

# Sunday of the Prodigal Son, & Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia

22 January / 4 February



**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 2:** When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendour of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, Glory to Thee!

**Tropar to the New Martyrs of Russia, Tone 4:** O ye holy hierarchs, royal passion-bearers and pastors, monks and laymen, ye countless new martyrs and confessors, mean, women and children, flowers of the spiritual meadow of Russia, who blossomed forth wondrously in time of grievous persecutions, bearing good fruit for Christ in your endurance: entreat Him as the One Who planted you, that He deliver His people from godless and evil men, and that the Church of Russia be made steadfast through your blood and suffering unto the salvation of our souls.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 2:** Hell became afraid, O Almighty Saviour, seeing the miracle of Thy resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee! And the world, O My Saviour, praises Thee forever.



**Kontakion of the New-Martyrs and Confessors (Tone 2):** O ye new passion-bearers of Russia, who have with your confession finished the course of this earth, receiving boldness through your sufferings: Beseech Christ Who suffered for you, that they who pray to you in the hour of the testing of their faith may receive the gift of courage. For ye are a witness to us who kiss your feet, that neither tribulation, prison, nor death can separate us from the love of God.

**Kondak for the Prodigal Son, Tone 3:** Having foolishly abandoned Thy paternal glory, I squandered on vices the wealth which Thou gavest me. Wherefore, I cry unto Thee with the voice of the Prodigal: I have sinned before Thee, O compassionate Father. Receive me as one repentant, and make me as one of Thy hired-servants.

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

**Matins Gospel II**

**Epistle: I Corinthians 6: 12-20**

12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "The two," He says, "shall become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

## YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Lord overlooks nothing. Even secrets are open to Him. Let us then do everything as if He were dwelling in us. Thus we shall be His temples, and He will be within us as our God - as He actually is. This will be clear to us just to the extent that we love Him rightly.

*St. Ignatius of Antioch. Letter to the Ephesians. B#10, p. 92.*

for the New Martyrs: Rom 8:28-39

## Gospel: St. Luke 15: 11-32

THE LORD SAID THIS PARABLE: A certain man had two sons: 12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. 29 And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. 31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

The second preparatory Sunday of Great Lent is termed the Sunday of the Prodigal Son. In the touching parable of the Prodigal Son read during the Liturgy, the Holy Church teaches us to rely on the mercy of God, provided we have sincerely repented of our sins. On this Sunday and the succeeding two Sundays, during the Polyeleos at the All-night Vigil, Psalm 136 is chanted: By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept when we remembered Sion... This psalm describes the suffering of the Jews during the Babylonian captivity and their longing for their fatherland. The words of this psalm teach us about our spiritual captivity, the captivity to sin, and that we should aspire towards our spiritual fatherland, the Heavenly Kingdom. The final words of this psalm scandalise many with reference to Blessed shall be he who shall seize and dash thine infants (those of the Babylonians) against the rock! Of course, the literal meaning of these words is brutal and unacceptable for the Christian, for the Lord Himself taught us to love and bless our enemies and to worship God in spirit and truth. These words gain a pure and lofty significance with a Christian and spiritual nature, for they mean, "Blessed is he who has a firm resolve to break, on the rock of faith, the newly forming evil thoughts and desires (as it were in their infant state) before they mature into evil deeds and habits".

*The Law of God*

Our Lord Jesus Christ said on several occasions that He had come into the world to take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses (Matt. 8:17), to heal all manner of sicknesses and all manner of disease among the people (Matt. 9:23) and that He should lose nothing of all that the Father had given Him (John 6:39). By the righteous He meant those who considered themselves righteous. And in our Lord's time this implied in particular the arrogant and self-satisfied scribes and Pharisees. By sinners and the lost, Christ meant the sinners and publicans who were seeking their salvation.

*St. Luke the Evangelist writes:* Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:1-2). *In answer to this reproach, Jesus Christ spoke two parables, of the lost sheep and the lost coin.*

Every parable constitutes a symbol or allegory. Each possesses two meanings, and in each of its images are contained two images, one literal and the other a spiritual one, under the surface. Thus each parable tells of one thing while implying something else, something deeper.

*Jesus turned to the crowd and asked:* What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance (Luke 15:4-7).

*The Savior continues with the parable of the lost coin:* What woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:8-10).

