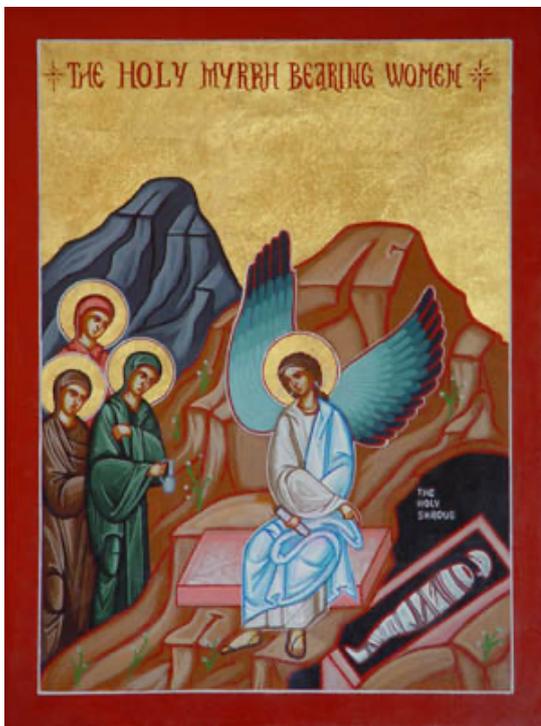


# Sunday of the Myrrbearing Women, St Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus

## Third Sunday of Pascha

3 / 16 May



**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 of the Sunday Of The Myrrh-bearing Women, Tone 2:** The noble Joseph took Thine immaculate Body down from the Tree, / having wrapped It in pure linen and spices, laid in a new tomb. / But on the third day Thou didst rise, O Lord, // granting to the world great mercy.

**Kondak of the Sunday Of The Myrrh-bearing Women, Tone 2:** When Thou didst cry, Rejoice, unto the myrrh-bearers, / Thou didst make the lamentation of Eve the first mother to cease / by Thy Resurrection, O Christ God. / And Thou didst bid Thine apostles to preach: // The Saviour is risen from the grave.

**Kondak of Pascha, Tone 8:** Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades, and didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

### Matins Gospel III

**Epistle: St. Acts of the Apostles 6: 1-7**

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

### THE FIRST SEVEN DEACONS

He performs the office of a deacon, who anoints the mind for holy endeavours and drives out passionate thoughts; he performs the office of a priest, who enlightens the mind by knowledge of what is, and destroys false knowledge; he performs the office of a bishop, who completes the mind's perfection by the sacred unction of knowledge of the worshipful Holy Trinity.

*St. Maximos the Confessor. Second Century on Love. Text 21. B#9. p. 302.*

### The Gospel According To St. Mark 15: 43 - 16: 8

Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marvelled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph observed where He was laid. Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away--for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples--and Peter--that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

## THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN

Today the Holy Orthodox Church, as you know, glorifies the Holy Myrrh-Bearing Women, for which reason this Sunday is called the “Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.”

Yesterday we already spoke of how the Myrrh-Bearing Women were, in essence, the first heralds of Christ’s Resurrection and, in a certain sense, as one Russian holy hierarch put it, the Apostles to the Apostles themselves.

Here is something characteristic: reading the Gospel, our attention cannot but be drawn to the following circumstance. When the Apostles themselves see the risen Teacher, they are not immediately seized by full faith; and when others tell them that their Teacher is risen, they cannot believe this as they should. The Holy Evangelist Mark even mentions that once, when the Lord appeared to them, He began to upbraid them – that is, directly to rebuke them for their unbelief and their hard-heartedness, for having heard of His Resurrection but not being capable of believing those who spoke to them about the Resurrection.

But if the Apostles were not able to believe in the miracle of the Resurrection, the Myrrh-Bearers did immediately recognize the One Who appeared to them. They were excited and ran enthusiastically, but at the same time fearfully, from the Lord’s Grave; initially they were afraid of telling this to anyone, given how unusual and strange was that which they had heard from the Angel. But as they were fleeing, He Whom they had wished to anoint with sweet-smelling myrrh appeared to them. He appeared and said only one word to them: “Rejoice!” The faithful Myrrh-Bearers immediately recognized that it was the Savior appearing to them, and they worshipped Him joyfully.

