



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

### Martyr Andrew Stratelates and those with him & Afterfeast of the Dormition

19 August / 1 September

**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!

**Troparion of the Feast tone 1:** In giving birth thou didst keep thy virginity,/ and in thy dormition thou didst not forsake the world, O Mother of God./ Thou didst pass on to life, since thou art the Mother of Life,/ and by thine intercessions thou redeemest our souls from death.

**Troparion of St Andrew the Commander tone 3:** Thou didst recruit a divinely chosen army/ for Christ the King by the power of the holy Faith,/ and as their commander and model thou didst excel with them in the warfare of martyrdom./ Therefore together with them intercede with the Lord/ Who has glorified thee to grant us His great mercy.

**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 Feast tone 2:** The grave and death could not hold the Mother of God,/ who is sleepless in her intercessions and an unchanging hope in her mediations./ For as the Mother of Life she was transferred to life/ by Him Who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb.

**Kontakion of St Andrew tone 4:** O Andrew most excellent commander, thou didst lead an army of martyrs to Christ./ And with them, O Andrew, thou didst proclaim:/ O Compassionate One, Thou art the martyrs' Crown.

#### Matins Gospel XI

#### Epistle: Corinthians 9: 2-12

For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defence to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who ploughs should plough in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

#### IF WE HAVE SOWN SPIRITUAL THINGS FOR YOU, IS IT A GREAT THING IF WE REAP YOUR MATERIAL THINGS?

'Are you not my work in the Lord?' For this is the great thing, and others avail nothing apart from this. Even Judas himself was 'an Apostle,' and 'free' and 'saw Christ,' but because he did not have 'the work of an Apostle,' all those things did not profit him. You see then why he adds this also, and calls them to be witnesses of it ...Upon this it follows that if from no other quarter, yet from you I have a right to receive. Nevertheless, from whom I had most right to receive, from you whose teacher I was, from those I did not receive ...The whole world had him for its Apostle ...'For I both exhibited miracles and taught by word, and underwent dangers, and showed forth a blameless life' ...And not only this does he establish by his illustrations, but he shows also what kind of man a priest ought to be. For he ought to possess both the courage of a soldier and the diligence of a husbandman and the carefulness of a shepherd, and after all these to seek nothing more than necessities ...For he did not say, What soldier serves and is not enriched? ...To prevent high thoughts in those who contribute to their teachers, he signified that they receive more than they give.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXI on I Corinthians IX, 2, 3, 4, 6. B#56, pp. 119-121.*

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Eph. 6:10-17

## **Gospel Matthew 18: 23-35**

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

### **FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS**

In this gospel parable that we heard today, the theme of forgiveness is paramount. We see how one debtor, who had a huge debt was forgiven, but when he himself refused to forgive the debt of another, his old debt was restored. This is a lesson to us on the importance of forgiving our brethren. We owe God a great debt – all that we have and are comes from Him. When we sin by misusing the bounty that God has bestowed upon us, rather than demand that we return everything to Him, He forgives us and gives us the opportunity to repent of our sins. But if we do not imitate His mercy and forgive the relatively small offenses of our neighbor, then we will again fall under the great debt that we owe to God and this time, because we did not forgive our neighbor, no forgiveness will be granted to us.

There is, however, another theme underlying this parable – and that is the nature of true repentance. "When once a man has truly repented, he must think no more of the sins committed, lest he fall again into sin. St Anthony advises: 'Guard yourself, that your mind be not fouled with the memory of former sins, and that the memory of them be not renewed within you.' And in another place, he says, 'Don't establish the sins that you have formerly committed in your soul by pondering on them, lest they be renewed in you. Be assured that they are forgiven from the moment that you turn to God in repentance. Be in no doubt about this.' " (St Nikolai Velimirovic)

