

The Third Sunday of Great Lent / Veneration of the Holy Cross

26 February / 11 March



Resurrection Tropar, Tone 7: By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death / to the Thief, Thou didst open Paradise / for the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy! / and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God / to proclaim that Thou art risen / granting the world great mercy.

Tropar of the Holy Cross, Tone 1: Save O Lord Thy people and bless Thine inheritance / Granting unto Orthodox Christians victory over their enemies / and by the power of Thy cross / preserving Thy community.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 7: The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, / for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. / Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: / The Saviour has come to those in faith, / enter, you faithful to the Resurrection.

Kondak of the Holy Cross, Tone 4: O Thou Who wast lifted up willingly on the Cross, bestow Thy mercies upon the new community named after Thee, O Christ God: gladden with Thy power the Orthodox Christians, granting them victory over enemies; may they have as Thy help the weapon of peace, the invincible trophy.

Matins Gospel VII

Epistle - Hebrews 4: 14 - 5:6

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Chapter 5: 1 For every priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also beset by weakness. 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4 And no man takes this honour to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son today I have begotten You." 6 As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek".

SEEING THEN THAT WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST... JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

What priest could be so righteous and holy as the only Son of God, who had no need to purge his own sins by sacrifice, neither original sins nor additional sins committed during a man's life? And what more suitable offering for men could be taken from men than human flesh? What more fitting for this immolation than mortal flesh? And to cleanse the faults of mortals what offering so clean as flesh that came to life in a virgin womb, and from a virgin womb, without any pollution of lust? And what could be offered as acceptably, and received as readily, as the flesh of our sacrifice, the flesh that made up the body of our priest? In every sacrifice there are four considerations: to whom it is offered, by whom it is offered, what is offered, for whom it is offered. And so the one True Mediator Himself reconciled us to God, and in this he remained one with Him to whom He made the offering, and made one in Himself those for whom He offered, and was Himself one as the offerer and the offering.

St. Augustine of Hippo. On the Trinity, 4.19. B#15, p. 226.

Gospel - Mark 8: 34 - 9:1

34 The Lord said, "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 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." MARK 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 death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

WHOEVER DESIRES TO COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF, AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS, AND FOLLOW ME

And you see how He also makes his discourse unexceptionable: not saying at all, 'whether you will or not you must suffer this,' but how? 'If any man will come after Me.' I do not force, I do not compel, but each one I make lord of his own choice ...For to good things do I call you, not to things evil or burdensome; not to punishment and vengeance, that I should have to compel. No, the nature of the thing alone is sufficient to attract you ...For you ought not, O Peter, because you have confessed Me Son of God, therefore only to expect crowns (Cf Mark 8:29), and to suppose this enough for your salvation, and for the future to enjoy security, as having done all. For although it be in My power, as Son of God, to hinder you from having any trial at all of those hardships, yet such is not My will for your sake, that you may yourself contribute something, and be more approved.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily LV on Matthew XVI, 1. B#54, p. 339.

THE CROSS PRESERVES THE UNIVERSE

In the Prophet Ezekiel (9:6), it is said that when the Angel of the Lord was sent to punish and destroy the sinning people, it was told him not to strike those on whom the "mark" had been made. In the original text this mark is called "tau," the Hebrew letter corresponding to the letter "T," which is how in ancient times the cross was made, which then was an instrument of punishment.

So, even then, it was foretold the power of the Cross, which preserves those who venerate it. Likewise, by many other events in the Old Testament the power of the Cross was indicated. Moses, who held his arms raised in the form of a cross during the battle, gave victory to the Israelites over the Amalekites. He also, dividing the Red Sea by a blow of his rod and by a transverse blow uniting the waters again, saved Israel from Pharaoh, who drowned in the water, while Israel crossed over on the dry bottom (Exodus, ch. 14, 17).

Through the laying on of his hands in the form of a cross on his grandsons, Jacob gave a blessing to his descendants, foretelling at the same time their future until the coming of the "expectation of the nations" (Genesis, ch. 48).