Why such joy? The Most Blessed Metropolitan Anthony pointed out how much fidelity to truth and infidelity to it mean to a man. Fidelity that is constant and firm in all things is the opposite of the cowardice of infidelity. Such was the case here, Vladyka Anthony said. The Apostles, rather than following their Teacher when He (to speak in modern terms) was arrested, fled in various directions. When the Lord went to raise Lazarus, the Apostle Thomas said: Let us go that we might die with Him (John 11:16). This did not meet with a single objection from the Apostles. This means that they were in agreement with the Apostle Thomas. Yet in the garden of Gethsemane it came out that they were frightened, and they fled. Only the apostle of love, the Apostle John, stood up to this fear and was inseparable from the Teacher even to Golgotha, where he stood with the Savior’s All-Holy Mother.

Yet the Apostles fled – and this is that infidelity and faint-heartedness, which cast a shadow over their eyes, that was noted by Vladyka Anthony. But the faithful Myrrh-Bearers went with Him to Golgotha and stood at the very Cross grieving and, at the same time, trying somehow to relieve by their love and compassion the terrible and superhuman grief of the All-Blessed Virgin Mary.

They did not abandon Him. We know from the Gospel how He was buried, and the Myrrh-Bearing Women saw where He was laid. The Apostles were not there... they had fled. The Myrrh-Bearing Women, however, remained faithful to Him to the very end and therefore, as Vladyka Anthony says, their conscience and inner spiritual intuition remained bright and clean. Therefore they immediately recognized the One Who appeared to them, worshipping Him without any hesitation as their beloved Teacher and the Conqueror of death.

Imagine only what the holy Myrrh-Bearer Mary Magdalene underwent as she wept inconsolably at the tomb of Him Who had once freed her from unclean hostile spirits, having cast out seven demons from her. After this was accomplished she became a constant follower of her beloved Teacher. Here she is weeping inconsolably at His tomb, and suddenly she hears from Someone that very same voice saying “Mary” – that dear and unforgettable voice, which had once cast out seven demons from her. If Mary’s heart did not burst from delight and joy, this was only because it was the Source of Life, Christ Himself, Who spoke with her. What a transition, from inconsolable grief to rapturous joy!

Therefore let us remember what fidelity and devotion mean, and what a clean conscience means. The holy women did everything in order to show attention to their Teacher. Fearing no dangers they go to Golgotha, they accompany Him, they stand at the Cross on Golgotha, they watch, looking reverently upon how their Teacher is buried – and for this they have the joy of seeing Him in glory, risen from the dead, before the Apostles.

Remember how important it is to be faithful to God. Fidelity and devotion to Him enlighten the human conscience and illumine the human mind. Conversely, when one person after another commits acts of infidelity and treason to the Lord and to truth, his soul becomes hardened, his conscience is coarsened and darkened, and it becomes difficult for him to recognize truth, difficult to venerate it.

Everyone should remember this, and always pray that the Lord would teach us to be faithful to Him always and in everything, just as the Holy and Glorious Myrrh-Bearing Women were faithful to Him. Their fidelity brought them through to the end, and they received the unspeakable joy of seeing their Teacher risen and of immediately worshipping Him. The example of their fidelity and love should be an edifying example for every Christian soul; an example, when followed, that will demonstrate one’s fidelity to the Lord to the end and grant the joy of beholding Him.

Amen.