In the parable, the servant who was forgiven his debt is like the sinner who repents. The sins (that is the substance of the debt) are gone – they no longer have any impact on the repentant person. If at that point the forgiven servant had indeed forgotten about the debt that had oppressed him, he would not even have recognized the small debt of his brother, let alone prosecuted it. But the memory of his sins stayed with him and found a home again in his heart. Even though he no longer was weighed down with the debt of sin – he continued to dwell upon the memory of the sin and as a result when he was presented with the reality of the debt, he fell almost without resistance into the same trap that had held him previously. When we repent of our sins but continue to dwell upon the memory of them, then we place ourselves in a condition of vulnerability. By allowing the sin to remain in us by entertaining its memory, we leave the door open to its return. How does this actually work out? Consider the person who has sinned through drunkenness. If that person repents of his sin and is forgiven and by God's grace overcomes his weakness then it is not uncommon for that same person to judge others who remain under the influence of drunkenness. Maybe the former alcoholic simply condemns not only those who remain alcoholics, but also anyone who will take a drink. In this way they constantly dwell in the memory of their own weakness and keep it alive in them. It is repelled for the moment by the antagonism towards drink – but it also remains, waiting for the moment of weakness that is bound to arise. Or perhaps we get a different reaction and the former alcoholic, out of compassion for his weaker brethren, begins to embark upon a career of "helping" others (by counseling or support work or some other benevolent outreach.) Here again, although the enslavement to this sin is kept at bay by compassion towards others, still it remains, waiting again for a moment of weakness, to re-enslave its former victim.

In the parable, the passion behind the sin is possibly greed or possessiveness or perhaps simply anxiety about "having enough to get by". By continuing to entertain the memory of his sin, the forgiven servant allowed the passion to attach to a new object – this time hiding itself by pushing the servant to be the strong aggressor rather than the weak one who got himself into trouble through lack of self-control. In the blink of an eye as it were, the sin is back and stronger than ever.

It is not in vain that we pray daily to the Mother of God to "quench the flame of my passions and deliver me from my many cruel memories and deeds and free me from all their evil effects." In this prayer, we recognize not only the danger of the enflamed passions, but even of the effect of the memory of the deeds committed under their influence. When we repent of our sins, it is necessary to turn away not only from the sin, but from everything connected with it – including the memory of the sin. If we are watchful and vigilant in our spiritual lives then we will begin to see not only the temptation to sin and so flee that, but also the precursors to the temptation – the situations, conditions and events that will set the stage for us to be tempted. And it is those very precursors that we must also flee so that we are not even in a position to be tempted. Repentance is indeed a radical act and brings about a radical change in our lives.

The master, seeing that his servant was still under the influence of the debt, reinstated that debt – not to punish but to cure, for the presence of the debt acted to curtail the action of the passion that had again enslaved the servant. In the same way, there are times when God allows us to suffer again the effects of our sins as a reminder or as a preventative measure to keep us from falling any deeper into sin, and perhaps to give us the chance to be healed of our weaknesses. Should you find yourself in this situation, then do not despair, but renew your repentance – use the difficulty in which you find yourself as an opportunity to turn away not only from the sin, but from everything connected with the sin. Sometimes we are stopped in this radical repentance by our anxiety about how we will meet our needs – because sometimes those conditions which contribute to our sins are also tied to the activities of daily life: work, school, friendships, even sometimes family. But remember that your hope, your dependence is not on what the world provides, but rather it is on God Who gives every good thing to those who love Him. If you place God above all else and trust in His providence, then He will provide for you all that you need.

Repentance is a radical act – it means turning your back first on the sin for which you repent and then turning away from everything that is connected with that sin – the memory of the sin, the situations surrounding the sin, the thoughts and images that lead into sin. And remember always that you are not alone in your struggle. God has provided for us a community of likeminded believers and within that community we support one another, we help one another, we show love and compassion for one another. That community begins in the Orthodox home – first with a husband and wife supporting each other, then the support and love that exists between parents and children. Second, that community continues with the local parish – brothers and sisters in Christ working together to realize our salvation. But the community does not stop at the borders of the parish, it continues on to the diocese and beyond to the whole Church. Even the saints are part of this community, not only praying for us, but giving us such help as God provides. The angelic host too – especially your guardian angel – is standing with you as you struggle to work out your salvation. Finally God Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, pours out His help and grace upon us continually. You are not alone. Therefore, brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to engage in this radical act, this radical repentance. Remember that when you repent, God forgives and breaks the hold of sin on you. Have no doubt about this, but make a clean break, erasing even the memory of sin and setting your mind and heart firmly on the path of salvation, looking only to the Kingdom of God which is our only true home. Repent – really repent, radically repent – for the Kingdom of God is at hand!

