

# 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

## Venerable Sergius of Radonezh

### 25 September / 8 October



**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 1:** When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; / while the soldiers were guarding Thy Most Pure Body; / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour, / granting life to the world. / The Powers of Heaven therefore cried to Thee O Giver of Life: / glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ! / Glory to Thy Kingdom; / Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

**Troparion of St Sergius tone 4:** Champion of virtue and warrior of Christ, / thou didst contend against earthly passions; / thou wast a model to thy disciples in vigil, chant and fasting / and the Holy Spirit came and dwelt in thee. / As thou hast boldness towards the Trinity remember thy flock / and visit thy children as thou didst promise, / O holy Father Sergius.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 1:** As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, / Raising the world with Thyself. / Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. / Adam exults O Master, Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to Thee; / Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ.

**Kontakion of St Sergius tone 3:** Wounded with love for Christ and eagerly following Him, / thou didst spurn all carnal desire and shine as the sun on thy fatherland. / Christ has given thee the gift of wonderworking. / Remember us who honour thy memory and cry: Rejoice, Sergius our holy Father.

#### Matins Gospel VII

#### EPISTLE: Corinthians 9:6-11

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, While you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

#### HE WHO SOWS SPARINGLY WILL ALSO REAP SPARINGLY, AND HE WHO SOWS BOUNTIFULLY WILL ALSO REAP BOUNTIFULLY

He called the thing sowing, so you might at once look into the recompense, and having in mind the harvest, you might feel that you receive more than you give. For this reason he did not say, 'he who gives,' but 'he who sows' ...A man when left to himself, does a thing more readily than when compelled. Therefore he dwells on this ...For if it is a work of virtue and yet all that is done is of necessity, it is shorn of its reward. So he labours at this point with reason. And he does not merely advise, he also adds a prayer ...By this prayer he waylays a thought which lay in wait against this liberality and which is now also a hindrance to many. For many persons are afraid to give alms, saying, 'Lest perchance I become poor' ...To do away with this fear then, he adds this prayer, saying, May 'He make all grace abound towards you.' Not merely fulfil, but 'make it abound.' 'Fill you,' he means, 'with such great things, that you may be able to abound in this liberality' ...He does not pray for riches, nor for abundance, but for all sufficiency...For in carnal things he asks for a sufficiency for them, but in spiritual things for abundance, not only in almsgiving, but in all others things as well, 'unto every good work.'

Then he brings the prophet forward as a counsellor for them, having sought out a testimony inviting them to bountifulness ...Let us not therefore nicely calculate, but sow with a profuse hand. Do you see how much others give to players and harlots? Give at any rate the half to Christ, of what they give to dancers ...For they clothe the persons of wantons with untold gold, but you do not cover even with a threadbare garment the flesh of Christ, and that though beholding it naked.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XIX on II Corinthians IX, 2, 3. B#56, pp. 369-370.*

#### Second Epistle: Galatians 5:22 – 6:2

## GOSPEL: LUKE 5:1-11

So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, And saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; And so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

### JESUS SAID TO SIMON ...'FROM NOW ON YOU WILL CATCH MEN'

Christ was preaching on the lake of Gennesaret. Now the sermon has finished. There were two boats at the shore, and Christ had been preaching from one of them. Here He addressed the Apostle Peter and said: "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets." Peter answered: "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing" (Lk. 5:4-5). And the Apostles were experienced fishermen; they knew the laws of the sea. If at night-time no fish were caught, then during the day a catch was out of the question. And Peter said this to Christ. But he added: "Nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the nets" (Lk. 5:5). And they let them down. And a miracle happened. The boats were so filled with fish that they started to sink. Then the Apostle Peter fell at the feet of the Saviour and said: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lk. 5:8).

This is the process of faith. The Apostle knew that fish could not be caught. But he accepted the word of Christ within himself, within his will; and this will, which by now was Christ's, he fulfilled. And what happened? A miracle? Yes, a miracle. But the main miracle was not in the abundance of fish, although this catch was a miracle. The main miracle was the change of soul which occurred in Peter. He saw himself, he saw his essence. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Here is the process of faith: to accept in your heart the word of Christ, to fulfill it. And then to us will be revealed the thing which is most important for our salvation, for our inner life.

