

17th Sunday After Pentecost

Venerable Eumenius, Bishop of Gortyna & Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross

18 September / 1 October

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

Troparion of the Feast tone 1: O Lord, save Thy people/ and bless Thine inheritance./ Grant victory over their enemies to Orthodox Christians,/ and protect Thy people with Thy Cross.

Troparion of St Eumenius tone 4: We have thee as a friend and helper, O gracious advocate Eumenius:/ for thou didst flow with compassion and dost pour healing upon the Church./ Protect those who honour thee.

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

Kontakion of the tone 4: O Christ our God Who wast voluntarily lifted up on the Cross,/ grant Thy mercies to Thy new people named after Thee./ Gladden with Thy power Orthodox Christians/ and give them victory over their enemies./ May they have as an ally that invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace.

Kontakion of St Eumenius tone 2: Radiant with divine Light blessed Hierarch Eumenius,/ thou dost illumine those who hymn thy glorious passing./ For thou dost pray unceasingly for us all.

Matins Gospel VI

for Sunday after the Exaltation: Gal. 2:16-20

EPISTLE: II Cor. 6:16-7:1

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD

He uses opposites which themselves cannot admit of their opposites: light and darkness' ...Do you bear God within you and run to them, God, Who has nothing in common with them? And in what way can this deserve forgiveness? Bear in mind Who walks and Who dwells in you ...But what is filthiness of the flesh? Adultery, fornication, lasciviousness of every kind. And what of the soul? Unclean thoughts, as gazing with unchaste eyes, malice, deceits, and whatsoever such things there are ...Do you realize the greatness of the prize? It is both to be delivered from what is evil, and to be made one with God ...What promises? That we should be temples of God, sons and daughters, have Him indwelling, and walking in us, be His people, having Him for our God and Father...

PERFECTING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD

Yet he is not content with this, but adds, 'Perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' For not to touch unclean things does not thereby make you clean, but something else is needed for becoming holy: earnestness, heedfulness, piety. And he well said, 'In the fear of God.' For it is possible to perfect chasteness, not in the fear of God but for vainglory ...For even if lust makes imperious demands, still if you occupy its territory with the fear of God, you have stayed its frenzy ...Now by holiness here he means not chastity alone, but the freedom from every kind of sin, for he is holy who is pure. Now one will become pure, not if he is free from fornication only, but also from covetousness and envy and pride and vainglory, yes, especially from vainglory, which in everything indeed it behoves us to avoid, but much more in almsgiving, since, with this distemper, it is no longer almsgiving, but display and cruelty. For when you do not do it out of mercy, but from parade, such a deed is not only no alms, but even an insult, for you have put your brother to open shame. Not then the giving money, but the giving it out of mercy, is almsgiving...

Wherefore I exhort and entreat you all, disregard what this man and that man thinks about these things, and inquire all these things from the Scriptures. And having learned what are the true riches, let us pursue them so we may also obtain the eternal good things, which may we all obtain, through the grace and love towards men of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom, to the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory, might, and honour, now and ever and world without end. Amen.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XIII on II Corinthians VI 1, 4. B#56.

The Holy Bible & the Holy Fathers for the Orthodox - edit. Johanna Manley



Gospel: Mark 8:34 – 9:1

34: And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. 36: For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37: Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38: Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. 9: 1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

Meditation

What is the most important investment you can make with your life? Jesus poses some probing questions to challenge our assumptions about what is most profitable and worthwhile. In every decision of life we are making ourselves a certain kind of person. The kind of person we are, our character, determines to a large extent the kind of future we will face and live. It is possible that some can gain all the things they set their heart on, only to wake up suddenly and discover that they missed the most important things of all. Of what value are material things if they don't help you gain what truly lasts in eternity.