In order to make this idea still clearer, Christ then proceeded to tell a third parable, that of the Prodigal Son. A certain man had two sons. The elder was practical, thrifty and obedient, while the younger was an irresponsible dreamer. He was not interested in his father's affairs and was tempted by the prospect of a carefree life somewhere far away from his father's house.

He was prey to that "levity of mind which does not value the happiness of being close to the heart of a good father, under the serene roof of his house, but yearns for a far country for no other reason than simply to be able to live as he pleases" (Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, *Collected Works*). He thus decides to take leave of his father for he lacked that love which might have led him to remain in his father's home.

He asks his father to give him that "portion of his goods" which was due to him. In a spiritual sense, "portion" should be understood as blessings received by man from God, those physical and mental advantages, external attributes and spiritual gifts bestowed on him. After abandoning his father's house, the son soon loses all these blessings. This departure implies man's rejection of God as he embarks on a course of sin and it is the main cause of all the trials that followed.

Anxious not to deprive his son of his freedom, the father places no hurdle in his way. The son sets forth from his native land. His sinful and idle life "in a far country" surrounded by like-minded people attracts him. Under the spell of this "free" and dissolute life he hardly notices how he squanders away all his means. In a spiritual sense to "waste his substance" means to squander and waste spiritual gifts. A prodigal life means to corrupt mind and will to such an extent that vice appears in the light of virtue and sinful passions as desirable pleasures.

However, this spiritual poverty was accompanied by material poverty: a "mighty famine" fell upon the land and the dissolute son was soon going without even his daily bread. Confronted by this hardship the son joined the service of a citizen of the foreign land who sent him out into the fields to feed his swine. He would have been glad to eat of the husks that the swine ate, but not even these were given to him. Bereft of food and shelter the young man comes to his senses, acknowledges the desperateness of his situation and this marks the beginning of his turning to God.

Before, his thoughts and desires had been held captive by passions and lusts. Now, on sober reflection he remembers his father and the happiness he had turned his back on when he set forth from his home. The son who had gone astray, but is not repentant, no longer has any claim to the name or rights of a son and is quite ready to be taken back into his father's household as no more than a hired servant. This is the thought in which the repentant sinner's new-found humility finds expression.

Faith in his father's kindness and trust in his love once more fill the heart of the unfortunate sinner and give him strength to resolve: *I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants* (Luke 15:18-19).

These words coming straight from the heart of the sinner, yet who is now illumined in grace, express the true sincerity of his repentance, his willingness to pour it forth like a confession before his father and the trusting hope in a happy outcome of his resolve. In the parable it is written: *And he arose and came to his father* (Luke 15:20). "That moment," Bishop Theophan the Recluse points out, "marks the beginning of his soul's turning towards God" (*Paths to Salvation*). The father sees him coming from afar, emaciated and in rags, almost too weak to drag himself on his way; he is filled with compassion and runs out to meet him, falling on his neck and kissing him.

The son only has time to utter part of his confession: *Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son* (Luke 15:21). The father interrupts him before he has time to ask to be taken on as a hired servant. The father was unable and did not wish to see in his son a hired servant. As St. John Chrysostom reminds us, the father did not wish even to reproach his son for his shameful past, because he saw before him a son who had been dead and was alive again, who had been lost and was found.

The father then gave orders to his servants for them to dress his son in the best robe and prepare a fatted calf. The father gave a feast and all made merry. "This is how the father welcomes and feasts the prodigal son on his return. This is a radiant image of God's wonderful love for the repentant sinner, on whom He has bestowed His mercy" (Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow).

The parable is concerned with God's great love for man, particularly for the sinner and the joy which Heaven knows when sinners find spiritual regeneration. In the eyes of God every man possesses infinitely greater value and importance than in the eyes of his fellows. We mortals underestimate and denigrate each other, often failing to understand the evil we are doing. This parable calls upon us to be charitable to all men, particularly those who have fallen prey to sinful passions and urges us to emulate the charity our Heavenly Father shows towards us.

The parable teaches us that from our early years we should follow the Lord's path, devoting our strength to good works, that we should be diligent, honor and respect our fellowmen and seek our happiness not in "far countries" but in the place where we live and work.

