

Sunday of the Paralytic

Fourth Sunday of Pascha

10 / 23 May

Resurrection Tone 3: Let the heavens be glad; let earthly things rejoice; * for the Lord hath wrought might with His arm. * He hath trampled down death by death; * the first-born of the dead hath He become. * From the belly of Hades hath He delivered us * and Hath granted to 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 of the Sunday of the Paralytic, Tone 3: As of old Thou didst raise the paralytic, O Lord, by Thy Divine presence, raise my soul which is paralysed grievously by all manner of sins and unseemly deeds, that being saved I may cry out: O compassionate Christ, glory be to Thy power.

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 IV

Epistle: The Acts of the Apostles 9: 32 - 42

Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralysed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

PETER RAISES TABITHA FROM DEATH

He sends them all out, imitating his master in this also (Ref. Mk.5:40). For where tears are - or rather, where miracles are, there tears have no place. Certainly not in the celebration of such a mystery. Listen, I beseech you: although something of a similar kind is not happening now, yet in the case of our dead, a great mystery is celebrating likewise ...Angels are present, commissioned from heaven ...sent from the King Himself to call their fellow servant, and I ask you, Do you weep? Do you not know what a mystery it is that is taking place, how awful, how dread, and worthy indeed of hymns and lauds? ...For it is a very great mystery of the Wisdom of God. As if leaving the dwelling, the soul goes forth, speeding on her way to her own Lord, and do you mourn? Why then you should do this on the birth of a child: for this in fact is also a birth, and better than that... For as the sun arises, clear and bright, so the soul leaving the body with a clear conscience, shines joyously ...Think what the soul must then be! in what amazement, what wonder, what delight!

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXI on Acts IX. B#55, pp. 138, 139.

Gospel: John 5: 1-15

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralysed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'" Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'" But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

JESUS HEALS THE PARALYTIC BY THE POOL

Great is the profit of divine Scriptures, and all sufficient is the aid which comes from them ...for the divine oracles are a treasury of all manner of medicines. Whether it be needful to quench pride, to lull passion to sleep, to tread under foot the love of money, to despise pain, to inspire confidence, to gain patience - in the Scriptures we may find abundant resource. For what man of those who struggle with long poverty or who are nailed by a grievous disease will not, when he reads the passage before us, receive much comfort? Since this man had been a paralytic for thirty eight years, and he saw others delivered each year, and himself bound by his disease, not even so did he fall back and despair, though in truth not merely despondency for the past, but also hopelessness for the future was sufficient to overstrain him ...Yes, Lord, he says, but I have no man ...to put me in the pool. What can be more pitiable than these words? ...Do you see a heart crushed through long sickness? Do you see all violence subdued? ...He did not curse his day ...but replied gently ...Yes, Lord; yet he did not know who it was who asked him.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXXVII on John V, 1. B#58, p. 128.

Christ is Risen!

Today's Gospel reading confirms us more and more strongly in the divinity of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The Gospels for the last two Sundays told us about the appearances of the Risen One. They were as if filled with the light of Christ's Resurrection: the wonderful appearances to the disciples, to Thomas, to the myrrh-bearers. But today's Gospel starts with a dismal, horrible picture: there is no brightness, no light. At the Sheep Gate there was a pool which had five porches. "In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered.... For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years" (Jn. 5:2-5). Just picture this: thirty-eight years in such a terrible condition, in pain and suffering, without a doctor, without care, without medicine, and maybe even often without food. And this unfortunate man bore all this because he wanted to be well. He tried to enter the water after it was troubled, but he had no one to help him, was late, and did not receive healing. And so passed thirty-eight years. Why this is a human lifetime!

Suddenly everything changed. Jesus came up to him and said: "Rise, take up thy bed and walk. . ." and he walked (Jn. 5:8,9).

What happened? What took place? What happened is that the reason for his sickness was removed. Christ revealed this reason when He met this man in the temple and said to him: "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (Jn. 5:14). Here is the reason—sin. Sin is the reason for all evil, for all our sufferings, for all our sicknesses. Yes, sin. . .sin alone. And Christ is the only one who can destroy it, who can forgive. But this is under one condition: "Sin no more."

We have lived through the Passion days, we have lived through the very death of Christ, the death of the Lamb of God, Who takes upon Himself the sin of the world. This means our sin, too. He, the Only Sinless One, has become the sacrifice for us before our Heavenly Father. And now we are walking in the Easter joy of the Risen Christ. And so week after week. But still we stumble, fall, sin. But let us not despond; let us turn to Him.

