



# Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

## Fifth Sunday of Pascha & Holy Great Martyr, Trophy-bearer and Wonderworker George

23 April / 6 May

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 4:** When the women disciples of the Lord / learned from the Angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection / they cast away the ancestral curse / and elatedly told the Apostles / death is overcome / Christ God is risen / granting the world great mercy.

**Troparion of St. George Tone 4 :**As the deliverer of captives/ and the protector of the poor,/ as the physician of the feeble and combatant of kings,/ holy champion and great martyr George,/ intercede with Christ our God to save our souls.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 4:** My Saviour and Redeemer / as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains / He has shattered the gates of hell, / and as Master, / He has risen on the third day.

**Kontakion of St. George Tone 4:** Thou wast cultivated by God/ and didst become a most wonderful cultivator of piety,/ and didst harvest for thyself the sheaves of virtue,/ for having sown in tears thou didst reap in joy/ and having withstood to death thou art garnered for Christ./ By thy intercessions, O Saint,/ thou dost obtain for us all remission of our sins.

**Kondak of the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, Tone 8:** Having come to the well in faith, the Samaritan woman saw Thee, the Water of Wisdom, whereof having drunk abundantly, she, the renowned one, inherited the kingdom on high forever.



**Vespers:** Isa . 43:9-14; Wisd . 3:1-9; Wisd . 4:7-15

**Matins Gospel VII**

**Epistle: The Acts of the Apostles 11: 19-26 & 29-30**

Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

### BARNABAS AND SAUL TO ANTIOCH

The persecution turned out to be no slight benefit, as 'to those who love God all things work together for good' (Rom.8:28). If they had made it their express study how best to establish the Church, they would have done nothing else but this: they dispersed the teachers ...When Stephen was slain, when Paul was twice in danger, when the Apostles were scourged, then the Gentiles received the word, and also the Samaritans. Paul declared: 'It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles' (ch.13:46) ... 'And the hand of the Lord', it says, 'was with them,' that is, they wrought miracles ...Even so, it is no small part of providential management for Paul to be there ...In this way that Voice of the Gospel, that Trumpet of Heaven is not shut up in Jerusalem ...Truly this is the reason why it was there they were appointed to be called Christians, because Paul spent so long a time in Antioch!

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXV on Acts XI. B#55, pp.162-163.*

Epistle: for St. George: Acts 12:1-11

## The Gospel According To St. John 4: 5-42

So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' For you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not laboured; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours." And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

### Homily

When Jesus encountered the Samaritan woman at the well, through her questions, He led her very gently to the realization that He was not simply a traveling stranger, nor was He just a wise man or even just a prophet, but that He was in fact the promised Messiah who would reveal to the world the Truth. In this process, when the woman perceived that Jesus spoke with authority of spiritual matters (and assumed therefore that He was a prophet), she asked Him where it was proper to worship God, in Jerusalem or on Mount Gerazim where the Samaritan people prayed. In this she expressed the common belief that God dwelt in a particular place, among a particular people. This belief was not limited to just the Jews and the Samaritans, but was common to all mankind even the pagans – and it was their god who dwelt in their land that protected them from their enemies (or if the god was weak allowed them to be defeated.) But Jesus, in His answer to her, revealed the truth that God does not dwell in any single place, for He is the creator of all places, but rather, that God is Spirit and that those who worship Him, will worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. God does not dwell in this place or that, but rather He "is everywhere present and fillest all things". These places that we come to worship God are not for Him to dwell, but they are places for us to pray. The Churches that we build and where we pray even now are places where heaven touches earth, where the spiritual world and the physical world meet; they are places where we come to meet God and where we are refreshed by the images of our heavenly home. Does this mean that we can only pray in the Church – of course not, for does not the Apostle enjoin us to "pray without ceasing". No matter where we are or what we are doing, God is there and we can (and should) pray, however, here in the Church the atmosphere is conducive to prayer, it enhances and amplifies our prayer and we join our own personal prayers to those of the whole Church.

The statement that opened this whole door to the woman at the well and to us is this, "God is Spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." What then does this mean; what does it tell us about our God. It is necessary, in order to rightly worship God, that we also have a proper understanding of God and of Who He is. Before we even begin to think about God, it is important to remember that God, in His essence, is unknowable and beyond comprehension, that is, He is so completely different from us that it is impossible for us to grasp His nature. But God, out of His great and boundless love for us, has condescended to reveal Himself to us so that we might know His love and love Him in return.

