

Sunday of the Dread Judgement

(Meatfare Sunday)

29 January / 11 February



Resurrection Tropar, Tone 3: Let the heavens rejoice / let the earth be glad / for the Lord has shown strength with His arm! / He has trampled down death by death! / He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell / and has granted the world great mercy.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 3: On this day thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, / leading us from the gates of death / On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices. / With the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

Kondak to Meat-fare Sunday, Tone 1: When Thou, O God, shalt come to earth with glory, and all things tremble, and the river of fire floweth before the Judgement Seat and the books are opened, and the hidden things made public, then deliver me from the unquenchable fire and deem me worthy to stand at Thy right hand.

Matins Gospel III

Epistle: I Corinthians 8: 8 — 9: 2

8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. 9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Chapter 9: 1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

SHALL THE WEAK BROTHER PERISH, FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED?

If one of you sees something unedifying and so much as goes on to pass it on and put it into the heart of another brother, in doing so you not only harm yourself but you harm your brother by putting one more little bit of knavery into his heart. Even if that brother has his mind set on prayer or some other noble activity, and the first arrives and furnishes him with something to prate about, he not only impedes what he ought to be doing, but brings a temptation to him.

St. Dorotheos of Gaza. Discourses: On the Fear of God. B#45, pp. 114, 115.

Gospel: St. Matthew 25: 31-46

The Lord said: 31 When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory. 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was ahungered and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was ahungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee ahungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD

And in return for what do they receive such things? For the covering of a roof, for a garment, for bread, for cold water, for visiting, for going to prison. For indeed in every case it is what is needed, and sometimes not even that. For surely, the sick and one who is in bonds do not seek only for this, but the one to be freed, the other to be delivered from his infirmity. But He, being gracious, requires only what is within our power ...leaving to us to exert our generosity in doing more...For even if they had done ten thousand things, the munificence would be of grace, since in return for services so small and cheap, such a heaven, and a kingdom and such great honour should be given them.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily LXXIX on Matthew XXV, 2. B#54, p. 476.

The two past Sundays spoke to us of God's patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come as our judge. 'Behold the goodness and severity of God' (Rom. 11:22). Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the end comes. In the words of the Great Canon: The end draws near, my soul, the end draws near; Yet thou dost not care or make ready. The times grows short, rise up: the judge is at the door. The days of our life pass swiftly, as a dream, as a flower. (Canticle Four, Tropar 2). This Sunday sets before us the 'eschatological' dimension of Lent: the Great fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Saviour, for the eternal Passover in the Age to Come. (This is a theme that will be taken up in the first three days of Holy Week.) Nor is the judgement merely in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts towards others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgement upon ourselves.

Lenten Triodion

Dearly beloved, in today's Gospel, our Lord tells the multitudes gathered to hear Him, a surprising story about a group of people very similar to themselves. He tells them of the whole race of humanity gathered before Him in that final day of Judgment. He tells them of the surprised reactions of many of those gathered there, when they are finally assigned either to the right or to the left hand of God; either to eternal salvation or to eternal damnation. They are judged either for their willingness or unwillingness to help our Lord Jesus Christ in a variety of needy situations: in times of hunger, thirst, nakedness, imprisonment, etc. And we hear, beloved, that neither group is able to comprehend when they had ever encountered and either helped or refused to help the Lord.

And it really matters little that they find it hard to comprehend this message, because God is able to discern a good and dedicated heart even if they themselves cannot. Before our Lord came, those righteous people may have performed their works of mercy out of a sort of second sense; a kind of innate feeling that they were doing what was pleasing to God. Possibly their sacrifices may have been even more meaningful because they had never heard the life-giving counsels of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the age of "an eye for an eye" they had the foresight to anticipate the teachings of "love your enemy", "turn the other cheek" etc.

Consider the awesome responsibility, beloved, that we bear—to provide suitable dwelling places for Him to dwell in. Christ makes His abode in us and we must be certain that just as the ideal home today is one where peace, love and devotion to one another reign, the spiritual home we provide for Him is the same.