Lastly this parable teaches us to appreciate the true meaning of the words "repentance" and "penitence". Repentance is only the beginning of penitence and cannot absolve us if not followed by penitence. Judas Iscariot repents but he does not find the inner strength necessary for true penitence.

The desperate plight of the younger son led him to repent and his repentance led to penitence, penitence to confession and confession to forgiveness and absolution. Through repentance, penitence and confession, forgiveness and communion we must strive to wash away our sins and aspire to spiritual perfection. Amen.

*The Living Word*

A.A.V.

for the New Martyrs: Luke 21:12-19

## Saints of the Week

### Meatfare week

**22 January / 4 February — The Holy Apostle Timothy** - One of the Seventy, he was born in Lystra of Lycaonia of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. His mother and grandmother were praised by the Apostle Paul for their sincere faith (2 Tim. 1:4-5). He met the great Apostle for the first time in Lystra, and was the only witness of Paul's healing of the man lame from birth. Later, Timothy was an almost constant travelling-companion of Paul's, visiting Achaia, Macedonia, Italy and Spain with him. A great zealot for the Faith, a superb preacher and of a gentle spirit, Timothy contributed greatly to the spreading and establishing of the Christian faith. Paul called him his own son in the faith (1 Tim. 1:2). After Paul's martyrdom, Timothy had St John the Evangelist as his teacher. But when the Emperor Domitian exiled John from Ephesus to the island of Patmos, Timothy remained in Ephesus as bishop. At the time of an idolatrous feast called Katagogium, the pagans, resentful of the Christians, made a merciless, masked attack on Timothy and killed him, in about the year 93. His honoured relics were later taken to Constantinople and buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles by the graves of St Luke the Evangelist and St Andrew the First-Called. Our Holy Father, the Martyr Anastasius; St. Brithwald, monk of Glastonbury, bishop of Sarum who removed his see from Ramsbury to Sarum.

**23 January / 5 February — Sunday of the Holy New Martyrs & Confessors of Russia (celebrated on the Sunday nearest to January 25 o.s.)** — In any case, the world can and must wholeheartedly use for its edification and correction the present suffering by fire of the Russian people. The Russian people undoubtedly will come out of this fire holier, stronger and greater than it ever was before. No good blacksmith throws nails into the fire to be rid of them, he does it to make something better out of them. We think and believe that the Creator of the Russian people allowed this great people to experience this flame of suffering not to punish and kill it, but in order that by its terrible example other peoples may come to their senses and understand that the Russian people will be even more greatly glorified before heaven and earth. Do not cry, but be happy. A great harvest of souls has ripened in Russia. In these days the tortured Russian people fill Paradise more than any other Christian people on earth.

*St. Nikolai*

*(Velimirovic) of Ochrid*

"Blessed is God! And in our time martyrs have sprung up and we have been vouchsafed to see people slain for Christ, people who have shed their blood which has watered the whole Church" (3rd Homily of St. John Chrysostom on 1 Chronicles)

We also in our times together with the golden-mouthed preacher can say the same of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, who now stand in the choir of the God-pleasers before the throne of the King of Glory and intercede on behalf of our people.

The congregation of the New Martyrs of Russia consists of representatives of all the professions and ranks of the Russian land - beginning from the time of the Tsar-Martyr down to the last homeless wanderer, the finest children of our Fatherland, who were fated to water the whole Russian Church with their holy blood.

The tortures which the holy passion-bearers endured were little different from the Christian martyrdoms of the first centuries, and the refined cruelty of the modern persecutors in no way yields to the cruelty of their predecessors.

Being incited by the devil — the first cause of all persecution against the Church in all ages, the new tormentors subjected their victims to the same kinds of sufferings which the Jews, pagans, and Moslems used in the first and following centuries of persecution.

To these God-pleasers can be ascribed the words of the apostle concerning the first martyrs of the Church of God in the Old Testament ... of them many were "stoned, sawn asunder, were slain with the sword" "not accepting deliverance: that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb 11:37, 35)

Tortures for Christ and death itself the new martyrs met fearlessly they rejoiced that in their sufferings they resembled their Redeemer.

Before their deaths many of them prayed for their tormentors, they blessed their murdered, they called them to repentance.