Neither money nor possessions can buy heaven, mend a broken heart, or cheer a lonely person. Jesus asks the question: *What will a person give in exchange for his life?* Everything we have is an out-right gift from God. We owe him everything, including our very lives. A true disciple gladly gives up all that he has in exchange for an unending life of joy and happiness with God. God gives without measure. The joy he offers no sadness or loss can diminish. The cross of Christ leads to victory and freedom from sin and death.

for Sunday: Matt. 15:21-28

Saints of the week

18 September / 1 October - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - St Eumenius, Bishop of Gortyna - He gave himself to Christ with his whole heart from his youth, freeing himself of two heavy burdens: the burden of riches and the burden of the flesh. He freed himself from the first by giving away all his goods to the poor and needy, and from the latter by strict fasting. He thus healed himself and was able to heal others. Passionless and filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Eumenius shone with a radiance that could not be hidden, as it is written: 'A city set on a hill cannot be hid' (Matt. 5:14), and so holy Eumenius could not be hidden from the world. Seeing him, the people chose him as their bishop in Gortyna. As a bishop, he governed Christ's flock as a good shepherd. He was a father to the poor, riches to the needy, consolation to the sad, healing to the sick and a marvellous wonder-worker. He worked many miracles by his prayers: he killed a poisonous snake, drove out demons, healed many of the sick, and did this not only in his home city but in Rome and in the Thebaid. In the Thebaid, he brought rain from God in a time of drought, and there finally finished his earthly course and entered into the eternal presence of his Lord. He lived and worked in the seventh century. The Holy Martyr Ariadne; The Holy Martyr Bidzini, Prince of Georgia.

19 September / 2 October - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy Martyrs Trophimus, Sabbatius and Dorymedon. In the time of the Emperor Probus, in the third century, when Atticus was governing Antioch, two Christians, Trophimus and Sabbatius, both eminent and honoured men, came to that city. Just at that time, there was a pagan festival and offerings to the idol of Apollo in Daphne near Antioch. Atticus made a special effort to ensure that all the citizens took part in the festivities. When someone saw Trophimus and Sabbatius, and told Atticus that these two old men were not taking part, Atticus summoned them for trial, and, when they refused to deny Christ, put them to torture one by one. After beating and torturing Trophimus, he sent him to Phrygia to Dionysius, a yet harsher torturer of Christians, himself taking Sabbatius from prison and trying him. When the torturer asked Sabbatius who he was and what was his rank, he replied: 'My rank and dignity, my homeland, my glory and my riches are Christ the Son of God, who is alive for ever and by whose providence the whole universe is held in being.' He was therefore beaten and flogged with iron flails until his bones showed through his flesh, and he died under these tortures. The torturer put Trophimus to harsh torture, and held him in prison to inflict yet greater torture on him. Then a certain senator, Dorymedon, a secret Christian, came to the prison and ministered to Trophimus. When the torturer discovered this, he put them both to torture and finally threw them to the wild beasts. But the animals would not touch them. Holy Dorymedon even shouted into the ear of a she-bear to eat him up, but the bear only became even more docile. The torturer ordered, in consequence of this, that Ss Trophimus and Dorymedon be beheaded. The souls of these holy martyrs now reign in heaven. The Holy Martyr Zossima the Hermit; St Theodore, Prince of Yaroslavl; **St. Theodore of Taurus, archbishop of Canterbury (602-690)** - probably the most important archbishop of Canterbury between St. Augustine and St. Lanfranc both for his organisation of the Church in England and as a scholar and teacher. The Venerable Bede tells us he was Greek by birth from Tarsus in Cilicia and had been educated in Constantinople and was a monk. Before his appointment he lived in Rome and was famous for his contribution to the bitter monothelite controversy. He was recommended by St. Adrian, an African bishop to Pope Vitalin, who was then looking for a suitable archbishop of Canterbury in 666. This followed the death in Rome of Wighard, the archbishop elect, and the choice of the kings of Northumbria and Kent in the crisis following the Synod of Whitby and an outbreak of the plague. St Adrian himself had been