What, then, must we do to make those homes exemplary dwellings for our Lord? We must follow the very counsels He set down for us. We must follow to the letter His perfect example. He was compassionate to the sick, the crippled, the poor, the sinner. So too, if we wish to have a suitable repository for our Lord, we must open it to admit all those other children of His with whom He concerns Himself.

If Christ comes to our hearts and sees that we hold them exclusively for Him and cannot bring ourselves to admit His needy children. He will know that He could not dwell in peace there. He came to serve and if we provide Him with a dwelling place which stifles His activity. He will pass by our spiritual homes.

What He wishes to see are spiritual hospitals, old-age homes, orphanages, etc., within us, where He knows that He can dwell and dispense His love to all in need of it. If we close the doors of our hearts to our brothers in Christ, He will pass by our door and our splendour will fall into decay. Remember, then, beloved, that it is not poverty, disease or any other earthly, human infirmity that will prevent our Lord from dwelling in a man, but rather sin. But, even in the case of sin, our Lord continues to knock and hope that we will expel it and accept Him back.

Beloved, all of mankind was created in the Image and Likeness of God and all share in Christ's humanity. Therefore it is not possible for us to call ourselves His followers and not recognize Him in our neighbour. And for this reason our Lord tells us in today's Gospel lesson, *inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to me* (Matt. 25:40). Amen.

The Living Word

Anon.

Saints of the Week

Cheesefare Week during which all foods **except meat** may be eaten.

29 January / 11 February — The Hieromartyr Ignatius - The chief feast of St Ignatius is in winter, on December 20th. Today we celebrate the translation of his relics from Rome, where he suffered martyrdom, to Antioch, where he had been archbishop. When St Ignatius was summoned to Rome to answer for his faith before the Emperor Trajan (98 - 117) a number of citizens from Antioch accompanied him on this long journey, prompted by their great love for their chief pastor. The saint of God, in no wise willing to deny the faith of Christ and scorning all the flattery and promises of the Emperor, was condemned to death and thrown into the Great Circus before the wild beasts. They tore him to pieces and he gave his soul to God. Then his companions collected his bare bones, took them to Antioch and buried them. When the Persians occupied Antioch in the sixth century, the relics of St Ignatius were again taken from Antioch to Rome; The Holy Martyrs Romanus, James, Philotheus, Hyperechius, Abibus, Julian and Paregorius; Our Holy Father Laurence of the Kiev Caves; New Martyr Demetrius of Chios; St. Andrew (Rublev) of Russia, iconographer;

St. Flora (Blath) of Kildare - virgin. Died 523. Saint Blath was the lay-sister who served as cook at Saint Brigid's convent in Kildare. She earned a reputation for heroic sanctity, and of her cooking it is said that bread and bacon at Brigid's table were better than a banquet elsewhere; **St. Dallan Forgaill the Blind** - (6th.cent.) A kinsman of St. Edan of Ferns, born in Connaught and a great scholar who, through his application to study, became blind. He wrote a poem in honour of St. Columba, called Ambra Choluim Kille which was only published after St. Columba's death. It is said that on its publication Dallan's sight was restored to him. St. Dallan was murdered at Triscoel by pirates (AD 598) and his head thrown into the sea. It was recovered and miraculously reunited to his body.

30 January / 12 February — The Three Great Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom - Each has his personal feast day in the month of January; Basil on the 1st, Gregory on the 25th and Chrysostom on the 27th. The common feast we celebrate today was instituted in the 11th century, in the time of the Emperor Alexius Comnenus. At one time there was a quarrel among the people about who was the greatest of the three. Some gave Basil the pre-eminence for his purity and courage; others Gregory for the unfathomable depth and height of his theological mind; others still Chrysostom for the wonderful beauty of his speech and the clarity of his presentation of the Faith. So the first were called Basilians, the second Gregorians and the third Johannites. But, by the providence of God, this dispute was resolved to the benefit of the Church and the yet greater glory of the three saints. The Bishop of Euchaita, John (June 14th), had a vision in his sleep, in which each of these saints appeared to him in great glory and indescribable beauty, and then all three together. They then said to him: 'We are one in God, as you see, and there is no dispute among us . . . neither is there among us a first or a second.' The saints also advised Bishop John to compile a common feast for them and to set aside for them a day of common commemoration. The quarrel was settled as indicated by the wonderful vision; January 30th being set aside for the common commemoration of the three hierarchs. The Hieromartyr Hippolytus, Bishop of Rome; The Holy Martyr Theophilus the New; St Peter, King of Bulgaria.