Their valour irradiates the Russian Church with a new glory presenting to the world a countless congregation of crowned passion-bearers. And together with them the whole Universal Church is harvesting the fruits of their victories. The New Martyrs have united heaven with the earth in common joy, for both the Church militant together with the Church triumphant now rejoices over them.

The celebration of the glorification of the Holy New-Martyrs and Confessors of Russia took place abroad on October 19/November 1, 1981.

*"Orthodox Life" 1/1987*

**The Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of Ancyra** - He was born in 258 in the town of Ancyra of a pagan father and a Christian mother. His devout mother, Euphrosyne, prophesied a martyr's death for her son, and left this world when Clement was twelve years old. Her friend Sophia took Clement into her own home as her son and saw that he was brought up a Christian. Clement became so famed for his virtuous life that he was chosen as bishop of Ancyra at the age of twenty. He acquired a mature wisdom in his early years, and harnessed and conquered his body by great restraint. He ate only bread and vegetables, and never anything slaughtered or with blood. In the reign of Diocletian, he was tortured as terribly 'as anyone has ever been since the foundation of the world'. He spent twenty-eight years under torture and imprisonment. Eleven different torturers tormented him. When, at one time, they were smiting him on the face, spitting on him and breaking his teeth, he cried out to Domentian the torturer: 'You are doing me honour, O Domentian, not torturing me, for the mouth of my Lord Jesus Christ was struck in like manner, and His cheeks slapped; and lo, I, unworthy as I am, am now made worthy of this!' When he was brought before the Emperor Diocletian in Rome, the Emperor placed on one side various instruments of torture, and on the

other side gifts—medals, clothing, money—whatever the Emperor was able to bestow, and then told Clement to choose. Christ's martyr, with a scornful glance at all the Emperor's gifts, chose the instruments of torture. And he was terribly tortured; piece by piece the flesh was flayed from his body until the bones showed white beneath. He was healed of these wounds, and was finally beheaded by a soldier in 312, while he was presiding at the Liturgy as bishop in the church in Ancyra. St Clement's miracles are without number. The Sixth Ecumenical Council; St Paulinus the Merciful;

**St. Colman** - Died c. 702. Saint Colman succeeded Saint Hierlug (Zailug) as abbot-bishop of Lismore in 698. During his rule the fame of Lismore monastery, Ireland reached its peak

**24 January / 6 February — Our Holy Mother Xenia** - Born in Rome, she was the only daughter of a famous senator. Drawn by the love of Christ, she refused to marry as her parents desired. In order to escape this, she fled from her home with two of her slaves and came to the island of Kos, to a place called Mylassa, where she started a community for virgins, remaining there in asceticism till her death. Though she was a weak woman, she had a man's perseverance in fasting, prayer and vigils. She often spent entire nights standing in prayer, was dressed more poorly than her sisters, and on her bread, when she ate, she often put ashes from the censer. At the hour of her death (in 450), a wonderful sign appeared over the monastery: a wreath of stars encircling a cross more resplendent than the sun. Many of the sick were healed by her relics. Her two slaves girls followed the example of their abbess in all things, and when they died, they were buried, by their wish, at the feet of blessed Xenia. The Holy Martyr Babylas; Our Holy Father Macedonius; Our Holy Father Philo, Bishop of Cyprus; Our Holy Father Dionysius of Olympus;