Who then is our God? Let us begin with the Symbol of Faith – the Creed. The very first thing that we say is "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty Maker of heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible." From this we know that God is unique, there are no other Gods and that He created everything else that exists. In fact we refer to God as "the One Who is" or

“the existing One” because only God is self existing – He exists without cause or beginning, He simply “is”. Everything else draws its existence from Him and He is the cause of the existence of the universe. This unique God is the Creator of everything else, of heaven and earth of things seen (the physical world) and unseen (the spiritual world). However, even though God is one and unique, He is not solitary or alone. God is one, a single perfect unity of three persons that have a single essence. This is the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God in three Persons. How can one be three and three one? Remember that God is beyond our understanding and comprehension – even though this seems to defy logic and reason, still it is true in a way beyond our ability to grasp or explain. We will set the Triune nature of God aside here for future consideration and return to a general understanding of the One True God.

“God is Spirit”; this is the great revelation that our Lord gives to the woman at the well. What does this mean then that “God is Spirit”? Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky – one of the foremost theological scholars of the last century writes: “God is Spirit...God is foreign to every kind of bodily nature or materiality. At the same time the spirituality of God is higher, more perfect, than the spirituality which belongs to the created spiritual beings (angels) and the soul of man, which manifest in themselves only an “image” of the spiritual nature of God. God is a Spirit Who is most high, most pure, most perfect. ... Concerning the spiritual nature of God, the Scripture speaks beginning with the very first words of the book of Genesis, and to the Prophet Moses God revealed Himself as “He That Is,” as the pure, spiritual, most high Existence.” Because we are accustomed to thinking of things in physical terms, very often in scripture, God is described as though He were material and bodily in nature. God “walks” with our first parents in the garden of paradise. He is said to have “hands” and “feet” and “wings” and “eyes” and “ears.” All these are only images given to us because “it is impossible for us who are men clothed in this crude flesh to think or speak about the Divine and lofty and immaterial actions of the Godhead, unless we use likenesses and images and symbols that correspond to our nature.” (St John of Damascus, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith).

God is also Eternal. God is outside time, for time is only a form of limited being, and God is limitless. Time defines change and God is unchanging. Time, in fact, is part of the created universe – God made time and is therefore greater than time and not subject to it in any way. The Fathers point out that “eternity” is not the same as “immortality”. Eternity is unoriginated and outside of time. Immortality, however presumes a beginning in time and a continued existence throughout time. Therefore God is eternal, while the soul of man or a created spirit such as an angel is more precisely immortal. If we, who are created, wish to experience eternity, we can only do so in communion with God.

God is also all-good, all-knowing (omniscient), all-powerful (omnipotent, almighty) and all-holy. In each of these descriptions we find the word “all” for God is the fullness of each of these things. All that is good finds its origin in God; all knowledge and power come from God; holiness is God’s natural state and condition. When we see or think of anything that is good or holy or powerful, we perceive a little bit of God for He is at the root of all these things.

God is everywhere present (omnipresent). He created the whole of the universe and so is present in every aspect of it. Because all of creation is dependent upon God, it is less that God is in the universe and more that the universe is in God. Practically, because of this we know that no matter where we find ourselves, no matter what situation or condition we are in, God is there with us and we only have to reach out to Him to find Him there.

God is all-sufficient; He has no needs, there is nothing that he must have or must do. There is no external force or law which binds Him or compels Him to act in a certain way. The only thing that motivates God to do anything is Himself. The only force that acts upon Him is His own love.

God is love. This is the greatest characteristic of God and it touches everything else. When we speak of love (and here I do not refer to that warm-fuzzy feeling of affection, but true love as described in the letter of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian Church) we speak of God and when we speak of God we speak of love – God is inseparable from love for He is love. Out of love, He created the world and out of love He nurtures and cares for every creature no matter how great or small. Even when we reject Him and turn away from Him and offend Him, out of love, He opens His arms for us and provides a way back.

These characteristics of God are not a complete description of Him or a complete catalogue of His attributes. God is greater than and beyond any words or description or understanding that we can come with. But He has shown us some things about Himself so that we can know Him and so that we can come to love Him as He loves us. Our Lord just barely opened the door of knowing God to the woman at the well and she responded with enthusiastic acceptance and love. He has opened the same door to us – let us take care to make the same response.