By the Cross, the Son of God, having become man and accomplished our salvation. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the Cross (Phil. 2:8). Having stretched out His hands upon the Cross, the Savior with them as it were embraced the world, and by His blood shed on it, like a king with red ink, He signed the forgiveness of the human race.

The Cross of the Lord was the instrument by which He saved the world after the fall into sin. Through the Cross, He descended with His soul into hell, to raise up from it the souls who were awaiting Him. By the Cross Christ opened the doors of paradise which had been closed after our first ancestors had been banished from it. The Cross was sanctified by the Body of Christ which was nailed to it when He gave Himself over to torments and death for the salvation of the world. Then it was filled with life-giving power. By the Cross on Golgotha the prince of this world was cast out (John 12:31) and an end was put to his authority. The weapon by which he was crushed became the sign of Christ's victory.

The demonic hosts tremble when they see the Cross, because the kingdom of hell was destroyed by the Cross. They do not dare to draw near to anyone who is guarded by the Cross.

The whole human race, by the death of Christ on the Cross, received deliverance from the authority of the devil, and everyone who makes use of this saving weapon is inaccessible to the demons.

When legions of demons appeared to St. Anthony the Great and other desert-dwellers, they guarded themselves with the sign of the Cross, and the demons vanished.

When there appeared to St. Symeon the Stylite, who was standing on his pillar, what seemed to be a chariot to carry him to heaven, the Saint, before mounting it, crossed himself and it disappeared. The enemy, who had hoped to cast down the ascetic from the height of his pillar, was put to shame.

One cannot enumerate all the various incidents of the manifestation of the power of the Cross. Invisibly and unceasingly, Divine grace that gushes from it saves the world.

The sign of the Cross is made at all the Mysteries and prayers of the Church. With the making of the sign of the Cross over the bread and wine, they become the Body and Blood of Christ. With the immersion of the Cross the waters are sanctified. The sign of the Cross looses us from sins. "When we are guarded by the Cross, we oppose the enemy, without fearing his nets and barking." Just as the flaming sword in the hands of the Cherubim barred the entrance into paradise of old, so the Cross now acts invisibly in the world, guarding it from perdition.

The Cross is the unconquerable weapon of pious kings in the battle with enemies. Through the apparition of the Cross in the sky, the dominion of Emperor Constantine was confirmed and an end was put to the persecution against the Church. The apparition of the Cross in the sky in Jerusalem in the days of Constantius the Arian proclaimed the victory of Orthodoxy. By the power of the Cross of the Lord, Christian kings will continue to reign until Antichrist, barring his path to power and restraining lawlessness (St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on II Thes. 2:6-7).

The “sign of the Son of Man” (Matt. 24:30), that is, the Cross, will appear in the sky in order to proclaim the end of the present world and the coming of the eternal Kingdom of the Son of God. Then all the tribes of the earth shall weep, because they loved the present age and its lusts, but all who have endured persecution for righteousness and called on the name of the Lord shall rejoice and be glad. The Cross then will save all who conquered temptations, from eternal perdition by the Cross, who crucified their flesh with its passions and lusts, and took up their cross and followed afar Christ.

However, those who hated the Cross of the Lord and did not engrave the Cross in their soul will perish forever. For “the Cross is the preserver of the whole universe, the Cross is the beauty of the Church, the Cross is the might of kings, the Cross is the confirmation of the faithful, the Cross is the glory of angels and the scourge of demons” (Octoechos: Exapostilarion, Monday Matins).

St John of Shanghai and San Francisco – Shanghai, Exaltation of the Cross, 1947

Lenten Synaxarion Cross Veneration Sunday

Let all the earth venerate the Cross, through which it has learned to worship Thee, the Word.