31 January / 13 February — The Holy Unmercenaries and Wonderworkers Cyrus and John - These compassionate and wonderful saints were not blood-brothers, but were brothers in spirit. Cyrus lived at first in Alexandria, and working as a doctor, healed people by the power of Christ together with medicine for the body. Discovering that illness came upon people mainly through sin, he always told them to cleanse their souls from sin by repentance and prayer, that they might be restored and strengthened in body. When Diocletian began his persecution of Christians, Cyrus went off to Arabia, where he received the monastic habit. But, as he had become known in Alexandria, so he became known also in Arabia, and people went to him for help. John, hearing of him and being at that time a Roman officer in Edessa, came to Arabia to see Cyrus. On seeing each other, they loved each other as brothers and remained together to live in asceticism. At that time, a Christian woman called Athanasia was tortured together with her three daughters in the town of Canopus. Cyrus and John heard of this, and came to Canopus to encourage the mother and daughters not to fall back from the Faith. And, grateful indeed for the counsel of these saints, Athanasia endured all the tortures and, with her daughters, was slain for Christ. The daughters were: Theoctista, aged 15, Theodota aged 13 and Eudocia aged 11. Then the torturers took Cyrus and John and, after torture and imprisonment, slew them with the sword in the year 311. These holy martyrs performed innumerable miracles, both during their lives and after their death. Their relics were translated to Rome in the time of the Emperor Arcadius. They are invoked for help especially for the sleepless and for the blessing of water and food. The Holy Martyr Tryphaena; Our Holy Father Nikita of the Kiev Caves; in Ireland at Ferns, St. Maidoc, bishop & St. Aidan, bishop; at Coldingham, St. Adamnan, priest.

1 / 14 February — Forefeast of the Meeting of Our Lord — The Holy Martyr Tryphon; The Holy Martyrs Perpetua, Felicitas and Satyrus; Our Holy Father Peter of Galateia; St. Cinnia of Ulster; St. Crewenna, who traveled with St. Breacca; St. Kinnia, virgin, veiled by St. Patrick;

St. Brigit (Brigid), abs & her disciple St. Darludach, nun - St Brigit lived at the time when Christ's Holy Church was just being revealed in Ireland. In those days, the country was still wild and many of the kings and warriors were brutal and cruel. The power of God's Grace to change people and even whole lands, was shone forth in this holy saint. For, St Brigit is remembered above all else for her holy love, compassion and charity. By her Christ-like example, she taught kings to be merciful, the greedy to be charitable and the pagans to seek Christ. Brigit was born in the year of our Lord 436, at Tirconnell, Ireland. Her mother was a slave, her father, the master. Before St Brigit was born, her mother was sold to a different master, a pagan magician. Brigit's mother was a Christian, strong in faith, and she worked hard to raise her child according to the Gospel. Soon after St Brigit's birth, the magician (wizard) moved to the province of Connaught, taking his household with him.