People say: I do not believe. What do these words mean? They mean that you are not fulfilling the teaching of Christ. Because if you would only attempt to fulfill the word of Christ, at least one commandment of Christ, then the essence of your life would be revealed to you, too. But you don't want to do this, and therefore you say: I have no faith. But how does one make an attempt? Well, the same way the Apostle Peter did. In spite of all his experience as a fisherman, he listened to Christ and let down the nets. Listen to the word of Christ. But where do we find this word? In the Gospel—that is where. If we know the Gospel and apply it to our life, then our life in Christ will be revealed to us. And His Resurrection will become for us more real than the physical world surrounding us. And He will fill our heart with an unspeakable joy, with the joy of Eternal Life; and this joy will have no end.

Only take the Gospel in your hands, only try to apply it in your life. Take everything which the Holy Church gives us. Then a miracle will happen to you, too—a greater miracle than the wonderful catch. Christ Himself will be revealed to you as He was revealed to Peter. Then you too will say deep in your heart: "I am a sinful man, O Lord!" And if you are a sinner, it means that you are sick and need a physician. And if a physician, then who is the Physician of the heart? Christ alone!

O Lord, Thou seest the infirmities and the wounds of sin in our heart, which prevent us from fulfilling Thy teaching, Thy Word. Heal us and help us to start a New Life!

*Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful*

### Second Gospel: Luke 6: 17-23

#### Saints of the week

**25 September / 8 October - The Repose of Our Holy Father Sergius of Radonezh** — A great ascetic and light of the Russian Church, he was born in 1313 in Rostov of devout parents, Kiril and Maria. After the death of his parents, Bartholomew—for that was his baptismal name—became a monk and founded the community of the Holy Trinity in the forest of Radonezh. A gentle and meek servant of God, occupied only with labour and prayer, he was made worthy of the gifts of wonder-working for the purity of his heart, raising the dead in the name of Christ. The holy Mother of God appeared to him a number of times. Princes and bishops came to him for counsel, and he gave his blessing to Prince Dimitri of the Don and foretold his victory in Russia's war of liberation against the Tartars. He had insight into men's hearts and into distant events. His community became filled with monks during his lifetime, and has served through the ages as one of the chief centres of spiritual life and of God's miracles. St Sergius entered into rest in 1392. After his death, he appeared a number of times to various people;

**Our Holy Mother Euphrosyne** — The daughter of a rich and eminent man, Paphnutius, from Alexandria, she was besought of God by her childless parents, who brought their daughter up in the Christian faith. Not wishing to marry, the young Euphrosyne, in order to hide from her father, dressed herself in men's clothing and presented herself to the abbot of a monastery as a eunuch of the Emperor Theodosius with the name of Smaragdus. The abbot received her and placed her under

the guidance of the monk Agapetus as spiritual father. By her fasting and prayers, Smaragdus quickly outstripped the other monks in the monastery. When she had spent thirty-eight years in strict asceticism, Paphnutius visited the monastery and the abbot placed him in Smaragdus's care for prayer and counsel. Smaragdus recognised Paphnutius, but Paphnutius did not recognise her. When her father confessed his grief for his lost daughter, Smaragdus told him not to lose hope, for he would see his daughter again once more in this life, and asked him to come again in three days' time. When Paphnutius returned, Smaragdus was on her deathbed. Then the dying monk said to Paphnutius: 'I am Euphrosyne your daughter; you are my father.' Her father could not for a long time collect himself, for sheer astonishment. Then Euphrosyne breathed her last and her father wept over her. After burying his daughter, Paphnutius remained in the monastery and settled in the cell of his departed, holy daughter. After ten years of asceticism, holy Paphnutius entered into rest in the Lord; Commemoration of the earthquake in Constantinople in 447, when a boy was lifted to heaven and heard the "Trisagion."

**St. Finbar (Barry) bishop of Cork, Ireland (c.633)** - Son of an artisan named Amergin and a lady of the Irish royal court. Educated at Kilmacahil monastery, Kilkenny, Ireland. Very light hair, which led to the nickname Fionnbharr, "white hair". Made multiple pilgrims to Rome, visiting Saint David of Wales on one trip. Preached throughout southern Ireland, and possibly in Scotland. Hermit on a small island at Lough Eiroe and at Gougane Barra. Founded a school at Eirce. Founded a monastery on the river Lee; it developed into the city of Cork, Ireland. First bishop of Cork. Extravagant miracles were attributed to him. It is said that the sun did not set for two weeks after his death.