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

2<sup>nd</sup> reading: Luke 21:12-19

### Saints of the Week

**19 August / 1 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Martyr Andrew Stratelates** - He was an officer, a tribune, in the Roman army in the time of the Emperor Maximian. A Syrian by birth, he served in his native land. When the Persians attacked the imperial Roman army, this Andrew was entrusted with the command in the battle against the enemy—whence his title: commander, stratelates. A secret Christian, although as yet unbaptised, Andrew commended himself to the living God, and, taking only the cream of the army, went to war. Before the battle, he told his soldiers that, if they all called upon the aid of the one, true God, Christ the Lord, their enemies would become as dust scattered before them. All the soldiers, fired with enthusiasm by Andrew and his faith, invoked Christ's aid and attacked. The Persian army was utterly routed. When the victorious Andrew returned to Antioch, some jealous men denounced him as a Christian and the imperial governor summoned him for trial. Andrew openly proclaimed his steadfast faith in Christ. After harsh torture, the governor threw Andrew into prison and wrote to the Emperor in Rome. Knowing Andrew's popularity among the people and in the army, the Emperor ordered the governor to set Andrew free, but to seek another occasion and another excuse (not his faith) to kill him. By God's revelation, Andrew came to know of this imperial command, and, taking his faithful soldiers (2,593 in all) with him, went off to Tarsus in Cilicia, where they were all baptised by the bishop, Peter. Persecuted here also by imperial might, Andrew and his companions withdrew deep into the Armenian mountain of Tavros. There in a ravine, while they were at prayer, the Roman army came upon them and beheaded them all. Not one of them would recant, all being determined on death by martyrdom for Christ. On the spot where a stream of the martyrs' blood flowed down, a spring of healing water sprang forth, healing from every disease. The bishop, Peter, came secretly with his people and buried the martyrs' bodies in that same place. They all suffered with honour at the end of the third century and were crowned with wreaths of eternal glory, entering into the Kingdom of Christ our God;

**Our Holy Father Theophanes** - Theophanes was born in Ioannia and, as a young man, left all and went to Mt. Athos where he was tonsured a monk in the community of Dochiariu. He was an example to all the monks in fasting, prayer, all-night vigils and depriving himself of all that was unnecessary. In time, and because of this, he was elected as abbot. Later, because of some misunderstanding with the monks, he left Mt. Athos and, with his nephew, went to Berea [Beroea] in Macedonia where he established a monastery in honor of the All-holy Theotokos. When this monastery blossomed with the spiritual life, Theophanes entrusted his nephew to govern it and he went to Naousa where he established another monastery in honor of the Holy Archangels. Theophanes died peacefully in the fifteenth century. His miracle-working relics, even now, repose in Naousa and manifest the great power of God.; The Holy Martyrs Timothy, Agapius and Thecla.

**20 August / 2 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition – The Holy Prophet Samuel** - The fifteenth and last of the Judges of Israel, he lived eleven hundred years before Christ. He was of the tribe of Levi, born of Elkanah and Hannah in a place called Ramatha or Arimathea, where noble Joseph was later born. The barren Hannah besought Samuel of the Lord with tears, and dedicated him to God when he was three years old. Living in Shiloh near the Ark of the Covenant, Samuel, at the age of twelve, had a true revelation from God of the punishment which would come upon the house of the High Priest, Eli, because of the

worthlessness of his sons Hophni and Phineas. This revelation was swiftly fulfilled: the Philistines routed the Israelites, slew both of Eli's sons and captured the Ark of the Covenant. When the messenger brought these bad tidings to Eli, he fell dead on the ground, breathing his last at the age of ninety-eight, and the same thing happened to his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phineas. Israel was under the Philistine yoke after this for twenty years. When this time had elapsed, God sent Samuel to the people to preach repentance to them as the one means of their salvation from their enemies. The people repented and cast out the foreign idols which they had served, accepting Samuel as prophet, priest and judge. Then Samuel set out with the army against the Philistines and, with God's help, put them to confusion and slew them, freeing the land and the people. After that, Samuel judged the people in peace to old age. Seeing him growing old, the people asked him to give them a king in his place. In vain, Samuel urged the people against this, saying that God was their only king, but the people remained adamant in their desire. Although this desire was not pleasing to God, He commanded Samuel to anoint Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, as king. Saul reigned a short time, and God rejected him for impudence and disobedience, and then commanded Samuel to anoint David the son of Jesse as king in Saul's place. At the time of his death, Samuel gathered all the people together and took leave of them, and when he died all Israel wept for him and buried him solemnly in his house at Ramah.; The Hieromartyr Philip, Bishop of Heraklion;