Here, Brigit's mother, whose name was Broiksech, became close to the Christian bishop, Mel. St Brigit herself was raised under the careful and loving eye of this holy bishop, and she grew strong in the Lord under the guidance of her elder. Very early in life, St Brigit showed special gifts of God's Grace, and several people were healed of illnesses through her pure prayers. Moreover, the saint was a hard worker, and she did every task to the glory of God. The people of the district had a special reverence for this blessed child, because of her open-hearted love for everyone and every creature. Now, in the old Irish law, if a master bought a slave woman who was expecting a child, he bought only the mother, and the child was born a free person. When the saint grew older, she wanted to go to visit her father, Dubthach, who lived in the province of Munster. The magician agreed to help her make the journey, and she went to her father's house. To her great joy, St Brigit soon brought her father to a true understanding of the Gospel. The blessed maiden worked on her father's estate, and continued to struggle in fasting and prayer. Once, the council of the bishops of Ireland was to be held in the town of Moy Liffey in nearby Leinster County. A woman in St Brigit's neighbourhood had some need to take her problems to the bishops for their advice and help, and she asked St Brigit to go with her on the journey. There was a certain holy bishop named Ibhair at the council, and it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, that a blessed maiden was coming to the council. When St Brigit entered the council room, Bishop Ibhair rose to his feet and glorified God. "This is the maiden whom I foresaw," he said. Then, he blessed and consecrated the chosen virgin. Shortly after this, St Brigit went to visit her mother, who was still in slavery. The mother was very ill, but she still had to work hard in her master's dairy. The young saint took over her mother's duties, and with her hard work and prayers, the dairy soon began to produce more butter than ever before. St Brigit had a custom of always dividing the butter into thirteen portions, one each commemorating the twelve apostles, and a larger portion in honour of Christ the Saviour. This last portion, she always gave away to the poor people in the area. Soon, the magician and his wife heard of these things and they came to look over their dairy. They saw that it was now clean and well run. The calves were in good health, and there was much butter being sold every day. The magician's wife, however, out of greed, demanded of Brigit that she fill a large container with butter then and there, so the mistress could take it home with her. There was only a small quantity of butter left at that time, because the saint had given the extra butter away to poor people. The mistress became angry and began to scold and mock; the blessed one. At this, the saint brought what butter there was in the church, and began to pray to God, making the sign of the Cross upon herself and over the butter. The merciful Lord heard the prayers of his servant, and when she began to take the butter out of the churn, there was more than there had been. Indeed, by God's Grace, there was even more than was needed to fill the container. When the magician saw this, he was amazed. He asked to be taught about this Christ Whom St Brigit and her mother adored. Moreover, he set St Brigit's mother free. After he had been taught the Christian faith, the magician and his whole household were baptized into Christ's Holy Church, and he gave away not only butter, but also cows, to the poor, and completely changed his way of life. St Brigit returned to her father's house, and though he loved her, he was often angry with her. The saint was in the habit of giving away something to every beggar or poor person who asked for her help. In this way, Brigit was giving away all her father's food, property and wealth. In despair, St Brigit's father took her to the fortress of King Dunlaing of Leinster, and asked him to take her into his service as a worker. It was the law in those days, that no-one could carry his sword into the king's house. So, when Dubthach started to enter the king's house, he took off his sword and gave it to St Brigit to hold, until she was sent for. When the king asked why St Brigit's father wanted to be rid of her, Dubthach replied, "She is a good and hard worker, but she is giving everything of mine away to those who do not work, and soon I will be poor." The king told him to bring in Brigit, but when Dubthach came to St Brigit, he noticed that she no longer held his sword. "Where is my sword?" he asked in alarm? "Father, a poor leper came and asked help of me. I had no gold, so I gave him your sword, that he might sell it." St Brigit was brought before the king, and her father angrily told him what had happened with the sword. The king asked in surprise: "Why did you take your father's wealth, and even his sword, and give it away?" St Brigit replied: "The Virgin's Son knows. If I had your power and wealth and all of Leinster, I would give it all to the Lord of the poor." The king was amazed. Then Brigit boldly told him and all those present about the Gospel of Christ and the life God commands of all those who would obtain the Heavenly Kingdom. The king glorified Christ because of the love and compassion of His saint, and sent her away in peace. Not long after this, a certain man came and asked for the hand of Brigit in marriage. Her father was happy to give her away, and the family encouraged her to marry the man. He was wealthy and had a good reputation, and everyone thought he would be a good husband. The saint, however, had already decided to become a nun. She replied to all, "The Son of the Virgin knows. Nothing is good for us if it harms our souls." St Brigit soon went down to the cathedral of Telcha Mide, to Bishop Mel, her elder, with eight other virgins to be tonsured. When they came to church on the day of their tonsure, St Brigit, out of humility, stood at the end of the line, thinking to herself that the others were all more worthy than she. When Bishop Mel saw the merciful saint standing last of all, he called her forth, and said: "Blessed are the least, for they shall be first." He tonsured St Brigit first and set her over the rest as Abbess. She later founded the convent at Kildare. For many years, then, St Brigit struggled and guided her nuns. God granted her many gifts of Grace. People from across the whole country came to the saint for healing, comfort and for help. The saint knew and often helped the great apostle, St Patrick in his tireless labour of enlightening Ireland. St Brigit was renowned for her charity and mercifulness. The number of the poor that she fed is known only to God, and she saved many from prison and death. St Brigit lived for eighty-eight God-pleasing years. As the time of her repose drew near, Bishop Nin, called by the people, "The Pure-Hand," arrived from Rome. He came to visit St Brigit, and found her near death. He celebrated the Divine Liturgy and gave her the Holy Communion. Soon after, the saint gave up her holy soul into the hands of Christ the Saviour, to Whom be all glory and adoration, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Amen! The great St Columba (Colum-cille), who was the apostle to the Scots in Scotland, when he was sailing to his monastery on the Isle of Iona, was caught in a great storm. He called upon Christ and His saint Brigit to calm the storm, and his prayers were answered. After that, he wrote an ode to the saint, from which the following troparion is composed: Pure virgin and flame of the Lord, / O Brigit, guide to the Eternal Kingdom, / deliver us, by thy prayers, from the throngs of demons and the storms of life, / and pray to Christ God that our souls be saved.