**26 September / 9 October - The repose of St John the Theologian, Apostle and Evangelist** — the son of Zebedee the fisherman and Salome the daughter of Joseph, the betrothed of the holy Mother of God. Called by the Lord Jesus, John immediately left his father and the fishing nets and followed Christ with his brother James. From that time, he was not parted from his Lord until the end. With Peter and James, he was present at the raising of Jairus's daughter and at the Lord's Transfiguration, and laid his head on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. When all the others had forsaken the crucified Lord, John stayed beneath the Cross with the holy Mother of God. In obedience to the Lord's wish, he was as a son to the holy Virgin Mary, caring for her and serving her, looking after her right up to her falling-asleep. After her Dormition, John went off with his disciple Prochorus to preach the Gospel in Asia Minor, and mainly lived and worked in Ephesus. By his inspired preaching and miracles, he brought many to Christianity and undermined the foundations of paganism. The vexed pagans bound him and sent him to Rome to the Emperor Domitian. He was tortured and flogged before the Emperor, but, when he was unharmed either by the strong poison that he was given to drink or the boiling oil into which he was put, the Emperor was afraid and, thinking he was immortal, sent him into exile on the island of Patmos. On this island, St John brought many to Christianity by his words and miracles, and strengthened the Church of God. He wrote his Gospel and the Revelation there. In the time of the Emperor Nerva, who gave liberty to all the captives, John returned to Ephesus, where he lived for some time, confirming the work that he had earlier begun. He was over a hundred years old when he went to the Lord. When his disciples later opened his grave, they found that his body was not there. Every year, on May 8th, a fine, fragrant dust endowed with healing power rose from his grave. After a long and fruitful life of labour upon earth, this beloved disciple of Christ and pillar of the Church entered into the joy of his Lord, to peace and eternal rejoicing; Our Holy Father Nilus of Calabria.

**St. Colman Elo** - He was founder and first Abbot of Muckamore, and from the fact of being styled "Coarb of MacNisse", is regarded as Bishop of Connor. He was born c. 555 in Glenelly, in the present County Tyrone, and died at Lynally in 611, 26 September, on which day his feast is celebrated. He studied under his maternal uncle, St. Columcille (Columba), who procured for him the site of a monastery now known as Lynally (Lann Elo). Hence his designation of Colmanellus or Colman Elo.

Tropar of St. Colman Elo, Tone 8: Following in the footsteps of thy renowned kinsman Columba, O Father Colman Elo,/ thou didst bring many in the Celtic lands to Christ by thy preaching and virtuous life./ Pray that we who hymn thee may be given grace to follow in thy footsteps that our souls may be saved.

**27 September / 10 October - The Holy Martyr Callistratus** — Born in Carthage, he was a Christian from his birth, as his father and grandfather were. One of his forbears, Neochorus, served as a soldier in Jerusalem under Pontius Pilate at the time of the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Seeing the many miracles that were wrought at the time of Christ's death, Neochorus came to believe in Him, and was taught the Faith and baptised by the apostles. Returning home, Neochorus took his Christian faith to his own people, like a precious pearl. So, in time, St Callistratus was born, baptised and brought up a Christian. When he went into the army, there was no other Christian in his regiment. One of his companions, seeing holy Callistratus get up at night and pray to God, reported him to the commander, Persentinus, as a Christian —and Persentinus was a harsh torturer of Christians. When he was convinced that Callistratus was indeed a Christian, the commander ordered him to offer sacrifice to idols, which Callistratus immediately refused to do. Then Callistratus was harshly beaten and thrown into the sea, but God's power preserved him, and he emerged from the sea unharmed. Seeing Callistratus's endurance and his miracles, forty-nine soldiers came to believe in Christ the Lord, and they were beaten and thrown into prison along with him. In prison, St Callistratus instructed his companions in the Faith and encouraged them. They showed great courage in suffering, and the Lord showed great power through them. The wicked torturer sent soldiers to the prison at night, and they slew Callistratus and the other forty-nine. They suffered for the truth in 304, and a church was later built over their relics; The Holy Apostles Mark, Aristarchus and Zenas; The Holy New Martyr Aquilina; Our Holy Father Sabbatius of Solovetz;

**St. Barrog** - Disciple of St. Cadoc, in Wales, also called Barrog and Barnoc. He was a hermit who lived on Barry Island, off the coast of Glamorgan.