*METROPOLITAN PHILARET OF EASTERN AMERICAN AND NEW YORK (+1985)*

## Saints of the Week

**3 / 16 May — The Holy Martyrs Timothy the Reader and his wife Maura of Antinoe in Egypt** - Strange was the destiny of these wonderful martyrs, husband and newly-wedded wife. Twenty days after their wedding, they were taken for trial for their Christian faith before Arrianus, governor of the Thebaid, in the time of the Emperor Diocletian. Timothy was a reader in the church where he lived. 'Who are you?', the governor asked him. Timothy replied: 'I am a Christian and a reader in the Church of God.' The governor said to him further: 'You see, don't you, the instruments prepared for torture?' Timothy replied: 'But you don't see the angels of God, which are strengthening me.' Then the governor commanded that he be pierced through the ears with iron rods, so that the pupils of his eyes leapt out with the pain. They then suddenly hanged him by the feet and stuffed his mouth with wood. Maura was at first afraid of torture but, when her husband gave her courage, she also confessed her steadfast faith before the governor. He commanded that, first, her hair be torn out, then all her fingers cut off. After many other tortures, to which they would quickly have succumbed had they not been strengthened by the grace of God, they were both crucified, one in sight of the other. And thus, hanging on their crosses, they remained alive for nine full days, counselling each other and encouraging each other in endurance. On the tenth day they gave their spirits into God's hands, the God for whom they had suffered crucifixion, and thus became worthy of His Kingdom. They suffered with honour for Christ in 286. 'Maura' means 'black', from which it comes that in Macedonia the day of these saints is known as 'Black Day'. On the island of Zakynthos there is a church of Saints Timothy and Maura, in which many miraculous healings have taken place; Our Holy Father Theodosius of the Kiev Caves.

**4 / 17 May — The Holy Martyr Pelagia of Tarsus** - born in the town of Tarsus of pagan but noble and wealthy parents, she heard about Christ and the salvation of the soul from Christians, became inflamed with love for the Saviour and was a Christian in her soul. There was at that time a terrible persecution of Christians. It happened that the Emperor Diocletian himself stopped in Tarsus and that, during the time of his stay in the town, his son, the heir, fell deeply in love with Pelagia and wanted to make her his wife. Pelagia replied through her mother—a wicked woman—that she was already promised to her betrothed husband, Christ the Lord. Fleeing from the foul heir and her wicked mother, Pelagia sought and found Bishop Linus, a man renowned for his holiness. He instructed her in the Faith and baptised her. Then Pelagia gave away her luxurious clothing and great wealth, returned home and confessed to her mother that she was already baptised. Hearing of this, the Emperor's son, losing all hope of getting this holy maiden as his wife, ran himself through with a sword and died. Then the wicked mother denounced her daughter to the Emperor and she was taken for trial. The Emperor marvelled at the girl's beauty and, forgetting his son, burned with an impure passion for her. But when Pelagia remained unfaltering in her faith, the Emperor condemned her to be burned in a metal ox heated by fire. When they stripped the martyr, she signed herself with the sign of the Cross and, with prayers of thanksgiving to God on her lips, went into the ox, where, in the twinkling of an eye, she melted like wax. She suffered with honour in 287. Bishop Linus hunted for the remains of her bones and buried them on a hill under a stone. In the time of the Emperor Constantine Copronymos (741-775), a beautiful church was built on that site in honour of this holy virgin and martyr Pelagia, who was sacrificed for Christ to reign eternally with Him; The Hieromartyr Silvanus, Bishop of Gaza; Our Holy Father Nicephorus the Hesychast;

**St. Ethelred, king of Mercia and monk in England (716)** - abdicated to become a monk at Bardney, where he was later elected abbot (Benedictines). Saint Ethelred is depicted as a Benedictine abbot with royal regalia at his feet. He is venerated at Leominster.