2 / 15 February — The Meeting of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ — On the fortieth day after His birth, the most holy Virgin brought her divine Son to the Temple in Jerusalem, to consecrate Him to the Lord and to purify herself according to the Law (Lev. 12:2-7, Exod. 12:2). And though neither the one nor the other was necessary, nevertheless the Lawgiver would not in any way transgress the Law which He had given through His servant and prophet Moses. At that time Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was serving his turn as high priest in the Temple. He stood the Virgin Mary in the place for maidens, not that for married women. On this occasion, there were two very special people present: the elder, Simeon, and Anna the daughter of Phanuel. The righteous elder took his Messiah up in his arms and said: 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.' Simeon also spoke the following words of the Christ Child: 'Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.' Then Anna, who had from her youth served God in the Temple in fasting and prayer, and who herself recognised the Messiah, praised the Lord and made

known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem the coming of the awaited One. But the Pharisees, present in the Temple and seeing and hearing all that passed, and being vexed with Zacharias for having stood the Virgin Mary in the place for maidens, made this known to King Herod. Believing this to be the new King of whom the star-followers from the East had spoken, Herod quickly sent to have Jesus killed. But in the meantime the holy family had already escaped from the city and set out for Egypt, under the direction of an angel of God. This day has been celebrated from the very earliest times, but its solemn celebration dates from 544, in the time of the Emperor Justinian. The Holy New Martyr Jordan — Candlemas — Blessing of Fruit

Tropar of The Meeting of the Lord, First Tone: Rejoice thou who art full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos, for from thee hath risen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice, thou also, O righteous Elder, as thou receivest in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who also granteth unto us the Resurrection.

Kondak of The Meeting of the Lord, First Tone: Thou Who didst sanctify the Virgin's womb by Thy birth, and didst bless Simeon's hands as was meet, by anticipation didst even now save us, O Christ God. But grant peace in the midst of wars unto thy commonwealth and strengthen Orthodox Christians whom Thou hast loved, O only lover of mankind.