Tropar of St. Barrog, Tone 8: Light of the West, inspirer of monastics and boast of ascetics,/ thy radiant life was pleasing to God, O Father Barrog./ Do not reject us in our pitiable state but pray, O Saint,/ that repenting and weeping we may be found worthy of a place in Christ's holy Kingdom.

**28 September / 11 October - Fast Day - Our Holy Father Chariton the Confessor** — an eminent and devout citizen of the city of Iconium. Imbued with the spirit of his compatriot, St Thecla, Chariton openly confessed the name of Christ. When a harsh persecution of Christians broke out under the Emperor Aurelian, Chariton was immediately brought to trial before the governor. The judge ordered him to worship false gods, to which Chariton replied: 'All your gods are furies, which were aforetime through pride cast out from heaven into the nethermost hell.' Chariton openly showed his faith in the one, living God, the Creator of all, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind. Then the governor ordered that Chariton be so beaten and tortured that his whole body became covered with wounds until it was like one great wound. After the evil death of Aurelian, whose evil-doing caught up with him in the end, Chariton was released from torture and imprisonment. He travelled to Jerusalem, but on the way was seized by robbers from whom he was freed by God's providence. He did not return to Iconium, but withdrew to the wilderness of Pharan, where he founded a community and gathered a group of monks together. Having given a rule to this community and desiring to escape the praise of men, he withdrew to another desert near Jericho where, in time, he founded another community, called after him. He finally founded another community, Souka, called in Greek the Old Lavra. He died at a great age and entered into the glory of his Lord on September 28th, 350, and his relics are preserved in his first monastery. The practice of tonsuring monks is attributed to St Chariton; The Holy Prophet Baruch; The Holy Martyr Mark the Shepherd; The Holy Martyr Vlacheslav (Wenceslas), King of the Czechs;

**St. Machan** - A Scottish saint trained in Ireland and consecrated bishop in Rome (Benedictines). St. Machan, who is commemorated in Ecelesmachan in Linlithgowshire, is said to have been a disciple of St. Cadoc of Llancarvan; if so, he was contemporary with Kentigern. We know almost nothing about him. In the Inquest of David I made about 1116 AD when he was Prince of Cumbrian, concerning the lands belonging to the Church of Glasgow a number of old churches can be recognised....Among them is the name Mecheyn, i.e. Machan. 'When Cadoc quitted Scotland, on his way back to Wales, he left behind him an earnest worker to develop his mission among the Britons and the Picts. He was Machan, who had been trained in Ireland, but who now devoted the rest of his life...to the Clyde Valley. One of his centres was Dalsersf, a parish formerly known as Machanshire. In the north end of the parish there is a property still called Machan, or Auld Machan, while the whole of the higher and bleaker lands to the south, between Auld Machan and Draffan in the parish of Lesmahagow, are still entitled Machanshire or Machanmuir.