*Archpriest David Moser*  
<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/propoved/info>

Gospel: for St. George: John 15:17-16:2

## Saints of the Week

**April 23 / May 6 — The Holy and Great Martyr George** - This renowned and glorious martyr was born in Cappadocia, the son of rich and God-fearing parents. His father suffered for Christ, after which his mother moved to Palestine. When George grew up, he went into the army, in which he rose, by the age of twenty, to the rank of tribune, and as such was in service under the Emperor Diocletian. When this Emperor began a terrible persecution of Christians, George came before him and boldly confessed that he was a Christian. The Emperor threw him into prison, and commanded that his feet be put in the stocks and a heavy weight placed on his chest. After that, he commanded that he be bound on a wheel, under which was a board with great nails protruding, and thus be turned. He then had him buried in a pit with only his head above the ground, and left there for three days and nights. Then, through some magician, he gave him deadly poison, but in the face of all these tortures, George prayed unceasingly to God, and God healed him instantly and saved him from death, to the great amazement of the people. When he also raised a dead man to life by his prayers, many embraced the Christian faith. Among these was the Emperor's wife, Alexandra, and the chief pagan priest, Athanasius, the governor Glycerius and Valerius, Donatus and Therinus. Finally, the Emperor commanded that George and the Empress Alexandra be beheaded. Blessed Alexandra died on the scaffold before being killed, and St George was beheaded. This happened in the year 303. The miracles that have been performed at his grave are without number. Also are his appearances in dreams to those who, thinking on him, have sought his help, from that time up to the present day. Consumed by love for Christ, it was not difficult for holy George to leave all for this love—his status, wealth and imperial favour, his friends and the whole world. For this love, the Lord rewarded him with a wreath of unfading glory in heaven and on earth, and with eternal life in His Kingdom. The Lord further endowed him with the power to help in need and distress all who honour him and call on his name; The Holy Martyr Lazarus the New.

**St. Ethelbert, king of East Angles** - he was venerated as a martyr because of his violent death for political reasons at the hand of Offa, king of Mercia, whose daughter Aelfthryth he visited with a view to marriage. The body was buried by the river Lugg at Marden and later translated to Hereford where it remained until the Danes burnt it in 1050. Fragments of the original shrine at Hereford still remain - it was the second most popular pilgrimage centre of the times.

**April 24 / May 7 The Holy Martyr Sabbas Stratelates** - This famous Sabbas lived in Rome in the time of the Emperor Aurelian, and held a general's rank. He was of a noble Gothic family. He often visited Christians in prison, helping them from his abundance. Through his great purity and fasting, God gave him power over unclean spirits. When he was charged with being a Christian, he stood courageously before the Emperor, cast his officer's belt before him and publicly confessed Christ the Lord. He was tortured in various ways: flogged, flailed with iron rods, burned with torches. But he did not succumb to these deadly tortures, and was seen to be alive and well. His comrades, the soldiers, seeing clearly that God was helping Sabbas, accepted the Christian faith, and seventy of them were immediately beheaded at the Emperor's command. Christ the Lord Himself appeared to Sabbas in the prison in great light, and strengthened His martyr. Then Sabbas was condemned to death by drowning. He was thrown into a deep river, where he gave his soul to God in the year 272. And his soul went to the Lord to whom he had remained faithful under many tortures; Our Holy Mother Elisabeth; The Holy Martyrs Eusebius, Neon, Leontius and Longinus; The Holy Martyrs Pasocrates and Valentine; Our Holy Father Thomas the Fool for Christ; The Holy New Martyrs Luke and Nicolas;

**St. Egbert of Lindisfarne (729)** - a Northumbrian monk, born of noble parentage c. 639; d. 729. In his youth he went for the sake of study to Ireland, to a monastery, says the Venerable Bede, "called Rathmelsigi", identified by some with Mellifont in what is now County Louth. There, when in danger of death from pestilence, he prayed for time to do penance, vowing amongst other things to live always in exile from his own country. In consequence he never returned to England, though he lived to the age of ninety, and always fasted rigorously. Having become a priest, he was filled with zeal for the conversion of the still pagan German tribes related to the angles, and would himself have become their apostle, if God had not shown him that his real calling was to other work. It was he, however, who dispatched to Friesland St. Wigbert, St. Willibrord, and other saintly missionaries. St. Egbert's own mission was made known to him by a monk, who, at Melrose, had been a disciple of St. Boisil. Appearing to this monk, St. Boisil sent him to tell Egbert that the Lord willed him instead of preaching to the heathen to go to the monasteries of St. Columba, "because their ploughs were not going straight", in consequence of their schismatic practice in the celebration of Easter. Leaving Ireland therefore in 716, Egbert crossed over to Iona, where the last thirteen years of his life were spent. By his sweetness and humility he induced the Iona monks to relinquish their erroneous mode of computation; in 729 they celebrated Easter with the rest of the Church upon 24 April, although their old rule placed it that year upon an earlier day.