**5 / 18 May — The Holy and Great Martyr Irene** - She lived in the Balkans in apostolic times, in the town of Magedon where her father Licinius was governor of a small region. Some think that she was a Slav. She was born a pagan of pagan parents. Penelope—for that was her pagan name—learned the Christian faith from her teacher, Appelianus. St Timothy, the disciple of the Apostle Paul, baptised her and her lady-in-waiting, and brought her a letter from the Apostle Paul to read. She infuriated her father by her refusal to marry, and he intended to torture her, but she brought him to Christianity in a miraculous way. She was tortured in different ways by four kings, other than her father, but God saved her through His angels. King Sedechias buried her up to the neck in a pit full of snakes and scorpions, but an angel of God neutralised the poison of the reptiles and preserved the holy maiden untouched. Then the same king attempted to saw her in two, but the sword broke against her body as against stone. This same king once again bound her to the wheel of a water-mill, then let the water in to drown her, but the water would not flow, but stood still, and the maiden remained whole and alive. King Sapor, Sedechias's son, shod her with nails, loaded a sack of sand onto her, put a bridle on her and commanded that she be led like an animal far outside the city. 'Truly I am as a beast before Thee, O Lord!', said the holy martyr as she ran bridled behind her torturers. But an angel of God caused an earthquake, and the earth opened and swallowed up her tormentors. Surviving all these tortures, by which an enormous number of pagans were brought to Christianity, Irene went to the city of Kallinikos, where she preached the Christian faith. The local king, Numerian, tried to kill her, throwing her into three burning metal oxen one after the other. But the maiden was preserved and remained alive, and many saw and believed. The Eparch, Vaudon, took her to the city of Constantina, where he thought to kill her by putting her onto a burning grid. But this did not harm St Irene, and many were brought to the true Faith. Finally, Irene came to the city of Mesemhria, where the king killed her but God restored her to life. And the king, seeing this, together with many of the people, believed in Christ and was baptised. And thus St Irene, by her sufferings and miracles, brought over 100,000 pagans to faith in Christ. At last she laid herself in a grave and commanded Appelianus to close it. After four days, when the grave was opened, her body was not in it. Thus God glorified forever the maiden and martyr Irene, who had sacrificed all and endured all, that God should be the more greatly glorified among men; Ss Martin and Heraclius.

**6 / 19 May — Fast Day - Holy, Righteous and Longsuffering Job** - a descendant of Esau, the grandson of Abraham, and lived in Arabia about 2,000 years before Christ. His father's name was Zareth and his mother's Bosora; his full name was Jobab. He was an honourable and God-fearing man, and was very rich. But when he reached the age of seventy-nine, God permitted heavy temptation from Satan to fall on him, as is written in detail in the Book of Job. In one day, Job lost all his great possessions and his sons and daughters. Then a great sickness fell on him, from which his whole body was covered with sores from top to toe, and Job lay on a rubbish heap outside the town and scoured his boils with sherds of broken pottery. But Job did not complain of God, but patiently endured all his sufferings to the end. Therefore the Lord restored his health and gave him riches greater than he had had before, and there were born to him seven sons and three daughters; as many as he had had before. And Job lived for 248 years, glorifying and praising God. Job is regarded as the model of patient endurance of every suffering that God sends us, and is a type of the suffering Christ;

**The Holy Martyr Barbarus** - a soldier during the reign of Julian the Apostate. When the emperor's commander Bacchus led the Roman army against the Franks, Barbarus, who was secretly a Christian, was serving in the army. In battle there appeared a certain hero on the side of the Franks, similar to Goliath of old and he challenged the Romans to send one of their men to come out to do battle. Commander Bacchus advised Barbarus to go. Barbarus prayed in his heart to the Living Lord, went out and defeated that giant. As a result, the Frankish army became confused and fled. Then the commander prepared a great celebration and ordered that sacrifices be offered to the idols. During the sacrificial offerings, the commander learned that Barbarus kept himself apart. When he was asked about that, Barbarus declared that he is a Christian. The commander informed the emperor and the emperor ordered that Barbarus be subjected to the most severe tortures. But Barbarus endured all with rare courage and composure. During his tortures, many miracles were manifested and many soldiers, witnessing this, accepted the Faith of Christ. Among them was the Commander Bacchus along with Callimachus and Dionysius. All three were beheaded for the Name of Christ and, after them, Barbarus was also beheaded in the year 362 A.D. Their souls took up habitation in the kingdom of Christ the Immortal King; St Barbarus the Robber; Martyrdom of Father John (Karastamatis) of Santa Cruz (1985); St. Edbert, bishop of Lindisfarne (698).