On this third Sunday of the Great Fast we celebrate the Veneration of the precious and life-giving Cross. Since during the forty days of the Fast we are also in a way crucified, mortified to the passions, contrite, abased and despondent, the precious and life-giving Cross is offered to us as refreshment and confirmation, calling to mind the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and comforting us. If our God was crucified for our sake, how great should be our effort for His sake, since our afflictions have been assuaged through the Lord’s tribulations, and by the commemoration and the hope of the Cross of glory. For as our Savior in ascending the Cross was glorified through dishonor and grief; so should we also endure our sorrows, in order to be glorified with Him. Also, as those who have traveled a long hard road, weighed down by the labors of their journey, in finding a shady tree, take their ease for a moment and continue their journey rejuvenated, so now in this time of the Fast, this sorrowful and laborious journey, the Holy Fathers have planted the life-giving Cross, for our relief and refreshment, to encourage and make easier the labors that lie ahead. Or as when there is a royal procession, the king’s scepter and banners precede him, he then appears himself, radiant and joyous in his victory, causing his subjects to rejoice with him. So then our Lord Jesus Christ, desiring to show His sure victory over death and His glory on the day of the Resurrection, sends His scepter before Himself, the sign of His kingship, the life-giving Cross, to gladden and refresh us, as it greatly fortifies and enables us to be prepared to receive the King with all possible strength, and to praise Him in His radiant victory.

This week lies at the middle of the holy Forty Day Fast. The Fast is like a bitter source because of our contrition and the sadness and sorrow for sin that it brings. And as Moses plunged the branch in the bitter waters of Marah, making them sweet, so God, who has led us through the spiritual Red Sea away from Pharaoh, through the life-giving wood of the precious and life-giving Cross sweetens the bitterness of the Forty Day Fast, and comforts us as those who were in the wilderness, up until the time when by His Resurrection He will lead us to the spiritual Jerusalem. And since the Cross is called, and indeed is, the Tree of Life, it is the very tree that was planted in the Garden of Eden. So it is fitting that the Holy Fathers have planted the Tree of the Cross in the middle of the Forty Day Fast to commemorate both Adam’s tasting of its sweet fruit and of its being taken from us in favor of the Tree of the Cross, tasting of which we shall in no way die, but will have even greater life.

**Through the power of Thy Cross, O Christ our God,
preserve us also from the temptations of the Evil One.
And make us worthy to venerate
Thy divine Passion and life-bearing Resurrection,
having radiantly traversed the great length of the Fast,
and have mercy on us, as Thou art good
and lovest mankind.
Amen.**

Saints of the Week

26 February / 11 March — Commemoration of Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit — On this day we celebrate the most glorious miracle which was performed by the holy and glorious Great-martyr Theodore the Tyro, through the boiled wheat - according to tradition recorded in the Synaxarion the Emperor Julian the Apostate (reigned 361-3), as part of his campaign against the Christians, attempted to defile their observance of the first week of Lent by ordering all the food for sale in the market of Constantinople to be sprinkled with blood from pagan sacrifices. St. Theodore then appeared in a dream to Eudoxios, Archbishop of the city, ordering him to warn his flock against buying anything from the market, instead the Saint told him, they should boil wheat (kolyva) and eat this alone.

St Porphyrius, Bishop of Gaza - This great bishop and pastor was born in Salonica of wealthy parents. He spent his youth to the age of 25 in his home town, then left his parents' home and worldly life and went off into the Egyptian desert. Under the guidance of an experienced spiritual father, the young Porphyrius became a monk and remained for five years. He then paid a visit to the Holy Land in company with his friend, the monk Mark. He lived another five years in asceticism in a cave near Jerusalem. But then his legs became weak and he was no longer able to walk. But he was always able, crawling on his knees, to be present at Divine Service. One night the Lord Himself appeared to him in a vision and healed him of the weakness in his