the pope's choice, but he had refused. Vitalin asked him instead to accompany and help St Theodore. He left Rome with St. Adrian and St Benedict Biscop, consulted St. Agilbert, bishop of Paris and former bishop of Wessex on the way, and reached England in 669. He made a visitation of most of the country, filled vacant sees, set up an important school at Canterbury with St. Adrian, which soon became the source of several future bishops and attracted students even from Ireland, and held the first synod of the Anglo-Saxon church at Hertford in 672. Its ten decrees were based on canons approved by the Council of Chalcedon, widely adopted in the West. But they dealt admirably with the legacy of division in England between bishops trained by Roman and those trained by Irish masters; they also dealt with the respective rights of bishops and monasteries. A further decision was taken to create more dioceses, which was later implemented by Theodore in Northumbria (at the expense of St. Wilfrid), in Mercia, East Anglia, and Wessex. Theodore's work was the unification of disparate elements in the Church, fusing the elements from Rome, Gaul, and Ireland into a single cohesive whole. Although he was highhanded in his division of the Northumbrian diocese, and the papacy upheld St. Wilfrid against him, his policy, if not the way of implementing it, was sound. In pursuing it, he rightly respected the territorial limits of the regional kings' power by creating a second (or third) diocese within the kingdom, but avoided setting up dioceses with territory in different kingdoms. Towards the end of his long life he sought a reconciliation with St. Wilfrid and helped towards his partial restoration. According to St. Wilfrid's biographer alone, he also expressed a desire that St. Wilfrid should succeed him at Canterbury. This was never realised. St. Theodore's second synod, at Hatfield, produced a declaration of orthodoxy by the Church in England in the monothelite controversy. The synods later held at Clovesho were the direct result of St. Theodore inaugurating the series at Hertford which decreed that such yearly synods should be held. St. Theodore's school at Canterbury taught not only Latin and Greek (very rare at this time), but also Roman Law, the rules of metre, computistics, music and biblical exegesis on the Pentateuch and the Gospels of the literal school of Antioch. Theodore is also known to have been interested in medicine. But the Penitential ascribed to him cannot be his work as it stands: some elements (e.g. on remarriage after divorce) are in plain contradiction to his known teaching, while others date from after Theodore's death. It is possible that certain elements may go back to Theodore's oral teaching, but the whole work had at least two editors and the original cannot be recovered. Some of his exegesis has been recently studied afresh. St. Theodore died on 19 September at the age of about eighty-seven; he was buried close to St. Augustine in the monastery of SS. Peter and Paul, Canterbury. In 1091 his incorrupt body was translated; St. Seguanus of Gaul (580).

20 September / 3 October - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy and great Martyr Eustace (Placidus).

He was a great Roman military leader in the time of the Emperors Titus and Trajan. Although a pagan, Placidus (for that was his pagan name) was a righteous and merciful man, like the centurion Cornelius, who was baptised by the Apostle Peter (Acts 10). Going hunting one day, he found a stag. By the providence of God, a shining Cross appeared among the stag's antlers and the voice of God came to Placidus, telling him to go to a Christian priest and be baptised. Placidus was baptised, along with his wife and two sons. At his baptism, he received the name Eustace, his wife the name Theopiste and their sons the names Agapius and Theopistus. After his baptism, Eustace went back to the very place where the revelation through the stag had occurred, and thanked God on his knees that he had brought him to the truth. At that, the voice of God came to him again, foretelling suffering for His name and strengthening him. Then Eustace secretly left Rome with his family, with the intention of hiding among simple people and serving God in an unknown and humble way. Arriving in Egypt, he was immediately beset by trials. Some wicked barbarian carried off his wife, and his two sons were seized by wild beasts. But the barbarian quickly came to a bad end, and a herdsman saved the boys from the wild beasts. Eustace settled in the Egyptian village of Vadisis, and there lived as a village hireling for fifteen years. After this, the barbarians descended on the Roman Empire, and the Emperor Trajan was sorry that his brave commander Placidus, who had been victorious wherever he had fought, was not with him. The Emperor sent two of his officers to seek the great general throughout the Empire. By God's providence, these officers, who had been friends of Eustace, came to this village of Vadisis, found him and took him to the Emperor. Eustace gathered the army together and defeated the barbarians. On the way back to Rome, Eustace went and found his wife and sons. When he arrived in Rome, the Emperor Trajan had died and the Emperor Hadrian was on the throne. When Hadrian summoned Eustace to offer sacrifice to idols, Eustace told him that he was a Christian. The Emperor put him to torture, together with his wife and sons. When the wild beasts did them no harm, he threw them into a white-hot metal ox. On the third day, they took out their bodies, dead but untouched by the fire. Thus this glorious general gave to Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God that which is God's, and entered into the eternal Kingdom of Christ our God. The Holy Prince Michael and his Counsellor Theodore; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Hilarion.