**7 / 20 May — Commemoration of the Appearing of the Precious Cross over Jerusalem** - In the time of the Emperor Constantius, St Constantine's son, and Patriarch Cyril of Jerusalem, the Precious Cross appeared one day at nine o'clock in the morning above Golgotha, and spread as far as the Mount of Olives. This Cross was brighter than the sun and more beautiful than the loveliest rainbow. The whole people—believers and unbelievers—left their work and watched this heavenly sign in fear and wonder. Many unbelievers were converted to faith in Christ, and also many Arians abandoned their wicked heresy and returned to Orthodoxy. Patriarch Cyril wrote a letter to the Emperor Constantius about this sign, the Emperor himself being inclined towards Arianism. This took place on May 7th, 357. Thus was it demonstrated by this means that the Christian faith does not lie in the worldly theorising of the sensual understanding of men, but in the power of God, shown forth through wonders and signs without number; The Holy Martyr Acacius; Our Holy Fathers of Georgia;

**St. John of Beverley, bishop of York (721)** - Born in Harpham (Humberside), Yorkshire, England; died at Beverley, England, May 7, 721; canonized in 1037; feast of translation, October 25. Saint John trained for the priesthood and monastic life in Kent under the direction of SS. Adrian and Theodore, but returned to Yorkshire upon completing his studies to become a monk at Whitby Abbey, which was then under the rule of Saint Hilda. John founded a monastery in Humberside, England, on the site of a small church dedicated to Saint John the Evangelist, where he asked to be buried. In 687, after the death of Saint Eata, John he was consecrated bishop of Hexham. He is said to have shown special care for the poor and the handicapped. Whatever time he could spare from his episcopal duties he spent in contemplation. At regular seasons, especially during Lent, he retired to pray in a cell by the church of Saint Michael beyond the Tyne, near Hexham. He would take with him some poor person, whom he would serve during his retirement. He was transferred York as archbishop upon the death of Saint Bosa in 705, and Saint Wilfrid succeeded him at Hexham as part of the final settlement of the latter's long dispute with the Northumbrian kings. He continued his practice of periodic retirement for spiritual refreshment. His chosen retreat was an abbey that he had built at Beverley, then a forest. Not until old age had worn him out did he resign his office to Saint Wilfrid the Younger in order to spend the last four years of his life in the peace of his beloved abbey at Beverley.

**8 / 21 May — Fast Day - The Holy Apostle and Evangelist John** - The main commemoration of this great Apostle and Evangelist is on September 26th, but on May 8th is commemorated a wonderful revelation about his grave. When St John was more than a hundred years old, he took seven of his disciples, went outside the city of Ephesus and told the disciples to dig a grave in the form of a cross. Then the old man went down alive into the grave and was buried. When the faithful later opened John's grave, they did not find the body in it. And on May 8th each year a dust arose from the grave, from which those suffering from many diseases were healed;

**Our Holy Father Arsenius the Great** - This glorious saint was born of a patrician family in Rome and was well educated in the secular sciences and philosophy as well as in spiritual wisdom. Abandoning all the vanity of the world, he dedicated himself to the service of the Church and was a deacon of the great church in Rome. Unmarried, withdrawn, quiet and devout, Arsenius thought to live that way his entire life. But the Providence of God directed his path in life otherwise. Emperor Theodosius took him as a tutor and teacher of his sons Arcadius and Honorius, and installed him as a senator surrounding him with great wealth, honours and luxury. But all of this burdened Arsenius' heart rather than pleasing him. It happened that Arcadius committed a wrong and for that Arsenius punished him. The offended Arcadius conceived a terrible revenge against his teacher and when Arsenius found out he changed into the clothes of a beggar, left for the seashore, boarded a boat and sailed to Egypt. When he arrived at the renowned Scete, he became a disciple of the glorious John Colobus [The Short] and dedicated himself to a life of asceticism. He considered himself dead and when someone informed him that a wealthy relative died and willed his entire estate to him, Arsenius replied: "But I died before him, how is it therefore that I could be his heir?" Withdrawn in a hermit's cell as in a tomb, throughout the entire day, he wove baskets of palm leaves, and at night, he prayed to God. He avoided men and all conversations with them. Only on feast days did he leave his cell and attend church to receive