**Blessed Xenia of St Petersburg** - Saint Xenia lived during the eighteenth century, but little is known of her life or of her family. She passed most of her life in Petersburg during the reigns of the empresses Elizabeth and Catherine II. Xenia Grigorievna Petrova was the wife of an army officer, Major Andrew Petrov. After the wedding, the couple lived in St Petersburg. St Xenia became a widow at the age of twenty-six when her husband suddenly died at a party. She grieved for the loss of her husband, and especially because he died without Confession or Holy Communion. Once her earthly happiness ended, she did not look for it again. From that time forward, Xenia lost interest in the things of this world, and followed the difficult path of foolishness for the sake of Christ. The basis for this strange way of life is to be found in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:18-24, 1 Cor. 2:14, 1 Cor. 3:18-19). The Lord strengthened her and helped her to bear sorrow and misfortune patiently for the next forty-five years. She started wearing her husband's clothing, and insisted that she be addressed as "Andrew Feodorovich." She told people that it was she, and not her husband, who had died. In a certain sense, this was perfectly true. She abandoned her former way of life and experienced a spiritual rebirth. When she gave away her house and possessions to the poor, her relatives complained to the authorities. After speaking to Xenia, the officials were convinced that she was in her right mind and was entitled to dispose of her property as she saw fit. Soon she had nothing left for herself, so she wandered through the poor section of Petersburg with no place to lay her head. She refused all assistance from her relatives, happy to be free of worldly attachments. When her late husband's red and green uniform wore out, she clothed herself in rags of those colors. After a while, Xenia left Petersburg for eight years. It is believed that she visited holy Elders and ascetics throughout Russia seeking instruction in the spiritual life. She may have visited St Theodore of Sanaxar (February 19), who had been a military man himself. His life changed dramatically when a young officer died at a drinking party. Perhaps this officer was St Xenia's husband. In any case, she knew St Theodore and profited from his instructions. St Xenia eventually returned to the poor section of Petersburg, where she was mocked and insulted because of her strange behavior. When she did accept money from people it was only small amounts, which she used to help the poor. She spent her nights praying without sleep in a field outside the city. Prayer strengthened her, and in her heart's conversation with the Lord she found the support she needed on her difficult path. When a new church was being built in the Smolensk cemetery, St Xenia brought bricks to the site. She did this in secret, during the night, so that no one would know. Soon her great virtue and spiritual gifts began to be noticed. She prophesied future events affecting the citizens of Petersburg, and even the royal family. Against her will, she became known as someone pleasing to God, and nearly everyone loved her. They said, "Xenia does not belong to this world, she belongs to God." People regarded her visits to their homes or shops as a great blessing. St Xenia loved children, and mothers rejoiced when the childless widow would stand and pray over a baby's crib, or kiss a child. They believed that the blessed one's kiss would bring that child good fortune. St Xenia lived about forty-five years after the death of her husband, and departed to the Lord at the age of seventy-one. The exact date and circumstances of her death are not known, but it probably took place at the end of the eighteenth century. She was buried in the Smolensk cemetery. By the 1820s, people flocked to her grave to pray for her soul, and to ask her to intercede with God for them. So many visitors took earth from her grave that it had to be replaced every year. Later, a chapel was built over her grave. Those who turn to St Xenia in prayer receive healing from illness, and deliverance from their afflictions. She is also known for helping people who seek jobs.

**St. Cadoc of Llancarvan Wales** - Son of Saint Gwynllyw, a king in Wales, a robber chieftain who led a band of 300; his mother, Saint Gladys, had been stolen in a raid on a neighbouring chief. Raised by an Irish monk; Cadoc's father had stolen the monk's cow, and when he came to demand its return, the king decided it was sign. Studied in Wales and Ireland. Priest. Once chased through a wood by an armed swineherd from an enemy tribe. His hiding place spooked an old, grey, wild boar that made three great leaps at him - then disappeared; Cadoc took this as a sign, and the location became the site of the great church and monastery at Llancarvan. He once saved his brother monks in a famine by tying a white thread to the foot of a (well-fed) mouse; he then following the thread to an abandoned, well-stocked, underground granary. Another time he and his brothers went out to meet a band of thieves, chanting and playing harps; it surprised the highwaymen so much, they turned and left. Lived as a hermit with Saint Gildas on the Island of Flatholmes off Vannes, Brittany. Established a monastery on a small island just off Brittany, joined by a stone bridge so local children could walk out for school. Returned to Britain to evangelize, and work with Christian survivors of Saxon raids. Born 6th century Welsh Died martyred by Saxons while serving at Mass c.580 near Weedon, Northamptonshire, England