legs, and he became completely well. When he was chosen as bishop of Gaza, Porphyrius accepted this obligation with a heavy heart. He found only 280 Christians in Gaza; the rest of the inhabitants being fanatical idol-worshippers. Only by his great faith and patience did Porphyrius succeed in bringing the people of Gaza to the Christian faith. He had to travel in person to Constantinople, to the Emperor Arcadius and the Patriarch, John Chrysostom, to beg for help in the unequal struggle against the idolators. Seeking support, he received it. The temples of the idol-worshippers were closed, the idols demolished and a fine church built with thirty marble pillars. There was especial help forthcoming from the Empress Eudoxia. Porphyrius lived long enough to see the whole city brought to the Christian faith, but only after great toil, suffering and tearful prayer on his part. He entered peacefully into rest in 421. He was a wonder-worker during his lifetime and after his death. His relics are preserved in Gaza to this day; The Holy Martyr John Calpha.

27 February / 12 March — Our Holy Father Procopius of Decapolis - This saint came from Decapolis by the Sea of Galilee; hence his name. In youth, he gave himself to the monastic life and passed through all those prescribed labours that purify the heart and uplift the soul to God. When a persecution on the part of the wicked Emperor Leo the Isaurian broke out over icons, Procopius stood up and defended icons, showing that their veneration is not idolatry, for Christians know that to prostrate themselves before icons is not to prostrate before dead matter but before the living saints depicted on the icons. Procopius was bestially tortured, imprisoned, beaten and flogged with iron flails. When the wicked Emperor was murdered, being already a lost soul, the icons were returned to the churches and Procopius returned to his monastery, where he spent his remaining days in peace. In old age, he entered into God's Kingdom, where he beheld with joy the living angels and saints whose images were on the honoured icons on earth. He departed this life peacefully in the 9th century; Our Holy Father Thaleleus; Our Holy Father Titus of the Kiev Caves; Our Holy Father Stephen; The Holy Martyr Julian the Gout-Sufferer.

28 February / 13 March — The Hieromartyr Proterius - This saint was a priest in Alexandria at the time that the Patriarch there was the heretic Dioscorus, one of the founders of the Monophysite heresy which holds that in Christ there are not two natures but one. At that time, Marcian and Pulcheria were on the imperial throne. Proterius, a holy and devout man, stood up against Dioscorus, as a result of which he endured much misery. Then the 4th Ecumenical Council was summoned at Chalcedon, at which the Monophysite heresy was condemned. Dioscorus was cast down from the patriarchal throne and sent into exile, and in his place the orthodox Proterius was chosen, He governed the Church with zeal and love, a true follower of Christ. But the followers of Dioscorus did not stop creating confusion in Alexandria. In the face of such bloody chaos, Proterius left the town with the intention of going away for a time, but the Prophet Isaiah appeared to him on the road and said: 'Return to the town; I am waiting to take you.' Proterius returned and went into the church. Hearing of this, the insolent heretics rushed into the church, seized the Patriarch and stabbed him. About six of the faithful perished along with Proterius. Thus this wonderful pastor of Christ's flock received the crown of martyrdom for the truth of Orthodoxy, in 457; St Basil the Confessor; The Hieromartyr Nestor, Bishop of Magydos; Blessed Nicolas the Fool for Christ of Pskov; Our Holy Father John Cassian; Our Holy Father Barsanuphius; St. Oswald, archbishop of York (992).

1 / 14 March — Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Eudocia - Living in Heliopolis, a city of Phoenicia, during the reign of Trajan, she was at first a great harlot, then a penitent, a nun and finally a martyr. She gained great wealth from her harlotry. The reversal of her life was brought about, through the providence of God, by an elderly monk, Germanus, and that unintentionally. Coming to Heliopolis in the course of his work, he stayed at the house of a Christian woman whose home abutted onto Eudocia's. When at night he began, as was his monastic custom, to read the Psalter and a book on the Dreadful Judgement, Eudocia heard him and stood listening attentively to his every word until the end. Fear and dread took such hold on her that she remained awake until daybreak. As soon as it was dawn, she sent a servant to beg that monk to come to her. Germanus came, and they began a long conversation on that which the old monk had been reading the previous night, and especially on faith and salvation. The result of these discussions was that Eudocia asked the local bishop to baptise her. After her baptism, she gave all her goods to the church, to be distributed to the poor, dismissed her servants and slaves and retired to a women's monastery. She so devoted herself to the monastic life—to obedience, patience, vigils, prayer and fasting—that after thirteen months she was chosen as abbess. She lived fifty-six years in the monastery and was worthy in the eyes of God to be given the gift of raising the dead. When a persecution of Christians arose under the governor, Vincent, holy Eudocia was beheaded. Here is a wonderful example of how a vessel of uncleanness can be purified, sanctified and filled with a precious, heavenly fragrance by the grace of the Holy Spirit; Our Holy Father Agapius; The Holy Martyr Antonina;