**St. Lioba, abbess of Bischofsheim** - Born at Wimborne, Dorsetshire, England; died at Schornsheim (near Mainz), Germany, c. 779. Saint Lioba's mother, descended of an illustrious family and closely related to Saint Boniface (f.d. June 5), had been barren for a long time before the saint was born. Nevertheless, Ebba immediately offered her to God and raised her in piety. She received her first education at Minster-in-Thanel. While Lioba was still young, she was placed in the care of the king's sister Saint Tetta at the Benedictine convent in Wimborne (Winburn or "fountain of wine"). Lioba matured spiritually and emotionally under Tetta's tutelage, and eventually took the religious veil. Tetta also ensured that she had a good education. Letters to Boniface reveal that Lioba understood and wrote verse in Latin. She limited her reading, however, to books that would stir her spirit to love of God. She knew by heart the divine precepts of the Old and New Testaments, the principal canons of the Church, the holy maxims of the Fathers, and the rules of the monastic life. Boniface kept in touch with his young relative through frequent correspondence. Recognising her virtue and abilities, in 748, he requested of her bishop and abbess that she be sent to him with about 30 pious companions to undertake charitable work with women in Germany. Although Tetta regretted the loss of her protegee, she could not refuse. Upon their arrival in Germany, Boniface settled the women religious at Tauberbischofsheim ("bishop's home," possibly his own previous residence). Lioba's zeal attracted so many vocations that her convent was populating many other foundations throughout the country. Lioba's convents were one of the most powerful factors in the conversion of Germany. The saint organised her convents in the true monastic tradition with a combination of manual labour (in scriptorium, kitchen, bakery, brewery, and garden), intellectual study (all had to learn Latin), community devotions, and leisure. No extreme austerities were permitted to interfere with the corporate life established by the Rule. Her love of God was so appealing. She was always ready to set her hand to any task she might ask of others and did it with cheer and modesty. It is said that she was beautiful, that her countenance was angelic, and that her nuns loved her. Perhaps this is so because Lioba took to heart Saint Paul advice: "Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3) and "anticipate one another in showing honour" (Romans 12:9b). Thus, Lioba often washed the feet of her sisters in emulation of her Lord. The corporal acts of mercy were her delight, especially extending hospitality to strangers and caring for the poor. She was always patient, kind, and accessible to all who needed her. Nevertheless, kings and princes honoured and respected her, especially Pepin the Short, Blessed Carloman (f.d. August 17) and Charlemagne. Charlemagne often called her to court at Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen) to seek her advice. His wife, Blessed Hildegard (f.d. April 30), loved her deeply and always heeded her advice, as did some of the bishops. Before his martyrdom, Saint Boniface commended Lioba and her community to the care of Saint Lullus (f.d. October 16) and his monks at Fulda, and requested that her bones be buried next to his at their deaths that they might be raised at the resurrection and spend eternity together. It is said that the tender affection uniting Boniface and Lioba forms one of the most charming episodes in church history. Following Boniface's death in 754, Lioba frequently visited Fulda. By special dispensation, she would be allowed with two elder sisters to join in the choir. Upon the advice of Lullus, Lioba resigned her offices in her old age and retired to the convent at Schornsheim, where she redoubled her prayer and penance. Occasionally she would answer Empress Hildegard's plea to visit her, but return to her cell as quickly as she could. On her last visit, she embraced the queen, kissed her on her garment, forehead, and mouth, then said: "Farewell, precious part of my soul; may Christ, our Creator and Redeemer, grant that we may see each other without confusion in the day of judgement." After her death, Lioba was interred at Fulda, on the north side of the high altar, near the tomb of Saint Boniface.

**29 September / 12 October - Our Holy Father Cyriacus the Solitary** — Born in Corinth of parents named John (a priest) and Eudoxia, he was a kinsman of the local bishop, Peter. He was made reader in the cathedral by the bishop while still a young man. Reading the Holy Scriptures, the young Cyriacus marvelled at God's providence, how it glorified every true

servant of the living God and ordered the salvation of the human race. At the age of eighteen, his desire for the spiritual life led him to Jerusalem. There, he entered the monastery of a godly man called Eustorgius, who grounded him in the monastic life. He then went off to St Euthymius, who discerned in him future spiritual greatness, clothed him in the Great Habit and sent him to the Jordan, to St Gerasim, where Cyriacus spent nine years. After Gerasim's death, he returned to St Euthymius' monastery, where he remained in silence for ten years. After this he moved from place to place, fleeing the praise of men. He lived in ascetic labour also in the community of St Chariton, where he finished his earthly course, having lived for a hundred and nine years. A glorious ascetic and wonderworker, St Cyriacus was massive and strong of body, and stayed thus in great old age, despite strict fasts and vigils. In the desert, he sometimes lived for years only on raw vegetables. He was very zealous for the Orthodox faith, denouncing heresies, especially the heresy of Origen. Of himself he said that, while he was a monk, the sun never saw him eat or be angry with any man. According to the rule of St Chariton, the monks ate only once a day, after sunset. Cyriacus was a great light, a pillar of Orthodoxy, the boast of monks, a mighty healer of the sick and a gentle comforter of the sorrowful. Living long in asceticism and giving aid to many, he entered into the eternal joy of his Lord in 557; The Holy Martyrs Dada and Gohdelas; St Theophanes the Merciful; St Mary of Palestine.