3 / 16 February — Afterfeast of the Meeting of Our Lord — St Simeon the Host of God; The Holy Martyrs Adrian and Eubulus.

Saint Nicholas of Japan - In the world Ivan Dmitryevich Kasatkin, Saint Nicholas was born on 1 August 1836 in Smolensk province, the son of a deacon. His mother died when he was very young. Ivan Dmitryevich was always very serious in church. He attended the Smolensk Theological Seminary where he excelled in his studies, particularly in languages. As he approached the end of his studies he offered fervent prayer to God seeking to know what path his life should take. At that time the priest serving the Russian Consulate in Hakodate, Japan, took ill and was forced to return to Russia. A notice was posted at the Academy seeking candidates for the position. Filled with a strong desire to preach the Gospel to those who had not heard it, Ivan asked to be sent to Japan. His superiors were hesitant to send the talented Ivan to the Consulate position feeling that it would be a waste of his skills, but Ivan convinced them that he would not simply carry out his duties at the Consulate but would devote much time to missionary work. Thus was tonsured with the name Nicholas in 1860, ordained, and left for Japan. What labours awaited the saint in Japan! Eight long years he studied the Japanese language, literature, history, customs, philosophy. He laboured at translating the Gospel into Japanese, the services, the catechism, and only after eight years did he acquire his first disciple, a pagan priest who at first wanted to kill him. Facing his assailant, Father Nicholas asked the priest - a man named Sawabe - if he was acquainted with Christian doctrine. Mr Sawabe replied that he was not, but that he knew the doctrines to be evil. Father Nicholas questioned him again: "How can you be sure of that? Before making such an assertion, ought you not to examine my religion to see whether or not it is so hateful as you suppose?" Mr Sawabe agreed, and Father Nicholas began to explain the tenets of the Christian faith. Mr Sawabe became interested, took notes, and asked if he could return for daily instruction. He was later baptised with the name Paul. Then there began the struggle for each Japanese soul, amidst constant danger of being killed by pagan fanatics. There was joy over the first small Japanese Orthodox community, then joy over the first Japanese priest, then the construction of the cathedral, the school for catechists, and finally - recognition as a diocese, in essence, a local church. It was in fact Paul Sawabe who became the first Japanese priest, ordained in 1875. In 1878 five more priests were ordained to minister to the Japanese flock which by then numbered about 4,000. Then, in 1880, Father Nicholas was summoned to Russia and on March 30 he was consecrated bishop in the Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. On his return to Japan Bishop Nicholas began to devote even more time to liturgical translations. He considered the holding of the divine services in Japanese as one of the conditions for the successful spreading of Orthodoxy since the entire majesty, wealth and depth of Christian thought was contained in the Orthodox divine services and had to be revealed to the members of the Japanese Church. To this end he faithfully spent four hours a night over the last thirty years of his life. Bishop Nicholas reposed on February 3, 1912. His funeral was the largest ever of a foreigner to be held in Tokyo. By the time of his repose, there were 35,000 native believers, 32 priests, 7 deacons, 15 choir directors, 121 lay preachers, a cathedral, 96 churches, and 265 chapels. To think that there had been no native believers when the young Father Nicholas arrived in Japan in 1860! There are no accounts of miracles attributed to Saint Nicholas. His "miracle" is evident in his efforts as a modern apostle who brought Orthodoxy to Japan and established a Church which continues to prosper to this day with some 30,000 Japanese Orthodox faithful, over forty parishes, and between two to three hundred converts made every year. For these labours in May 1993 the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA resolved to recognise Archbishop Nicholas as a saint, along with Metropolitan Innocent of Moscow and Archbishop John of Shanghai and San Francisco. The service of glorification of Saints Innocent and Nicholas took place on 17/30 January 1994; at Chester, St. Werburga, virgin; in Cornwall, St. Ia (Ives), virgin & martyr; in Ireland, St. Caellainn, virgin; St. Werburga of Mercia, widow, abbess (ca700); St. Colman MacDuach, bishop of Connaught; St. Laurence of Canterbury, bishop (619).