**April 25 / May 8 — The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark** - Mark was a companion and helper of the Apostle Peter in his journeys. Peter, in his first Epistle, calls him his son, not after the flesh but after the spirit (I Pet. 5:13). When Mark was with Peter in Rome, the faithful begged him to write down for them the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus, His miracles and His life. So Mark wrote his Gospel, which the Apostle Peter himself saw and testified to as true. Mark was chosen by the Apostle Peter to be bishop, and sent to Egypt to preach. And so Mark was the first preacher of the Gospel and the first bishop in Egypt. Egypt was oppressed by a thick darkness of paganism, idolatry, divination and malice. But, with the help of God, St Mark succeeded in sowing the seed of the knowledge of God in Libya, Ammonia and Pentapolis. From Pentapolis, he went to Alexandria, whither the Spirit of God led him. In Alexandria, he succeeded in establishing the Church of God, in giving her bishops, priests and deacons and in rooting everything firmly in faithfulness and devotion. Mark confirmed his preaching with many great miracles. When the pagans brought accusations against Mark as a destroyer of their idolatrous faith, and when the governor of the city began to search for Mark, he fled again to Pentapolis, where he continued his earlier work. After two years, Mark again returned to Alexandria, to the great joy of his faithful, whose number had already increased very greatly. The pagans took the opportunity to seize Mark, and they bound him firmly and began to drag him over the cobblestones, crying: 'We're taking the ox to the stall!' They threw him into prison all injured and bloodstained, where there appeared to

him first an angel from heaven, who encouraged and strengthened him, and then the Lord Himself. Jesus said to him: 'Peace to thee, Mark My Evangelist!', to which Mark replied: 'And peace to Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ!' On the next day, the wicked people hauled Mark from prison and again dragged him through the streets with the same cry: 'We're taking the ox to the stall!' Utterly spent and enfeebled, Mark said: 'Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit', and thus breathed his last and went to the better world. His holy relics were given burial by Christians, and through the ages they give healing to people from every pain and ill;

**St Anianus, Second Bishop of Alexandria** - When Mark stepped out of the boat on dry land in Alexandria, the sandal on one foot became torn. Then, he saw a cobbler to whom he gave his sandal for repairs. In mending the sandal, the cobbler pierced himself with the needle in his left hand and blood began to flow and the cobbler screamed in pain. Then the apostle of God mixed some dust with his spittle and anointed the wounded hand and suddenly the hand became whole again. Astonished at this miracle, the cobbler invited Mark to his home. Hearing Mark's homily, Anianus [for that was the cobbler's name] was baptized; he and his entire household. Anianus displayed so much virtue and so much zeal for the work of God that St. Mark consecrated him bishop. This holy man was the second bishop of the Church in Alexandria.

**April 26 / May 9 — Fast Day - The Hieromartyr Basil, Bishop of Amasea** - Licinius, the brother-in-law of the Emperor Constantine, whose sister he had married, dissembled before the great Emperor, saying that he was a Christian. When he received authority over the whole of the East, he began, at first secretly but then publicly, to persecute the Christians and to uphold idolatry. His wife grieved greatly over this, but could not turn her husband back from this dishonour. Giving himself over to idolatry, Licinius gave himself over to all the passions, and especially to brutality towards women. Through this fall into such an impure passion, he desired to deflower the maiden Glaphyra, who was in waiting at the imperial court. She complained to the Empress, who sent her away from the court at Nicomedia secretly to the coast of Pontus. The maiden got as far as the town of Amasea, and was there warmly received by the bishop, Basil, and the other Christians. Glaphyra was very joyful that God had preserved her virginity, and wrote of this to the Empress. And the Empress rejoiced and sent her money for the Church in Amasea. But one letter of Glaphyra's, on its way to the Empress, fell into the hands of an imperial eunuch, who showed it to Emperor Licinius. Discovering where Glaphyra was to be found, he immediately sent orders that she and the bishop be brought to Nicomedia. In the meantime, Glaphyra died, and the soldiers brought only Basil, in bonds. After torture and imprisonment, this blessed man was beheaded and thrown into the sea, in the year 322. His priests, with the help of an angel of God, found his body near the town of Synope, took it out of the water with the aid of fishing nets and carried it to Amasea, where they gave it burial in the church which he had built by his labours. The Emperor Constantine raised an army against Licinius, overcame him, arrested him and sent him into exile in Gaul, where he ended his God-hating days; St Janik of Devic;

