is clear from the material, however, that this movement was simply the local part of a larger catacomb movement amongst Orthodox Christians in Russia. Thus we can see the considerable influence of Bishop Alexis on the future development of the True Orthodox or Catacomb Church in Russia. Holy New Martyr Alexis, pray for us! Our Holy Mother Mary (Marius); St Antony, Patriarch of Constantinople. St Callia; St. Ethilwald of Lindisfarne (740).

13 / 26 February — Our Holy Father Martinian - The life of this saint is wonderful beyond measure and is worth reading in full. What did he not endure to fulfil the Law of God? At the age of eighteen, he went off into a mountain in Cappadocia called the Ark and there spent 25 years in fasting, vigils and prayer, and struggling with manifold temptations. When a woman came to tempt him and he saw that he would fall into sin with her, he leapt barefoot into the fire and stood in it until the pain brought forth tears from his eyes and he had killed all lust within himself. When other temptations arose, he fled to a lonely rock in the sea and lived there. When, though, in a shipwreck, a woman swam to the rock, he leapt into the sea intending to drown himself. But a dolphin took him upon its back and brought him, by God's providence, to the shore. He then decided to make nowhere his permanent home but to travel incessantly. Thus he passed through 164 towns in two years, exhorting and advising the people. He finally arrived in Athens, where he died in 422. Ss Zoa and Photinia; Our; Our Holy Father Simeon, the Outpourer of Myrrh; St. Modomnoc, bishop of Ossory (6th c.)

14 / 27 February — St. Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Teacher of the Slavs - brother of Methodius, originally from Salonica of eminent and wealthy parents, Leo and Maria. When the Khazarite king, Kagan, sought preachers of the Christian faith from the Emperor Michael, the Emperor commanded that these two brothers be found and sent to the Khazars. They converted

Kagan and baptised him together with a great number of nobles and an even greater number of the people. After some time they compiled a Slavic alphabet of 38 letters and began to translate the service books from Greek to Slavonic. At the invitation of Prince Rastislav they went to Moravia, where, with great devotion, they spread and confirmed the Faith. They went to Rome at the invitation of the Pope and Cyril fell ill and died there in 869. Our Holy Father Auxentius; Our Holy Father Isaac the Recluse of the Kiev Caves.

15 / 28 February — Apostle Onesimus of the Seventy (ca 109) - he was a slave of Philemon, a rich and distinguished citizen of Colossae in Phrygia. He offended his master in some way and fled to Rome, where he heard the Gospel from the Apostle Paul and was baptised. By this time, Paul had brought Philemon also to the true Faith, and he reconciled the two of them, Philemon and Onesimus, master and slave, writing a special epistle to Philemon—one of the most moving writings to be found in the New Testament: 'I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds . . . Perhaps he departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever, not now as a servant, but above a servant; a brother beloved.' Deeply moved by this letter, Philemon received Onesimus as a brother indeed and gave him his freedom. Onesimus was later made bishop and received the see of Ephesus after the death of the Apostle Timothy. This is recorded in the epistles of Ignatius the God-Bearer. At the time of the persecution under Trajan, Onesimus, by then an old man, was arrested and taken to Rome. There he testified before the judge Tertylus, was imprisoned and finally slain. A wealthy woman took his body, placed it in a silver coffin and buried it, in the year 109; Our Holy Father Eusebius; St. Oswy, king of Northumbria (670)

Saturday February 29, 2020 / February 16, 2020 - All of the venerable fathers, lit up with great deeds Martyrs Pamphilus the priest, Valens the Deacon, Paul, Seleucus, Porphyrius, Theodulus, Julian, and five Egyptians: Elias, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Samuel and Daniel, at Caesarea in Palestine (†c .307- 309); Martyrs of Persia at Martyropolis (4th C); Venerable Maruthas, bishop of Martyropolis in Mesopotamia (†422); Venerable Roman of Mt. Athos (†1694); Righteous Basil of Pavlovo- Posadsky (†1869); St. Macarius (Nevsky), metropolitan of Moscow (†1926). *Movable feast on Cheesefare Saturday*: Commemoration of all the saints who showed forth in asceticism [Gal. 5:22-6:2 (§ 213); Matt. 11:27-30 (§ 43)].