21 September / 4 October - Fast Day - Apodosis of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy Apostle Codratus. One of the Seventy, he was a disciple of the Great Apostles. He preached the Gospel in Athens, and was at first bishop in Athens after St Publius, and then in the city of Magnesia. He was very learned in the secular disciplines and rich with the grace of the Holy Spirit. His biographer says of him: 'He was as a morning star among clouds', the clouds being the darkness of Hellenic paganism, lacking the light of devotion, and the holy Apostle Codratus shone to them—the Hellenes—as a great light, illumining the darkness, casting down the foul sacrifices and destroying demonic temples by his prayers. But darkness always hates the light, and the pagans hated holy Codratus. They first stoned him, as the Jews had earlier stoned St Stephen, and then imprisoned him, leaving him without bread until his holy soul left his body and entered into the Kingdom of Christ his God. St Codratus wrote a defence of Christianity and gave it to the Emperor Hadrian. This defence acted so strongly upon the pagan Emperor that he decreed that Christians should not be persecuted without special cause. Holy Codratus suffered in about 130. He was buried in Magnesia, the place of his passion. The Hieromartyr Hypatius, Bishop of Ephesus, and Andrew the Priest; St Dimitri, Bishop of Rostov; Martyr Metropolitan Theophan (Tuliakov) of Nizhni- Novgorod (1937).

22 September / 5 October - The Hieromartyr Phocas, Bishop of Sinope. He exercised himself from his youth in all the Christian virtues. As bishop in his birthplace, the town of Sinope on the shore of the Black Sea, he strengthened the devout in their faith by his divine example and words, and brought many idol-worshippers to the true Faith. The stony-hearted pagans were filled with wrath against holy Phocas, and the Lord foreshowed to him in a vision his death by martyrdom. Phocas saw a shining dove fly down from heaven, carrying in its beak a beautiful wreath of flowers which it laid on his head, and a voice came from the dove: 'My cup is full, and it is for thee to drink it!' From this vision, the man of God learned that he must very soon suffer for Christ. He was not afraid, but, with thanksgiving to God, prepared himself for torture. Soon after this, the Governor, Africanus, took Phocas for interrogation and inflicted harsh tortures upon him: his whole body was beaten black and blue and torn with wounds, and, after imprisonment, he was thrown into boiling water, in which this courageous soldier of Christ finished his earthly course and entered into the joy of his Lord. He suffered in the time of the Emperor Trajan (98-117); The Holy Prophet Jonah; The Holy Martyr Phocas the Gardener; Our Holy Father Cosmas of Zographou; St Peter the Merciful; The Holy Priest Jonah; The 26 Martyrs of Zographou Monastery on Mt. Athos, martyred by the Latins.

23 September / 6 October - Fast Day - The Conception of the Honourable, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John — On this day are celebrated God's mercy, His wondrous act and His wisdom: His mercy towards the devout and righteous parents of St John, the aged Zacharias and Elisabeth, who had all their lives begged a child of God; the wonder of the conception of John in Elisabeth's more-than-aged womb; and the wisdom of the dispensation of man's salvation. For John, God had a specially great plan: that he should be a prophet and the forerunner of Christ the Lord, the Saviour of the world. Through His angels, God revealed the birth of Isaac to the childless Sarah, and of Samson to the childless Manoah and his wife, and of John the Baptist to the childless Zacharias and Elisabeth. Through His angels, God revealed the birth of those for whom He had a special plan. How could children be born of aged parents? If someone is curious to find out, let him not ask men, for men do not know, nor does natural law (it being beyond natural law), but let him turn his gaze to the power of almighty God, who made the whole world from nothing and who, for the creation of Adam, the first man, used no parents, either young or old. Instead of being curious, let us thank God that He often reveals to us His power and mercy and wisdom beyond the natural law, by which we would otherwise be fettered and, without these special wonders of God, would fall into despair and forgetfulness of Him. The Holy Martyr Iraida; The Holy New Martyr Nicolas Pantopoles (The Grocer); The Holy New Martyr John;