St. David of Wales, bishop (542 - 601) – of Welsh royalty. Son of King Sant of South Wales and Saint Non. Grandson of Ceredig, Prince of Cardigan. Uncle of King Arthur. Priest. Studied under Saint Paulinus. Collaborated with Saint Columba, Saint Gildas, and Saint Finnigan. Missionary and founder of monasteries. Following his contribution to the synod of Brevi in Cardiganshire, he was chosen primate of the Cambrian Church. Archbishop of Caerleon on Usk; moved the see to Menevia. Presided at the Synod of Brevi which condemned the Pelagian heresy. Encouraged and founded monasteries. First to build a chancel to Saint Joseph of Arimathea's wattle church at Glastonbury. After a vision in his monastery in the Rhos Valley, he set out next day with two monks to Jerusalem to aid the Patriarch. While there his preaching converted anti-Christians. It is said that once while he was preaching, a dove descended to his shoulder to show he had the blessings of the Spirit, and that the earth rose to lift him high above the people so that he could be heard by them all. Born at Menevia (now Saint David's), Wales. Died 601 at Mynyw, Wales. Name means beloved one.

2 / 15 March — The Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Cyrenia - He was chosen for his wisdom and virtue as bishop, and governed the Church of God with love and zeal. When a persecution of Christians arose in the time of the wicked Emperor Licinius, this man of God was taken before the judge and put to various tortures. When the torturer, Sabinus, urged him to deny Christ and worship pagan idols, Theodotus replied: 'If you knew the goodness of my God, who, it is my hope, will by these brief tortures make me worthy of eternal life, you would wish to suffer for Him as I do!' They hammered nails into his

body, and he thanked God; then, believing that the end was near, he counselled and instructed the Christians that were around him. But, by the providence of God, there came at that moment an order from the Emperor Constantine to free all Christians who had been brought to trial for the sake of Christ. Then this saint also was freed, returned thus tortured to his see in Cyrenia and lived for a further two years. He then entered into rest in the Lord whom he had served faithfully and for whom he had suffered greatly. He finished his earthly course in 302, and went to the courts of the Lord; The Holy Martyr Troadius; The Four Hundred and Forty Martyrs of Lombardy; Our Holy Father Agathon; The Holy Martyr Euthalia.