**25 January / 7 February — Fast day - St Gregory the Theologian** - Born in Nazianzus of a Greek father (who later became a Christian and a bishop) and a Christian mother, he studied in Athens before his baptism with St Basil the Great and Julian the Apostate. He often foretold to Julian that he would be an apostate and a persecutor of the Church, and so it came to pass. Gregory was especially influenced by his mother, Nonna. He was baptised when he had completed his studies. St Basil consecrated him bishop of Sasima, and the Emperor Theodosius quickly called him to the vacant archiepiscopal throne of Constantinople. His works were manifold, the best-known being his theological writings, for which he received the title 'the Theologian'. He is particularly famed for the depth of his Sermons on the Holy Trinity. He also wrote against the heretic Macedonius, who taught wrongly of the Holy Spirit (that the Spirit was a creature of God), and against Apollinarius who taught that Christ did not have a human soul but that His divinity was in place of His soul. He also wrote against the Emperor Julian the Apostate, his sometime schoolfellow. In the year 381, when a quarrel broke out in the Council concerning his election as archbishop, he withdrew himself, declaring: 'Those who deprive us of the (archiepiscopal) throne cannot deprive us of God.' He then left Constantinople and went to Nazianzus, remaining there in retirement, prayer and the writing of instructive books until his death. And, although he was in weak health all his life, he lived to the age of seventy. His relics were later taken to Rome, and his head to the Cathedral of the Dormition in Moscow. He was, and remains, a great and wonderful light of the Orthodox Church, as much for the meekness and purity of his character as for the unsurpassable depth of his mind. He entered into rest in the Lord in the year 389. Our Holy Father Publius; Our Holy Father Mares; The Holy Martyr Felicitas and her seven sons;

**St. Theneva** (also known as St Dwyn) - British princess. When she became pregnant before marriage, her family threw her from a cliff. She survived the fall unharmed, and was soon met by an unmanned boat. She knew she had no home to go to, so got into the boat; it sailed her across the Firth of Forth to land at Culross where she was cared for by Saint Serf; he became foster-father of her son, Saint Kentigern.. Born British Isles. Died 7th century.

**St. Eochod** - Died 597. One of Saint Columba's (f.d. June 9) twelve companions, Saint Eochod was chosen by Columba to evangelize northern Britain. He is called the Apostle of the Picts of Galloway.

Tropar of St Eochod tone 6: The Picts of Galloway honoured thee as their Apostle,/ O righteous Hierarch Eochod,/ for at the behest of Father Columba/ thou didst open to them the Gospel of Salvation./ Wherefore, O Saint, cease not in thy pious labours,/ praying that our souls may be saved.

St. Theoritgitha, virgin, novice-mistress of Barking on the Thames.

**26 January / 8 February — Our Holy Father Xenophon and our Mother Maria, and their sons John and Arcadius** - They were rich and respected citizens of Constantinople. Xenophon and Maria lived godly lives, and made every effort to give their sons a Christian upbringing. When the boys were grown, their parents sent them to Beirut to study, but a storm capsized their ship. By God's providence, both John and Arcadius were somehow saved and thrown onto the shore by the waves; in two separate places, however, so that each thought the other had perished. Out of grief for each other, they became monks in two different monasteries. After two years of mourning, their parents travelled to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places. There, helped by the insight of a holy man, the brothers were first united with each other and then with their parents. Out of gratitude to God, Xenophon and Maria gave away all their goods to the poor and both embraced the monastic state. This touching story of these four holy souls demonstrates clearly how the Lord guides most wonderfully the destinies of those who believe in Him; how He looses on them trials and sorrows, that they may later, yet more greatly strengthened in their faith, experience the greater joy. They lived and died in the fifth century. Our Holy Father Simeon the Ancient; St David, King of Georgia;

**St. Conan of Iona** - Died 648 -A bishop of Ireland, pr possibly from Scotland. It is believed that Conan taught St. Fiacre before going to the Isle of Man, where he served as a missionary and was consecrated bishop;

**St. Theofrid** - Died c. 690. Saint Theofrid was a monk of Luxeuil who became abbot of Corbie in 622 and a regional bishop

**27 January / 9 February - Fast day - SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, THE GOLDEN TRUMPET OF ORTHODOXY** - The memory of this illuminary of the Church is celebrated on November 13 and January 30 but, on this date, the Church celebrates the translation of his honourable relics from the village of Comana, where he died in exile, to Constantinople, where earlier he had governed the Church. Thirty years after his death, Patriarch Proculus delivered a homily in memory of his spiritual father and teacher. He so enflamed the love of the people and Emperor Theodosius the Younger toward this great saint that all of them desired that Chrysostom's relics be translated to Constantinople. It was said that the sarcophagus, containing the relics of St. John Chrysostom, did not allow itself to be moved from its resting place until the emperor wrote a letter to Chrysostom begging him for forgiveness (for Theodosius' mother, Eudoxia, was the culprit responsible for the banishment of this saint) and appealing to him to come to Constantinople, his former residence. When this letter of repentance was placed on the sarcophagus, its weight became extremely light. At the time of the translation of his relics, many who were ill and who touched the sarcophagus were healed. When the relics arrived in the capital, then the emperor in the name of his mother as though she herself was speaking over the relics, again, prayed to the saint for forgiveness. "While I lived in this transient life, I did you malice and, now, when you live the immortal life, be beneficial to my soul. My glory passed away and it helped nothing. Help me, father; in your glory, help me before I am condemned at the Judgment of Christ!" When the saint was brought into the Church of the Twelve Apostles and placed on the patriarchal throne, the masses of people heard the words from St. Chrysostom's mouth saying: "Peace be to you all." The translation of the relics of St. John Chrysostom was accomplished in the year 438 A.D.