The pool at the Sheep Gate was only a shadow of what Christ performed and is performing. He alone is the source of healing and forgiveness. He alone, as God, can forgive sins. Let us turn to Him, and He will say to us the same words He said to the paralytic: "Rise, take up thy bed and walk."

And we will rise and walk again in the light of His Resurrection. But let us remember His words to the paralytic, "Sin no more." And let us not sin, because Christ is Risen!

The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei

Over the next 3 Sundays we will hear in the Gospel of events that occurred during the life of Christ, but which occurred in the time between the Jewish Passover (when our Lord was crucified and rose again) and the Jewish feast of Pentecost (when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles). The first of these events is the healing of the paralytic at the "Sheep's Pool". This pool was built by Solomon and was covered by a dome supported by 5 sets of pillars – thereby producing 5 separate "porches" around the pool. It was in this pool that the sacrificial lambs were washed before they were offered at the temple. We are also told in the Gospel that an angel of the Lord came down to the pool at a certain time and stirred the water, and the first person who entered the pool at this time was healed of whatever disease he had. As one might expect the 5 porches were filled with the sick and lame waiting for the stirring of the water in the hope that they might be healed. This particular miracle was set forth by God as a foreshadowing of the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Just as those who entered the pool after it had been blessed by an angel were healed of their physical ailments, so also those who enter the "pool" of the baptismal font after the water has been blessed by the priest are healed of their spiritual ailment – that is of the ailment of death and corruption which is brought about by our sinful state.

In addition to this overall parallel between the miracle of the sheep's pool and baptism, there are other parallels that reinforce their connection. The water is "stirred" by an angel endowing the water with the grace of God for healing. The water in the baptismal font during the service is "stirred" by the priest with his hand in the form of the cross as he invokes the Holy Spirit to "come now and sanctify this water". The one who enters the water of the pool is immersed in it just as the one who enters the baptismal font is likewise immersed and when each leaves the pool, his infirmity (physical or spiritual) is healed and left behind. It is not the water of the pool, nor is it simply the water of the baptismal font that of its own nature is healing – rather it is given this power by the grace of the Holy Spirit which is communicated by the blessing of the angel or the priest. Given that this miracle is manifested by God to lead His people towards the sacrament of baptism that would appear with the coming of the Messiah, let us consider this sacrament and its place in our lives.

It is necessary to point out here that the sacraments are not magic spells – they are prayers asking God to bestow upon us His sanctifying grace. We must cooperate with Him and work with the grace that He pours out upon us. If we neglect or misuse this grace then it has no beneficial effect on us and in fact when called to show the result of the grace in our lives by the Master at the Great Judgment, then we will face the fate of the slothful servant who hid his talent in the ground and even that which we think we have will be taken from us.

Grace is the power of God given to us for a holy life: as the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "The Lord said, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." There are two aspects to the operation of this grace in us. "Both the spiritual birth and further spiritual growth of a man occur through the mutual action of two principles. One of these is the grace of the Holy Spirit; the other, man's opening of his heart for the reception of it, a thirst for it, the desire to receive it, as the thirsty, dry earth receives the moisture of rain – in other words, personal effort for the reception, preservation and activity in the soul of the Divine gifts." (Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*) Thus it is evident that grace is not some magic substance that instantly transforms us – rather it is a powerful spiritual tool which is entrusted to us by God so that by using it, we each might work out our own salvation. Grace does not interfere with the freedom of man; it does not act upon him irresistibly. Often people, making use of the Mysteries, do not receive from them that which they could give; for their hearts are not open to receive grace, or else they have not preserved the gifts of God which they have received.

"In the Mysteries, prayers are joined with blessings in one form or another, and with special acts. The words of blessing accompanied by outward sacred acts are, as it were, spiritual vessels by which the grace of the Holy Spirit is scooped up and given to the members of the Church who are sincere believers. Thus a mystery (sacrament) is a sacred act which, under a visible aspect, communicates to the soul of a believer the invisible grace of God." (Pomazansky)

Now let us return to the sacrament of baptism. First when a person comes to be baptized they (or their sponsor on their behalf in the case of an infant) must first break with the life of world. They must place a decisive boundary between themselves and "the world" and for this they must openly and straightforwardly renounce the devil; for one cannot serve two masters. From antiquity, this renunciation of the devil and "all his works and all his service and all his pride" has been a part of the baptismal formula. This renunciation gives way to the opening of an entrance in to the Kingdom of grace, a birth into a new life "by water and the Spirit" and the beginning of the life in Christ.