St. Adamnan, abbot of Iona and biographer of St. Columba (627-704) - he was born in Co. Donegal and became a monk in one of St. Columba's monasteries in Ireland. He was a biblical scholar and teacher. who moved to Iona under abbot Segene, whom he succeeded in 679. He became famous both as a writer and as a leading protagonist in Northern Ireland of the Roman system of calculating Easter. In 686 he came to Northumbria to obtain from his former pupil King Aldfrith the release of sixty Irish prisoners. captured during the reign of Egfrith (670-85). In 688 St Adamnan visited St. Ceolfrith of Wearmouth, who converted him from the Iona tradition of Easter calculation and other practices. In 692 he took part in Irish synods and conventions as the ruler of Iona's monasteries in Northern Ireland. Then and in 697 he met with considerable success, pleading for the acceptance of the Easter dates which were kept by Rome and virtually all the Church in the West. At the Synod of Birr (697) he persuaded leading clerics and laymen to adopt the Law of Adamnan (Cain Adamnan) which protected women by exempting them from going to battle and insisting that they be treated by all as non-combatants. Boys and clerics were similarly protected and provision was made for effective sanctuary. These rules the first example of their kind came to be accepted all over Ireland. St. Adamnan's principal work was the Life of his relative Columba, founder of Iona. This influential portrait of a charismatic pioneer is one of the most vivid Lives to be produced in its time. He also wrote a work on the Holy Places of Palestine, compiled from information provided by the French bishop Arculfus. who had been shipwrecked in western Britain. After Adamnan's death, Iona accepted the Roman Easter in 716.

24 September / 7 October - The Holy Protomartyr Thecla, Equal to the Apostles — Thecla was born in Iconium of eminent pagan parents. She was betrothed at the age of eighteen to a young man, at the time that the Apostle Paul came to Iconium with Barnabas to preach the Gospel. Listening to Paul for three days and nights, Thecla turned utterly to the Christian faith and vowed to live in virginity. Her mother, seeing that she shunned her betrothed and thought no more of marriage, first talked to her and then beat her and starved her. Finally, she gave her over to the judges and demanded, wicked mother that she was, that Thecla be burned. The judge threw her into the flames, but God preserved her unharmed. Thecla then became a follower of the Apostle Paul, and went with him to Antioch. Attracted by Thecla's beauty, an elder of the city attempted to take her by force, but Thecla tore herself out of his grasp. The elder denounced her to the governor as a Christian who was averse to marriage. The governor condemned her to death and threw her to the wild beasts, but the animals would not touch the body of this holy virgin. Amazed at this, the governor asked: 'Who are you, and what is the power that you have in you, that nothing can do you harm?' Thecla replied: 'I am a servant of the living God.' Then the governor let her go free, and she began to preach the Gospel and succeeded in bringing many to the true Faith, among whom was an eminent and honoured widow, Tryphena. After this, St Thecla, with the blessing of the Apostle Paul, withdrew to a solitary place near Seleucia. She lived a long time there in asceticism, healing the sick with miraculous power and in this way bringing many to Christianity. The doctors in Seleucia were jealous of her and sent some young men to assault her, hoping that, in losing her virginity, she would lose also her miraculous power. Thecla fled from these insolent young men and, when she saw that they would catch her, prayed to God for help in front of a rock, and the rock opened and hid the holy maiden and bride of Christ. This rock was her hiding-place and her tomb. St Chrysostom says of this wonderful Christian heroine and saint: 'I seem to see this blessed virgin going to Christ with virginity in one hand and martyrdom in the other.' St Stephen, King of Serbia, the First-Crowned (Simon the Monk); St David; The Holy Prince Vladislav.