**28 January / 10 February — Our Holy Father Ephraim the Syrian** - Born in Syria of poor parents in the reign of the Emperor Constantine the Great, his early youth was spent somewhat tempestuously, but he suddenly underwent a spiritual crisis and began to burn with love for the Lord Jesus. He was a disciple of St James of Nisibis (Jan. 13th). By the great grace of God, wisdom flowed from his tongue like a stream of honey and from his eyes tears flowed unceasingly. Loving work like a bee, Ephraim was constantly either writing books or teaching the monks in the monastery or the people in the city of Edessa, or was giving himself to prayer and pondering. His books are numerous; his prayers are beautiful. The best-known of the latter is the prayer in the Great Fast: 'O Lord and Master of my life ... ' When they wished to take him by force and make him bishop, he feigned madness and began to run through the city of Edessa, trailing his garments along behind him. Seeing him mad, they left him in peace. He was a contemporary and friend of St Basil the Great. St Ephraim was especially the apostle of repentance. Even today his writings soften many hearts, strengthen them against sin and turn them back to Christ. He entered into rest at a great age in 373. Our Holy Father Isaac the Syrian; Our Holy Father Palladius; Our Holy Father Ephraim of the Kiev Caves;

**St. Cannera of Inis Cathaig, virgin** - (also known as Cainer, Conaire, Kinnera) Died c. 530. Little is known of Saint Cannera except that which is recorded in the story of Saint Senan, who ruled an abbey on the Shannon River, which ministered to the dying- -but only men. Cannera was an anchorite from Bantry in southern Ireland. When she knew she was dying, she travelled to Senan's abbey without rest and walked upon the water to cross the river because no one would take her to the place forbidden to women. Upon her arrival, the abbot was adamant that no woman could enter his monastic enclosure. Arguing that Christ died for women, too, she convinced the abbot to give her last rites on the island and to bury her at its furthest edge. Against his argument that the waves would wash away her grave, she answered that she would leave that to God. Cannera told the abbot of a vision she had in her Bantry cell of the island and its holiness. Her appearance signalled a change in the attitude of the monks toward women, whose contamination they feared. Cannera charges Senan with this unchristian prejudice. She reminded him that "Christ is no worse than yourself." If He could find comfort in the presence of women, so should the monks. The monks believed that the holier a man, the more he distances himself from Eve. They saw their celibacy as a taboo against women, rather than a sacrifice of love to Christ. They also failed to recognize that Jesus broke the conventions of His time. Again, Cannera said, "Christ came to redeem women no less than to redeem men," and "women gave service and tended to Christ and His Apostles," so why should the monks so distance themselves? Other double (men and women) monasteries already existed in Ireland for Saint Patrick (March 17) and his followers did not reject the fellowship and ministry of women. Probably because Saint Cannera walked across the water, sailors honor their patron by saluting her resting place on Scatterry Island (Inis Chathaigh). They believed that pebbles from her island protected the bearer from shipwreck. A 16th-century Gaelic poem about Cannera prays, "Bless my good ship, protecting power of grace. . . ." St. Anthimus of Brantome, abbot;

**St. Glastian of Kinglassie** - (also known as Glastian of MacGlastian) Born in County Fife, Scotland; died at Kinglassie (Kinglace), Scotland, in 830. As bishop of Fife, Saint Glastian mediated in the bloody civil war between the Picts and the Scots. When the Picts were subjugated, Glastian did much to alleviate their lot. He is the patron saint of Kinglassie in Fife, and venerated in Kyntire,

## Meatfare Saturday and the Commemoration of the Departed

In the days of this week "we do not sing Alleluia", i. e. we do not sing "Alleluia" at Matins instead of "God is the Lord", as the "Alleluia" is sung during Great Lent and on Wednesday and Friday in Cheesefare Week. At Matins we sing only two verses (instead of three) of the Sessional Hymns. At Compline the Canon to the Theotokos is dropped; and to be exact they also are dropped in the Inter-hours.