**St. Oswin, king and martyr (651)** - St. Oswin grew up in the political turmoil of early 7th century Northumbria. In AD 633, his father, Osric, had managed to secure the crown of Deira (modern Yorkshire) after the death of his cousin, King Edwin of Northumbria, at the Battle of Hatfield Chase. Bernicia was taken by his rival, Eanfrith, but, within a year, both men had been massacred by their enemy, the Northern Welsh and Mercians who were sweeping across the Country. The young Oswin fled to safety in Wessex. While Oswin grew into a burly young man, Eanfrith's half-brother, Oswald was accepted by both Bernicia and Deira as King of a united Northumbria and he drove off their south-western invaders. He married the daughter of the King of Wessex in AD 635, but there is no evidence of his making trouble for Oswin. Seven years later, however, Oswald was dead. His brother, Oswiu, became King of Bernicia, but was rejected by the Deirans who recalled Oswin in AD 644. He may have made his peace with the Mercians at this time and used their armies to assert his rights in the north. According to St. Bede, Oswin was "a man of handsome appearance and great stature, pleasant in speech and courteous in manner. He was generous to high and low alike and soon won the affection of all by his kingly qualities of mind and body, so that even men of very high birth came from nearly every province to his service." He was a great friend of St. Aidan and a man of "piety and devotion". Oswin was, however, despised by King Oswiu who greedily coveted the Deiran lands which had once belonged to his brother. In August AD 651, he raised a vast army, which Oswin was obliged to march out to meet, but, finding he was greatly outnumbered, the King of Deira wisely decided to withdraw from the battlefield and avoid unnecessary bloodshed. He took refuge in the house of his friend, Ealdorman Hunwald, at Gilling in North Yorkshire, but was treacherously betrayed by him. Oswiu sent his soldiers to the manor and King Oswin was cut down where he stood. He was the last King of the House of Aelle. Oswiu's wife was Oswin's cousin and she insisted her husband build a monastery at Gilling in expiation for his crime. Oswin was, however, buried at Tynemouth in Northumberland. He was remembered as a Christian martyr because he had died "if not for the faith of Christ, at least for the justice of Christ"; and his shrine became a popular place of pilgrimage.

**Rest of Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) of Platina (1982)** - born Eugene Rose in 1934 in California in an American Protestant family. As a college graduate, his search for philosophical truth led him initially to Buddhism and other eastern religions. A friend encouraged him to visit the old Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Mother of God, "Joy of All Who Sorrow", in San Francisco. Upon entering the Cathedral, during Vespers of Great Friday, he felt that his search was over and that he had "come home." He began attending the Divine Services regularly and was received into the Church. In 1963, with the blessing of Archbishop John (Maximovitch), he and another young man formed the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood as a missionary endeavour towards the conversion of English-speaking people. They opened a bookstore and began publishing a magazine in English, The Orthodox Word. They laboured tirelessly for the glorification of St. Herman, a missionary and wonderworker whose relics lay on American soil. A gifted intellectual with a promising career before him, Father Seraphim (then Eugene) turned his back on this world. He devoted himself full-time to missionary endeavours and the study of the Holy Fathers. Inspired by the ancient desert-dwellers and ascetics, he and his companion left San Francisco to live as monks in the Northern Californian forest. He was tonsured into the Small Schema in 1969, receiving the name Seraphim after his beloved St. Seraphim of Sarov. He built a small hut on the mountainside where he prayed and prepared many articles for publication. He wrote and translated many soul profiting books, articles, and church services, including the service to St. Herman of Alaska (sung at his glorification in 1970) and an akathist to St. John of Shanghai & San Francisco. He laboured greatly to preserve St. John's memory and to publish reports of miracles worked through him. He struggled in the face of modernism to preserve a patristic Orthodox understanding of the life of the soul after death. 'spirituality' outside the Church, and the book of Genesis, among other things. His best known works are Orthodoxy & the Religion of the Future and The Soul after Death. Father Seraphim was ordained hierodeacon in January 1977 and was raised to the rank of hieromonk on the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearers in the same year. As a priest, he ministered not only to the brethren and pilgrims at the monastery, but also to a number of small parishes in Northern California and Oregon. His constant counsel was: "Censure yourself. Never excuse yourself. If you must, or think you must give way to a weakness, then be certain that you recognise it as a weakness and a sin. But see your own faults and condemn not your brother!" During the latter portion of his life, Father Seraphim continually emphasised the need for spiritual attentiveness in preparation for struggles to come. He said often: "It is later than you think. Hasten therefore to do the work of God!" Father Seraphim reposed in the Lord in 1982 after an acute illness. He was an inspiration to many and accomplished much for the glory of God and the spread of the true Orthodox Christianity amongst English-speaking people. Forty days after his repose, Bishop Nektary (Kontzevich) of Seattle stated that he was 'a righteous man, possibly a saint'. May God grant him rest with His saints where the light of His countenance shall visit him. An may his memory be eternal!