St. Chad of Mercia (672) - Our holy father Chad was tonsured in Ireland while still in his teens. When he came to Great Britain, we do not know, but in about 655, he became abbot of a monastery in Yorkshire where he was known as a great struggler. St Aiden had been his elder, and St Chad followed his example in everything. St Chad became well known throughout Britain for his holiness, meekness and patient love. In 664, the Bishop of York reposed in the Lord, and Saint Chad was chosen as the new bishop. The saint was filled with love for his flock, and he wanted to teach them all about Christ. The holy bishop began to walk through the whole diocese, teaching the Gospel everywhere. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy in every village and town, and preached from the town squares, where he set up crosses. Moreover, St Chad stopped to teach at every cottage, farm, castle and cross-road, and his diocese became one of the most enlightened in Britain. When blessed Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek bishop, was made Archbishop of Britain in 669, he soon heard of St Chad. When the blessed Theodore visited York, he commanded the holy bishop to travel by horse, rather than on foot, for he saw that St Chad was already old and frail. The saint did not want to fulfil this, for he wanted to come to his people as a minister and servant, as Christ had done, and not like a lord on horseback. Nevertheless, the meek saint obeyed. In this same year, 669, St Chad was appointed as bishop of the Kingdom of Mercia. At that time, Mercia was ruled by King Wulfer. Wulfer had been baptised many years before, but later, he supported the worship of demons in his land, and his chief adviser was a cruel pagan. The king's wife, Erminhilda, was a fervent Christian, however, and tried to teach her children about Christ and His Holy church. St Chad began his long, hard work of teaching the people of Mercia the way of salvation. Again, the holy bishop travelled from town to town, preaching, baptising and celebrating the Divine Liturgy. The saint often preached standing near one of the great stone crosses left behind by the Celtic Christians who had long before been driven out of the country by the invading Angles and Saxons. More than anything else, St Chad liked to go alone into the forest, and pray to God for his flock, and for his own soul. He built a small cell and chapel in the woods, and went there to pray and struggle as often as he could. Once, while St Chad was in his cell praying, he heard a loud crashing sound outside. He went out and saw a large stag, collapsed from exhaustion, by the side of the pool, drinking. Making the sign of the Cross, the saint went to the poor animal and stroked it. He knew that hunters must be chasing the stag to kill it, so the saint hid the animal. Soon, the sound of a hunter's horn was heard, and a richly dressed young man on horseback came galloping into the clearing. He reverently greeted the bishop, and asked if he had seen the deer. "I do not tend the deers, nor the beasts of the forest, nor the birds of the air, but this deer, perhaps, has led you to salvation," the bishop replied. The young man was Prince Wulfade, the eldest son of the King. The saint's words opened the heart of the young prince, and he asked the holy bishop to explain the path of salvation to him. St Chad began to tell the prince about how the world was created by Christ our God and how Christ died on the Cross and rose again to save us. He explained about the Church and how everyone who wants to be saved must be born again in Holy Baptism and be united to Christ's Holy Church. The young prince heard all this, and then begged St Chad to baptise him. The saint took Prince Wulfade to the pond, and entering the deep water, baptised him in the name the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He then taught the prince many more things. Later, Prince Wulfade brought his younger brother Rufine to the saint to be taught and baptised. After this time, the young princes came often to the holy bishop to be taught how to struggle and pray. The evil pagan counsellor of the king found out about the new, holy life of the two young princes, and he feared that he might lose his power because of them. For this reason, and because he hated the two princes, he began to slander them to the king. "Your two sons have disobeyed you. They have become Christians, even though you forbade it. They no longer obey your law, and they are now plotting against you to take over your throne." The evil counsellor convinced the king that he had to kill the two princes before they killed him. One day, the king and the counsellor followed the two princes into the forest, to the cell of St Chad. The holy bishop was away, and the two young men stood alone in prayer. Suddenly, the king burst through the door and cried out: "Why do you disobey my commands and follow this religion of Christ. You know my law, that the old gods must be worshipped by my sons and nobles. I command you to renounce Christ and give honour to the old gods." "We belong to Christ's Holy Church, and we will never turn from Him. But you yourself were once a Christian. We beg you, father, to return to the Holy Church and save your soul." At these words, the king became enraged, and, drawing his sword, furiously cut the two princes to pieces. Thus, the two holy princes received the crown of martyrdom. When the queen learned of this evil deed, she and her daughter immediately went and buried the relics of the two martyrs, and then went to live in the women's monastery at Sheppey. Soon after this, the king's evil counsellor fell ill and died. Suddenly, the king was left all alone: he had killed his two sons; his wife and daughter had fled from him and become nuns, and his counsellor was dead. Now, the king began to feel sorrow for his evil deed. He realised that his sons were innocent, and he remembered his own baptism, and the last words of his sons, begging him to return to Christ's Holy Church. Finally, overcome by sorrow and repentance, the king set out at dawn to the cell of Saint Chad, to ask his help and prayers. As King Wulfer entered the chapel, the holy bishop was celebrating the Divine Liturgy. The king, feeling his guilt, stood at the door and watched. When the bishop reached that part of the Liturgy in which the great mystery takes place, the sanctuary was suddenly filled with a great light. The king was amazed, and fell to the floor in prostration, looking up with fear. He saw that the great light stayed around the Holy Table and filled the sanctuary until the saint had finished communion. The king remained on the floor until the Liturgy ended, and the saint came to him. After this, the king listened to everything Saint Chad taught him, and then he confessed his faith in Christ, and returned to His Holy Orthodox Church. King Wulfer struggled to completely change his life. He helped Saint Chad and his presbyters to lead the people of the kingdom to Christ's Church, and he became merciful and gentle. St Chad chose the town of Lichfield for his cathedral, as in earlier days, St Amphibale and nearly a thousand other Christians had been martyred there. King Wulfer helped to build the new Church. St Chad continued his life of holy struggle, teaching the Gospel of Christ's Church everywhere in the Kingdom of Mercia. At length, God called the holy bishop to Himself, and Saint Chad gave up his holy soul to the Saviour on 2 March, 672.