**St Stephen, Bishop of Perm** - a Russian by birth. From an early age he was devoted to prayer and pious thoughts. As a young man, Stephen went to Rostov where he was tonsured a monk in the monastery of St. Gregory the Theologian. Learning about the Land of Perm, completely overrun with the weeds of heathenism, Stephen desired to become a missionary in this land. He immediately dedicated himself to the studying of the language of the Perms and when he mastered the language, he composed an alphabet and translated the ecclesiastical books into that language. With the blessing of the Metropolitan of Moscow, Stephen, as a presbyter, started out on his apostolic mission and with apostolic zeal began to preach the Gospel in this dense darkness of the heathenism of Perm. Having baptized a few souls, he endeavoured to build a church in Perm dedicated to the Holy Annunciation. When the Church of God flourished in Perm, he was consecrated as its bishop. Undergoing every hardship, affliction, maliciousness and humiliation, he succeeded to dispel the darkness among the heathens of Perm and to illuminate them with the Light of Christ. In his old age he returned to Moscow once more but, there ended his earthly life and took up habitation with the Lord in the year 1396 AD.

**April 27 / May 10 — The Holy Apostle Simeon** - One of the Seventy, he was the son of Cleopas, and Cleopas was the brother of Joseph, the betrothed of the most holy Mother of God. Seeing the miracles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Simeon was converted and included among the Seventy apostles. With great zeal and courage, he preached the Gospel everywhere in Judea. And when the wicked Jews killed James, the Lord's brother and first bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, throwing him down from the top of the Temple and belabouring him round the head with a stick, then this Simeon, Joseph's nephew, was installed as bishop in Jerusalem. He, as the second Bishop of the Holy City, governed the Church of God with wisdom and strength to a great age. He was more than a hundred years old when he suffered, and his sufferings came about as follows: in the time of the Emperor Trajan there was a double persecution begun in Palestine, against the descendants of David and against the Christians. The wicked people condemned Simeon on both counts. St Simeon endured harsh torture and was finally crucified, as had been the Lord whom he had faithfully served on earth; Our Holy Father Stephen, Bishop of Vladimir;

**The Burning of the Relics of St. Sava by the Turks** - Sava was the Archbishop of the Serbs. The body of St. Sava was buried in Mileshevo Monastery. During the time of the Turkish tyranny, the Serbian people gathered around the relics of their saint to seek comfort and healing. Fearing that an insurrection might arise from that place against the Turks, Sinan Pasha of Belgrade ordered that the relics of St. Sava be translated to Belgrade and there to be burned on Vracar, April 27, 1594 A.D. With the burning of the relics of this saint, the rabid Pasha did not burn the saint who remained alive before the Throne of God in the heavens and in the hearts of his people on earth; Our Holy Father John the Confessor.

**28 April / 11 May — Fast Day - The Holy Apostles Jason and Sosipater, and the Virgin, Cercyra** - The first two were among the Seventy Apostles, and the last was the daughter of the king of the island of Corfu. The Apostle Paul mentions Jason and Sosipater (Rom. 16:21), and calls them his kinsmen. Jason was born in Tarsus, as was the Apostle Paul himself, and Sosipater in Achaea. The first was nominated by the apostles as Bishop of Tarsus and the second as Bishop of Iconium. Travelling and preaching the Gospel, these two apostles came to the island of Corfu, where they succeeded in building a church dedicated to St Stephen the Protomartyr and in bringing some unbelievers to the Church. The king of the island threw

them into prison, where there were seven robbers already imprisoned: Saturninus, Jakischolus, Faustian, Januarius, Marsalus, Euphrasius and Mamminus. The apostles brought all seven of them to the Christian faith, making wolves into lambs. The king commanded that these seven be put to death in boiling pitch, and they thus received the wreath of martyrdom. When, after this, the king was in process of questioning the apostles, his daughter Cercyra, looking through a window, saw the torture of these men of God and, discovering the reason for it, proclaimed herself a Christian and gave all her jewels away to the poor. The king was filled with wrath against his daughter and shut her up in a separate prison, then, failing to turn her from Christ, ordered that the prison be burned down. The prison burned to the ground, but the maiden remained alive. Seeing this wonder, many of the people were baptised. The furious king ordered that his daughter be bound to a tree and killed with arrows. Those who had come to believe in Christ fled from the terrible king to a nearby island and hid themselves. The king set off in a boat to arrest them, but his boat overturned in the sea and thus the unrighteous perished, as Pharaoh aforetime. The new king accepted the Christian faith and was baptised, receiving the name Sebastian. Jason and Sosipater freely preached the Gospel and strengthened the Church of God in Corfu to great old age, and there finished their earthly course and went to the courts of the Lord. The Holy Martyrs Maximus, Dada and Quintilian ; The Holy Martyr Tibald; St. Cronan, abbot of Roscrea, Ireland (7th c.)