Holy Communion. In order not to become lazy, he often asked himself the question: "Arsenius, why did you come to the wilderness?" He remained in the wilderness for fifty-five years as a "desert dweller" and for that entire time was a model to the monks and a glory to monastics in general. In all, Arsenius lived one hundred years and died peacefully in the year 448 A.D. after prolonged labour and voluntarily imposing hardships upon himself and took up habitation in the kingdom of Christ the Lord, Whom he loved with all his heart, all his mind and all his soul;

**St Emilia** - the mother of Saint Basil the Great. In her youth she desired to remain a virgin for life but was forced into marriage. Emilia gave birth to nine children and so inspired them with the Spirit of Christ that five of them became Christian saints: Basil the Great, Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, Macrina and Theosevia. In her old age Emilia established a convent where she lived with Macrina her daughter and where she died in the Lord on May 8, 375 A.D.; Our Holy Father Arsenius the Lover of Labour; St. Wiro, monk-missionary of the Netherlands (c.753).

**9 / 22 May — St Nicolas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia** - on this day is commemorated the translation of his relics. In the time of the Emperor Alexius I Comnenus and Patriarch Nicolas Grammaticus, in 1087, the body of this saint was taken from Myra in Lycia to the town of Bari in Italy. This came to pass because of a Moslem attack on Lycia. The saint appeared to a priest in Bari and commanded that his relics be taken there. At that time, the town of Bari was Orthodox and under the administration of an Orthodox patriarch. At the translation of the saint's relics, many miracles were wrought on those who touched them, and a healing myrrh flowed in abundance from them. Also on this day is commemorated the miracle worked by St Nicolas on Stefan of Decani, King of Serbia. This was when the saint restored the sight of the blind King Stefan.

**The Holy Prophet Isaiah** - This great prophet was of royal birth. He was born in Jerusalem of Amoz the brother of Amaziah, King of the Jews. By the great grace of God that was within him, Isaiah was made worthy to see the Lord of Sabaoth on His heavenly throne, surrounded by six-winged seraphim which cried unceasingly: 'Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth' (Is. 6). Isaiah prophesied many things, both to individuals and to nations. Once he walked for three days naked through the streets of Jerusalem, prophesying the imminent fall of the city to the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, and warning the King and the leaders of the people not to seek help from Egypt and Ethiopia, because they too would shortly be over-run by the same Sennacherib, but to seek the aid of the all-seeing God. And this prophecy, like all the rest, was literally fulfilled (37:31-35). But his most important prophecies were on the incarnation of God, on the conception of the most pure Mother of God, on John the Baptist and on many events in the life of Christ. This seer, because of his pure heart and zeal for God, also received the gift of working miracles. Thus, when the besieged city of Jerusalem was suffering from thirst, he prayed to God and water flowed out from beneath the hill of Sion. This water was named Siloam (Sent), and it was to that water that, later, the Lord sent the man born blind, to wash himself and receive his sight (Is. 8:6; Jn 9:7). In the time of King Manasseh, when Isaiah thundered against the pagan practices of the king and the leaders of the people, comparing that generation with Sodom and Gomorrah, the anger of the leaders and the people was lifted up against this great prophet, and he was seized, taken out of Jerusalem and sawn in half. He lived and prophesied seven hundred years before Christ;

**The Holy Martyr Christopher** - Third century martyr in the persecutions of Decius. His fame derives from the pious legend of him being a "Christ-bearer" (= Christopher). He was a powerfully built man who wandered the world in search of novelty and adventure. He came upon a hermit who lived beside a dangerous stream and served others by guiding them to safe places to cross. He gave Offero instruction in the truth of God. Offero took the hermit's place, but instead of guiding travellers, he carried them safely across the stream. One day he carried a small child across the stream; the child's weight nearly crushed him. When they arrived on the other side, the child revealed himself as Christ, and he was so heavy because he bore the weight of the world on himself. He then baptised Offero with water from the stream. Christopher's service at the stream led to his patronage of things related to travel and travellers, people who carry things.