**30 September / 13 October - Fast Day - St Gregory the Enlightener, Bishop of Armenia** - Gregory was of a noble family, kin to the imperial house of Persia (to King Artaban) and Armenia (King Khosrov). When these two houses made war between themselves, Gregory withdrew to Caesarea in Cappadocia, where he first came into contact with the Christian faith, received baptism and married. He had two sons of this marriage, Rostanes and Aristanes, and dedicated them both to the service of the Church. After his wife's death, he returned to Armenia and entered the service of King Tiridates. Gregory served his king faithfully, and the king loved him, but, when he discovered that Gregory was a Christian, he was greatly enraged and put pressure on him to reject the Christian faith and worship idols. Having no success whatever in this, Tiridates put Gregory to harsh torture and, after cruel torment, threw him into a deep pit filled with every kind of poisonous reptile, meaning thus to kill him. But God, who is all-seeing, preserved Gregory alive in that pit for four-teen whole years. Tiridates continued the persecution of Christians in his kingdom, and attacked a women's monastery of thirty-seven nuns with their abbess, Gaiane. When he had slain them with terrible tortures, Tiridates went mad and was like a monstrous wild boar. A man appeared to the king's sister in a dream and told her that her mad brother would not be restored to sanity until Gregory was taken out of the pit. This being done, Gregory healed and baptised Tiridates. Then Gregory, at the king's desire, became Bishop of Armenia and, with the king's help and, above all, God's help, enlightened the whole of Armenia and the surrounding area with the Christian faith. St Gregory finished his life of great toil in old age, in about 335. In his place, his son Aristanes was consecrated bishop, and he continued his father's work. Aristanes was one of the 318 fathers at the First Ecumenical Council; The Holy Martyrs Gaiane, Rhipsimia and 35 other nuns; St. Michael, First Metropolitan of Kiev; St. Honorius, archbishop of Canterbury (653).

**1 / 14 October - The Protection of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary** - The Church has always glorified the most holy Mother of God as the Protectress and Defender of the Christian people, entreating, by her intercession, God's loving-kindness towards us sinners. The Mother of God's aid has been clearly shown times without number, both to individuals and to peoples, both in peace and in war, both in monastic deserts and in crowded cities. The event that the Church commemorates and celebrates today proves this constant protection of the Christian people by the Mother of God. On October 1st, 911, in the time of the Emperor Leo the Wise (or the Philosopher), there was an all-night vigil at the Blachernae church of the Mother of God in Constantinople. The church was crowded. St Andrew the Fool for Christ was standing at the back of the church with his disciple Epiphanius. At four o'clock in the morning, the most holy Mother of God appeared above the people with a veil spread over her outstretched hands, as though to protect them with this covering. She was clad in gold-encrusted purple and shone with an unspeakable radiance, surrounded by apostles, saints, martyrs and virgins. Seeing this vision, St Andrew gestured towards it and asked Epiphanius: 'Do you see how the Queen and Lady of all is praying for the whole world?' Epiphanius replied: 'Yes, Father; I see it and stand in dread.' As a result, this commemoration was instituted to remind us both of this event and of the Mother of God's constant protection whenever we prayerfully seek that protection, that shelter, in distress. The Holy Apostle Ananias; Our Holy Father Romanus the Melodist; Our Holy Father John Kukuzelis; Our Holy Father Gregory; Martyr Prince Mylor of Brittany; St. Bavo, hermit (d.650)

Troparion of the Protection tone 4: Most holy Mother of God,/ today we Orthodox joyfully celebrate thy coming among us./ As we gaze at thy icon we cry with compunction:/ Shelter us under thy protection, deliver us from evil,/ and pray thy Son Christ our God to save our souls.

Kontakion of the Protection tone 3: Today the Virgin is standing before us in the Church/ praying for us with the choirs of Saints./ Angels worship with Hierarchs,/ Apostles rejoice with Prophets,/ for the Mother of God intercedes with the Eternal God for us.