**29 April / 12 May — St Basil of Ostrog** - born in Popovo Selo in Herzegovina, of simple and devout parents. From his youth he was filled with love for the Church of God, and when he grew up he went to the monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God at Trebinje, and became a monk. As such, he quickly became known for his serious and rare ascetic life, for he loaded himself with ascetic practices, each harder than the last. He was later chosen and consecrated as Bishop of Zahum and Skenderia, much against his will. As a bishop, he first lived in the monastery at Tvrdos, whence, as a good pastor, he confirmed his flock in the Orthodox faith, keeping it from the cruelty of the Turks and the guile of the Latins. But when he was too pressed-upon by his enemies, and when Tvrdos was destroyed by the Turks, Basil moved to Ostrog, where he lived in strict asceticism, protecting his flock by his unceasing and loving prayers. (A new church, on the ruins of the old Tvrdos, has been built in our day by Nikolai Runjevac, from the village of Poljica near Trebinje—a wonderful foundation in the sight of God and His people) He went peacefully to the Lord in the 16th century, leaving his whole and healing body, uncorrupt and wonderworking, to the present day. The miracles at the grave of St Basil are without number. Both Christians and Moslems hasten to his relics and find healing of the gravest sicknesses and sufferings. A great national gathering takes place there every year at Pentecost. The Nine Holy Martyrs of Cyzicus; Our Holy Father Memnon the Wonderworker.

#### REFLECTION

During a certain uprising in Constantinople during the reign of Emperor Constantine, some embittered men broke off the nose and ears of the statue of the emperor in the city. Many adulators quickly came to the emperor and with great disgust relayed to the emperor how rebels broke the nose and ears from his statues and they asked the emperor to punish the transgressors with the most severe punishment. The great emperor felt his nose and ears with his hands and said to the flatterers: "I feel that my nose and ears are whole and undamaged!" The flatterers were ashamed and withdrew. With every royal generosity we all need to endure insults from others. Yet, with particular caution listen to accusations against other people, which our flatterers bring to us. We should always confess before God and before ourselves, that we, by our sins, deserved even greater insults than those which are perpetrated against us.

#### HOMILY

##### **About stirring up pure minds**

"This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you; through them by way of reminder I am trying to stir up your sincere disposition" (2 St. Peter 3:1).

Do you see brethren, the goal with which the Apostle Peter writes in his epistle? To stir up in people their pure minds! The apostle considers this as the main thing. And truly, it is the main thing. For if in every man the dormant pure mind would be awakened, there would not be a single human soul left on earth who would not have believed in Christ the Lord; who would not have confessed Him as the crucified and resurrected Savior of the world; and who would not have contritely turned to repentance for sins committed by the inducement of an impure mind.

Nothing distances us more from the Good News [Gospel] than an impure mind. What makes the human mind of man impure? Sin makes the human mind impure as milk when you pour in poison; it all becomes poisonous, so the human mind when impure sin enters into it, it all becomes impure. Every sin is impure; every sin makes the mind of man impure, muddy and poisonous. All knowledge which an impure mind possesses is impure as a muddied and soiled image of an object in a muddied and soiled mirror. "To the pure all things are pure" (Titus 1:15), said Paul, the other chief apostle. While Adam had a pure mind in Paradise, all of his knowledge about the Creator and created things was clear and true. Sin darkened his mind and the minds of his descendants. That paradisaical, pure mind of the sinless man is not dead rather is dormant in men under sin. It is necessary only to awaken it and then it will unerringly lead man back to Christ. That is why the apostle takes the responsibility to awaken in men that original pure, clear, discerning mind given to him by God.

O, my brethren, let us assist the holy apostle in awakening of men; He who was crucified upside down on the cross because of His preaching, let us help him in as much as it concerns us, and to awaken in every one of us, our own pure mind. If every one of us does this, we will see that all of us have one mind. For a pure mind is one while an impure mind is legion!

O resurrected Lord, You awaken in us a pure mind through the prayers of Your Holy Apostle Peter.

**To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.**