**St. Edbert + 768** - The successor of St Ceolwulf on the throne of Northumbria in England. After a prosperous reign of twenty years he resigned and went to the monastery of York, where he spent a further ten years in prayer and seclusion

**21 August / 3 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Apostle Thaddeus** - One of the Seventy, he was not that Thaddeus who was one of the Twelve. St Thaddeus first saw and heard John the Baptist, and then saw the Lord Jesus and followed Him. The Lord included him among His seventy, lesser apostles, whom He sent two and two before His face (Luke 10:1). After His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, the Lord sent Thaddeus to Edessa, Thaddeus's birthplace, in fulfilment of His promise to Avgar, which He made when He sent him the napkin with the imprint of His face. By kissing this napkin, Avgar was healed of his leprosy, though not entirely; a little of the leprosy remained on his face. When St Thaddeus visited Avgar, the latter received him with great joy. Christ's Apostle instructed him in the true Faith and then baptised him. When the baptised Avgar came up out of the water, the remaining leprosy fell from him and he was completely healed. Glorifying God, Prince Avgar desired that his people should come to the knowledge of the true God and glorify Him. The prince called together all the citizens of Edessa before the holy Apostle Thaddeus, to hear him preach about Christ. Hearing the Apostle's words and seeing their miraculously-healed prince, the people cast away their idols and their unclean living, embraced the Christian faith and were baptised, and the city of Edessa became resplendent with the Christian faith. Prince Avgar brought much gold and offered it to the Apostle, but Thaddeus said to him: 'Having abandoned my own, do I accept another's?' St Thaddeus preached the Gospel throughout Syria and Phoenicia, and entered into rest in the Lord in the Phoenician city of Beirut.; The Holy Martyr Bassa and her children: Theognius, Agapius and Pistus; Our Holy Father Abraham of Smolensk; Our Holy Forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**22 August / 4 September - Fast Day - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Martyrs Agathonicus, Zoticus and others** - St Agathonicus was a citizen of Nicomedia and a Christian. He turned the Greeks from idolatry with great fervour, and instructed them in the true Faith. The imperial governor, on orders from the Emperor Maximian, was persecuting Christians with great harshness. In this persecution, he seized St Zoticus in a place called Carpe, crucified his disciples and took him off to Nicomedia, where he also seized and bound Agathonicus, Princes, Theoprepus, Acyndinus, Severian, Zeno and many others. They were taken, securely bound, to Byzantium. On the way, Zoticus, Theoprepus and Acyndinus died from exhaustion and of their wounds. Severian was killed near Chalcedon and Agathonicus and the others were taken to Thrace, to a place called Silybria, where, after torture before the Emperor himself, they were beheaded with the sword and entered into eternal life and the joy of their Lord. The Holy Martyr Eulalia; The Holy Martyr Anthusa;