- Pamphilus, the first of the martyrs, was a presbyter of the church at Caesarea in Palestine. He was a learned and devout man who corrected the text of the New Testament from the errors of the various copiers. He alone, recopied this salvific book and gave it to those who desired it. The second was the Deacon Valentine, old in years and grey in wisdom. He was an excellent authority of Holy Scripture and knew them completely by heart. The third was Paul, an honourable and distinguished man who, during a previous persecution, was cast into the fire for Christ. Besides them, there were five brothers, according to the flesh and spirit, who were born in Egypt and were returning to their homeland after being forced to work in the mines of Cilicia. At the gates of Caesarea they declared that they were Christians for which they were brought to court. To the question: "What are your names?" They responded: "The pagan names which our mother gave to us, we discarded and we call ourselves: Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Samuel and Daniel." To the question: "Where are you from?" They responded: "From Jerusalem on High." All of them were beheaded and with them a young man Porphyrius who sought the bodies of the martyrs in order to bury them. Porphyrius they burned alive as well as Seleucus, formerly an officer who had approached and kissed the martyrs before the sword fell on their heads. Also the aged Theodulus, a servant of a Roman judge, who, during the funeral kissed one of the martyrs. Finally Julian, who revered and praised the lifeless bodies of the martyrs. And so they gave little for much, the inexpensive for the precious and mortality for immortality and took up habitation with the Lord in the year 308 A.D. The Holy Venerable Martyr Roman – a simple and illiterate peasant from Carpenesion. Learning of the heroism and glory of the martyrs of Christ, the young Roman desired martyrdom for himself. He went to Thessalonica where he began to praise the Faith of Christ on the streets and referred Islam as a fable. The Turks tortured him horribly and then sold him to a galley captain. Christians ransomed him from the captain and sent him to the Holy Mountain [Athos] where he was tonsured a monk by the illustrious Elder Acacius. But Roman further desired martyrdom for Christ. With the blessing of the Elder Acacius, Roman traveled to Constantinople pretending insanity and began to lead a dog along the Turkish streets. To the question: "What are you doing?" Roman responded that he is feeding the dog as Christians feed the Turks. The Turks threw him into a dry well, where he remained without bread for forty days. They then removed him from the well and beheaded him. A light emanated from his body for three days. An Englishman removed his body and took it to England. A certain monk dipped a towel in the blood of the martyr. This towel is preserved, even today, in the Dochiariu Monastery [Mt. Athos]. This glorious soldier of Christ suffered in the year 1694 A.D.

Icon Of The Feast

The icon of the Sunday of the Last Judgment incorporates all of the elements of the parable from Matthew 25:31-46. Christ sits on the throne and before him the Last Judgment takes place. He is extending his hands in blessing upon the Theotokos on his right, and John the Baptist on his left. Seated on smaller thrones are the Apostles, represented by Peter and Paul, a depiction of the words of Christ in Matthew 19:28. (1.)



1. Christ is seated on the throne between the Theotokos (left) and Saint John the Baptist (right). Seated on smaller thrones are the Apostles, represented here by Saint Peter (left) and Saint Paul (right).

Proceeding from the throne are the scrolls pronouncing the judgment upon the sheep and the goats. (2.) The faithful are received with the words that are written on the scroll to the right of Christ the Judge, “Come, you blessed of My Father, and inherit the kingdom” (v. 34). The scroll on the left condemns the unfaithful with the words, “Depart from me you cursed, into the everlasting fire” (v. 41).



2. The scrolls pronouncing the judgement can be seen at Christ's feet and below them, Adam and Eve bow before Christ.

3. Below Adam and Eve is the Archangel Michael surrounded by the books which contain the works of each person.

Before the throne, the progenitors of the human race, Adam and Eve, bow before Christ. (2.) In the center of the icon is the Archangel Michael. He is holding the scales of judgment and is surrounded by the books that contain the works of each person (Revelation 20:11-13). (3.) Also shown are the angels with trumpets announcing the return of Christ and signaling the resurrection of the dead and the commencement of the Last Judgment (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). (4.)



4. To the left and right of the Archangel Michael are angels with trumpets announcing to the world the return of Jesus Christ, the start of the Last Judgements, and signaling the resurrection of the dead.

To the left of the Archangel are both the living and the dead who are approaching the throne and Christ the judge. Whereas Adam and Eve are representative of all of humanity, this part of the icon shows that both the living and the dead will stand before Christ. (5.)



5. Pictured to the bottom-left of the Archangel Michael are the living and dead coming before the throne of Christ the judge.



6. To the bottom-right of the Archangel Michael is the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil, his demons, and those who are not worthy of inheriting the Kingdom of God.

At the bottom right of the icon is the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and the demons, and also for those who are not found worthy to inherit the Kingdom of God. (6.)

The icon offers a clear image of the theme of judgment with Christ on His throne, the Archangel with the scales and books, and the anticipation of the sentence of everlasting punishment for the unrighteous and the reward of eternal life for the righteous.

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