Through the prayers of our God-bearing father, St Chad, may we find repentance, and save our souls, glorifying the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen!

3 / 16 March —The Holy Martyrs Eutropius, Cleonicus and Basiliscus - They were comrades of St Theodore the Tyro. When glorious Theodore gloriously laid down his life, they remained behind in prison, and were not condemned for a long time because of the courage of the imperial governor of the town of Amasea. When a new governor arrived, more inhuman than his predecessor, he ordered these three to be brought before him . All three were young men; Eutropius and Cleonicus were brothers and Basiliscus a kinsman of Theodore's. But all three were, through their brotherly love, as blood-brothers. And they therefore said to the governor: 'As the Holy Trinity is indivisible, so are we indivisible in faith and inseparable in love . ' All flattery on the governor's part was in vain, as were all his efforts to bribe Eutropius. He first invited him to dine with him, which Eutropius refused with a quotation from the Psalms: 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsels of the ungodly', after which he offered him vast wealth—150 litres of silver—which Eutropius likewise refused, reminding the governor that Judas lost his soul for silver. After all these attempts, followed by interrogation and torture, the first two were condemned to be crucified, for which they gave thanks to Christ that He had counted them worthy to die the death He had died; and the third, Basiliscus, was beheaded. They all entered into the Kingdom of joy, where their commander, Theodore, was waiting for them, glorified before Christ the Lord and Victor. They suffered with honour in 308. St Piama of Egypt; An Unknown Girl in Alexandria;

St. Non – also known as Nonna; Nonnita - Nobility, possibly of a royal house. A widow, it is said she was the unwed mother of Saint David of Wales. Lived in convents in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany.

4 / 17 March — St James the Faster - lived in the sixth century. He was so perfected in godliness that he was able to heal the gravest illnesses by his prayers. But the enemy of the human race brought a heavy temptation on him. There was once sent to him a woman who had been corrupted by some mockers. She pretended to weep before him, but enticed him to sin. Seeing that he would fall into sin, James put his left hand into the fire and held it there until it was completely burned. Seeing this, the woman was filled with fear and horror, repented and reformed her life. But on a second occasion he did not resist and fell with a young girl whom her parents had brought to him to be healed of her madness. He indeed healed her, but then sinned with her and, in order to conceal the sin, killed her and threw her into a river. As always, the path from lust to murder was not very long. James spent ten years after that as a penitent, living in a grave. He learned after that that God had forgiven him, because, when he at one time prayed for rain in a time of great drought from which both men and cattle were suffering, it fell. Here is an example, similar to that of David, of how wicked the evil demon is; how, by the permission of God, the greatest spiritual giants can topple, and how again, by sincere repentance, God in His compassion will forgive the greatest sins and does not punish those who punish themselves.; Our Holy Father Gerasim.