**St. Sigfrid, abbot of Wearmouth (688)** - Nothing is known about the early life of Saint Sigfrid, a disciple of Saint Benedict Biscop. He was known for his knowledge of Scripture, his temperance, and obedience. During Benedict's absence on his fifth visit to Rome, Saint Esterwine died. Saint Ceolfrid and the other monks elected the deacon-monk Sigfrid to take Esterwine's place as coadjutor abbot of Jarrow and abbot of Wearmouth in 686. Both saints fell deathly ill upon Benedict's return to Jarrow. Knowing that their earthly lives were about to end and wanting a final meeting to inquire about the welfare of each other and their monks, Sigfrid, suffering from a lung disease, was carried on a stretcher to Benedict's cell. They were both too weak to even embrace one another unaided. After consulting Sigfrid, Benedict sent for Ceolfrid and appointed him abbot over both monasteries. Benedict and Sigfrid, of one heart in life, died the same year. Sigfrid was buried by Saint Ceolfrid in the abbey-church of Saint Peter next to his master, Saint Benedict, and his predecessor, Saint Esterwine;

**St. Symphorian (c.2nd-3rd c.)** - he lived in Gaul in the Roman city of Autun, where the pagan goddess Cybele was particularly revered. On her feast day the image of this goddess was wheeled through the streets of Autun on a chariot, while the mob bowed and worshipped. Taking part in the ceremonies was the provincial governor, Heraclius. Heraclius commanded Symphorian to worship Cybele as the mother of all the gods. Declaring that he worshipped the one true God, Symphorianus asked for a hammer to smash the pagan idol. Learning that Symphorian came from a noble family, the governor decided to give him another chance. When the saint persisted in his faith, he was flogged. The governor then tried to bribe him, offering him an army commission if he would recant. But all this was in vain, and he eventually condemned the saint to be killed by the sword. Soldiers led him to the place of execution outside the city wall. As they went he saw his mother standing on the walls. She shouted to her son, 'Do not be afraid, Symphorian. Your death will lead straight to eternal life.' Then swordsman cut off his head and he was buried in a tomb. 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!

**23 August / 5 September - Apodosis of the Dormition - The Holy Martyr Lupus** - this holy man was a servant of St Dimitrios of Salonica. When St Dimitrios was beheaded by the Emperor Maximian, Lupus dipped the hem of his garment and his ring in the martyr's blood. Lupus worked many miracles in Salonica with this garment and ring, healing people of every pain and infirmity. The Emperor Maximian, who was still staying in Salonica, discovered this, and commanded that Lupus be tortured and killed. But the soldiers who drew their weapons on Lupus turned one on the other and wounded one another. As Lupus was not yet baptised, although he was a Christian, he prayed to God that He would somehow bring about his baptism before his death. On this, water suddenly poured down on the holy martyr from a cloud, and he thus received baptism. After harsh torture, he was beheaded and entered into the heavenly Kingdom; The Hieromartyr Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons; The Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons - He was in his youth a pupil of St Polycarp, the disciple of the apostles, who sent him to preach in Gaul. After St Pothinus's death by martyrdom, Irenaeus was made bishop. In his numerous writings, Irenaeus both expounded the Orthodox faith and defended it against heretics. He suffered for Christ in the time of the Emperor Severus, in 202, along with nineteen thousand Christians; St Victor;

**Holy Martyr Ebba the Younger, abbess of Coldingham, sister of King Oswy and her companions (870)** - Abbess at Coldingham, Berwickshire, Scotland, a double monastery that had been founded by Saint Ebbe the Elder, and which was the largest in the country at the time. When the monastery was attacked by Scandinavian pirates, Ebbe gathered her nuns and exhorted them to save themselves from falling into the hands of the pirates by voluntary disfiguring themselves. She then set

an example by cutting off her own nose and upper lip; the other nuns did the same. When the Vikings broke into the convent, they were so horrified and angry by what the women had done to escape being raped, they locked them all in, set fire to the house, and burned them all to death.

**24 August / 6 September - Fast Day - The Hieromartyr Eutyches** - one of the lesser apostles, born in Sebastopol, he was a disciple and friend of the Apostles John the Theologian and Paul. Although he was not included in the Seventy, he was called an apostle by virtue of having been a disciple of the great apostles, and because he showed true apostolic zeal in the service of the Gospel. Consecrated as a missionary bishop, St Eutyches travelled widely, having an angel as a companion, and he also received heavenly bread from an angel while in prison. When his body was flayed with serrated iron rods, his blood ran down mingled with a sweet myrrh. He was thrown into the flames and before wild beasts, and was finally beheaded with the sword in Sebastopol; The Holy Martyr Tation; The Holy Martyr Syra; Our Holy Father Arsenius of Komel; St George Limniotes.