4 / 17 February — Afterfeast of the Meeting of Our Lord — Our Holy Father Isidore of Pelusium - He was an Egyptian, the son of eminent parents and a kinsman of the Patriarchs of Alexandria Theophilus and Cyril. Completing his secular studies, he renounced his riches and worldly standing and gave himself wholly to the spiritual life for the love of Christ. He was a great and ardent interpreter and defender of the Orthodox faith. The historian Nicephorus states that St Isidore wrote more than 10,000 letters to various people, in which he reprimanded one, advised another, consoled a third, instructed a fourth. 'It is more important to be proficient in good works than in golden-tongued preaching', he writes in one letter. In another, he says: 'If a man wishes his virtues to appear great, let him regard them as small and then they will be truly shown to be great.' The first and fundamental rule for Isidore was first do and then teach, after the example of the Lord Jesus. At a time when St John Chrysostom was undergoing persecution and the whole world was divided into two camps, one for and one against this great pillar of Orthodoxy, St Isidore stood on the side of Chrysostom. He wrote to Patriarch Theophilus, saying what a great light Chrysostom was in the Church and begging that the hatred of him should cease. He lived long and laboured greatly, glorifying Christ the Lord in his life and his writings, and entered into the Kingdom of Christ in about 450; Our Holy Father Nicolas the Confessor; The Holy New Martyr Joseph; St. Aldate, hieromartyr of Gloucester, England (6th c) ; in Scotland, St. Modan, ab of Melrose.

Icon Of The Feast

The icon of the Sunday of the Last Judgment incorporates all of the elements of the parable from Matthew 25:31-46. Christ sits on the throne and before him the Last Judgment takes place. He is extending his hands in blessing upon the Theotokos on his right, and John the Baptist on his left. Seated on smaller thrones are the Apostles, represented by Peter and Paul, a depiction of the words of Christ in Matthew 19:28. (1.)



1. Christ is seated on the throne between the Theotokos (left) and Saint John the Baptist (right). Seated on smaller thrones are the Apostles, represented here by Saint Peter (left) and Saint Paul (right).

Proceeding from the throne are the scrolls pronouncing the judgment upon the sheep and the goats. (2.) The faithful are received with the words that are written on the scroll to the right of Christ the Judge, "Come, you blessed of My Father, and inherit the kingdom" (v. 34). The scroll on the left condemns the unfaithful with the words, "Depart from me you cursed, into the everlasting fire" (v. 41).



2. The scrolls pronouncing the judgement can be seen at Christ's feet and below them, Adam and Eve bow before Christ.

3. Below Adam and Eve is the Archangel Michael surrounded by the books which contain the works of each person.

Before the throne, the progenitors of the human race, Adam and Eve, bow before Christ. (2.) In the center of the icon is the Archangel Michael. He is holding the scales of judgment and is surrounded by the books that contain the works of each person

(Revelation 20:11-13). (3.) Also shown are the angels with trumpets announcing the return of Christ and signaling the resurrection of the dead and the commencement of the Last Judgment (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). (4.)



4. To the left and right of the Archangel Michael are angels with trumpets announcing to the world the return of Jesus Christ, the start of the Last Judgements, and signaling the resurrection of the dead.

To the left of the Archangel are both the living and the dead who are approaching the throne and Christ the judge. Whereas Adam and Eve are representative of all of humanity, this part of the icon shows that both the living and the dead will stand before Christ. (5.)



5. Pictured to the bottom-left of the Archangel Michael are the living and dead coming before the throne of Christ the judge.

6. To the bottom-right of the Archangel Michael is the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil, his demons, and those who are not worthy of inheriting the Kingdom of God.

At the bottom right of the icon is the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and the demons, and also for those who are not found worthy to inherit the Kingdom of God. (6.)

The icon offers a clear image of the theme of judgment with Christ on His throne, the Archangel with the scales and books, and the anticipation of the sentence of everlasting punishment for the unrighteous and the reward of eternal life for the righteous.

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