On Meatfare Saturday, before the commemoration (on Meatfare Sunday) of the Last Judgment, the Holy Church prays for the departed, so that together with us they also stand at the right hand of the Judge, and especially prays for those who have died, who, as the Synaxarion says, were stolen suddenly by death in a foreign country, on the sea and on impassable mountains, on cliffs, from starvation, from plagues and hunger, in war, in fires, from cold, and have undergone all kinds of other generic types of death, and also about poor and needy, and in general for all who "have not received commemoration in the legitimate psalms and hymns".

On a Saturday, instead of another day, before Meatfare Sunday it is necessary to pray for the repose of souls because the Sabbath Day is the day of rest, according to its innate meaning. It is the most important day for prayer for those who repose with the Saints. Besides this, the present prayer for the departed who repose the Holy Church reminds us about our inevitable end and our standing for trial before the incorruptible Judge, that, fearing these things to better prepare us for the spiritual struggle which are to come in the saving fast.

The service for Meatfare Saturday is performed in the same way as for the Saturday before the feast of Pentecost, with the only exception that on the Meatfare Saturday the hymns of the Octoechos are sung according to the tone in the order, and on the Saturday before Pentecost we must use the 6th tone.

The peculiarities of the service for these days are that:

a) at Vespers, instead of the Prokeimenon, we sing the "Alleluia", with the priest exclaiming the verses: "Blessed are they whom Thou has chosen", and "Their souls shall dwell with the blessed";

b) in Matins after the usual verses, i. e. the 16th Kathisma we sing "Blessed are the undefiled" (i. e. the 17th Kathisma), on two stases, and after each of them at the "Glory", together with the "Alleluia", we sing the end of the stasis, three

times, namely, after the first stasis we sing the words: "Unless Thy law had been my study", and after the second stasis we sing the words: "My soul shall live".

After the second stasis we sing with the refrain: "Blessed are Thou, O Lord", the Troparion for the departed: "The choir of the saints have found the fountain of Life".

After the 6th ode of the canon we sing the Kontakion: "With the saints give rest", and the Ikos.

As after the first stasis "Blessed are the undefiled", so after the second stasis and the hymn "Blessed are Thou, O Lord", and after the 6th Ode of the Canon, before the singing of the Kontakion: "With the saints give rest" there is a Litany for the Departed. In it we call out: "Again we pray for the repose of the souls of the servants of God, the forefathers, fathers and brothers, Orthodox Christians who here and everywhere lie asleep".

After this, usually, from a special book the departed Orthodox god-fearing Emperors, Kings, Great Princes, and god-fearing Empresses, Queens, Princesses are commemorated by name. In other temples after this a table is placed before the Royal Doors, and on the table is a cross and before it a candle in its holder, and sometimes even kutiya. In other temples only a candle in a large candleholder is placed before the Royal Doors. While intoning these litanies, the priest or deacon hold a censer.

This service for the departed is performed and when, if the Feast of the Three Hierarchs (Jan. 30), or the Translation of the Head of John the Forerunner (Feb. 24) falls on Meatfare Saturday the service for these feasts is performed on Meatfare Friday.

But if the Saint's Feast of the Temple or the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord falls on Meatfare Saturday, then on Meatfare Saturday we sing the service of the temple feast or the Meeting of the Lord; then we sing the service for the departed, evening and morning, on the previous Saturday or on Meatfare Thursday.

When the Saint's Feast of the temple falls on Meatfare Saturday, then the service for the departed may be sung only at the sepulcher, in the temple there must only be one service to the temple; and where there is no sepulcher, the service is sung as noted above; however, at the sepulcher may also be understood the vestibule, in which it is necessary to perform the order for the departed after the dismissal of Vespers (Ustav (Rubrics) chapter 14).

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp., (Kharkov, 1900) p 492-3*

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