**25 August / 7 September - The Holy Apostle Titus** - One of the Seventy, he was born in Crete and educated in Greek philosophy and poetry. Led by a dream, he read the Prophet Isaiah and came to doubt all Hellenic learning. Hearing of Christ the Lord, he went to Jerusalem with some other Cretans, and himself heard the words of the Saviour and saw His mighty works. His youthful heart clave utterly to Christ. He was later baptised by the Apostle Paul, whom he served in the works of the Gospel as a son serves his father. Paul loved Titus so greatly that he sometimes called him his son (Titus 1:4), and sometimes his brother (II Cor. 12:18). Titus travelled widely with the great Apostle of the people, and was by him made Bishop of Crete. At the time of Paul's suffering in Rome, Titus was there, and buried the body of his teacher and spiritual father. He then returned to Crete, where he had great success in baptising the pagans, and wisely governed the Church to great old age. He entered into rest at the age of ninety-four; .The Holy Apostle Bartholomew - Today is the commemoration of the translation of St. Bartholomew's relics, while his main feast falls on June 11th. When this great Apostle was crucified in Ourbanopolis in Armenia, Christians took his body and buried it in a leaden coffin. When numerous miracles had been wrought over the Apostle's grave, especially healings of the sick—which led to an increase in the number of Christians—the pagans took the coffin containing Bartholomew's relics and cast it into the sea. At the same time, they threw in four other coffins with the relics of four martyrs: Papias, Lucian, Gregory and Acacius. By God's providence, the coffins did not sink, but floated, carried by the waves, to various places: Acacius's to the city of Askalon, Gregory's to Calabria, Lucian's to Messina, Papias's to another place in Sicily and Bartholomew's to the island of Lipara. By some mysterious revelation, the Bishop of Lipara, Agathon, learned of the approach to Lipara of the relics of St Bartholomew. Agathon, with his clergy and people, went out to the shore and awaited the coffin with great joy. On that occasion, many of the sick were healed by the holy Apostle's relics. They were placed in the church of St Bartholomew and lay there until the time of Theophilus the Iconoclast (about 839), then, when the Moslems threatened the Liparites, the Apostle's relics were taken to the town of Benevento. Thus God glorified His apostle by miracles, both during his lifetime and after his death; the Holy Confessors of Edessa; St. Menas, Patriarch of Constantinople; at York the translation of the relics of St. Hilda of Whitby (680).

## REFLECTION

When an unexpected misfortune happens to us who are innocent, we should not immediately grieve but rather we should try to see in this the Providence of God, Who, through that misfortune, is preparing something new and beneficial for us. One day, unexpected news came to Blessed Theophanes, the abbot of Dochiariu, that the Turks had seized his sister's son, forced him to embrace Islam and took him to Constantinople. Theophanes immediately traveled to Constantinople and, with the help of God, succeeded to find his nephew and to secretly bring him out of Constantinople and brought him to his monastery on Mt. Athos. There, he again, received his nephew into the Christian Faith and, after that, also tonsured him a monk. However, the brethren began to complain against their abbot and his nephew for fear of the Turks, for they were afraid that the Turks would find out and come and destroy the monastery. Not knowing what to do, St. Theophanes took his nephew and, with him, secretly withdrew not only from Dochiariu but also from the Holy Mountain and came to Berea. The later activities of Theophanes in Berea and in Naousa proved how much that misfortune was beneficial to the Church. That which Theophanes could never succeed to achieve on the Holy Mountain, he achieved in these other places to which he had fled from that misfortune. Namely: he founded two new monasteries, where, in time, many monks were saved and where countless men found comfort for themselves. In addition to this, his holy relics among the Christian people became a source of healing for the strengthening of faith among many unbelievers and those of little faith. Thus, God wisely directs the destiny of men through unexpected misfortunes, which momentarily seem to men that they are going to their final destruction.