Baptism stands first in the series of Mysteries – it is the door to the Church and to all the other Mysteries of grace bestowed therein. Baptism bestows on the believer a new life – he is "born again" and now is alive not with the life of this world, but with the life of Christ. The act of immersion which constitutes the Sacrament of Baptism recalls that we "die with Christ" and are buried with Him as we enter the water and we "rise with Christ" as we emerge from it. So in this sacrament, we "die" to the world and are "born" to the eternal life of Christ.

Orthodox Baptism is marked by triple immersion – that is the person is immersed in the water three times. This triple immersion signifies first the life of the Trinity – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It also represents the three day burial of our Lord and like Him we too are "buried" in the waters of baptism for three "days" after which we are raised with Him and enter into a new life. In Hebrew tradition there was a similar rite – a rite of washing from ritual impurity – that involved immersion in water. This was the baptism that the Forerunner offered to those who came in repentance. They were ritually "washed" from the uncleanness of their sins in the waters of the Jordan. But the baptism of John was itself only a foreshadowing of the Baptism of Christ, the sacrament that He bestowed upon His Church. In the Acts of the Apostles we see

that Paul comes upon believers who were only baptized with the baptism of John and did not know the regenerating life of the Holy Spirit. He caused them to be baptized anew with the Baptism of Christ and then the Apostles were called to lay hands upon them that they might also receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19). (This bestowal of the Holy Spirit is preserved in the life of the Church and is given to us in the sacrament of Chrismation – but that is a topic for another day.) From this we see that the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ (that is the sacrament of Baptism) are two distinct things – the baptism of John foreshadows the baptism of Christ which encompasses it and fulfills it.

The sacrament of Baptism is indispensable for the Christian, for in Baptism a man receives in the place of the old existence he had, a new existence and life, and becomes a child of God, a member of the Body of Christ (that is the Church), and an inheritor of eternal life. It is therefore evident that Baptism is indispensable for all, so that growing in body and spirit we might grow in Christ. Having received this new life, we must cooperate with its action in our lives, we must work to incorporate it in our lives and to live in accordance with the Godly life that it instills in us.

Today we are told not only of the miracle of our Lord in the healing of the paralytic at the Sheep's Pool, but we also are shown how our Lord prepared the world for the Mystery of Baptism. If we wish to enter into the Kingdom of God (that is, heaven) and if we wish to share in the eternal life of union and communion with the God/man Jesus Christ, then we must begin by embracing this sacrament of Baptism for it is the door into the Church, the door into the Kingdom of Heaven and the door leading to eternal life.

Archpriest David Moser

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/propoved/info>

Saints of the Week

10 / 23 May —The Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot - One of the twelve Great Apostles, he was born in Cana of Galilee. The Lord Jesus came to his wedding with His Mother and His disciples, and, when the wine ran out, the Lord changed water into wine. Seeing this wonder, the newly-married Simon left his home and parents and bride, to go after Christ. Simon was called the Zealot because of his great and burning zeal for the Saviour and His Gospel. After receiving the Holy Spirit, he went off to preach the Gospel in Mauretania in Africa. As a result of his success in bringing many to the Faith of Christ, he was tortured and finally crucified like his Lord, who had prepared a crown of glory for him in His immortal Kingdom. The Holy Martyrs Alphaeus, Philadelphus and Cyprinus;

Our Holy Mother Isidora the Fool for Christ - Isidora lived in the fourth century and was a nun in a convent in Tabennisi. She pretended insanity in order to conceal her virtues and her mortification. Isidora performed the most menial tasks, fed on the leftovers on the dishes, served all and everyone and was despised by all and everyone. At that time, an angel of God revealed to the great ascetic Pitirim about Isidora's secret. Pitirim came to the convent and when he saw Isidora he bowed down to the ground before her. And so, she to him. Then the sisters informed Pitirim that she was insane. "All of you are insane" replied Pitirim, "and this one is greater before the Lord than I and all of you; I only pray that God will render to me that which is intended for her at the Dreadful Judgment!" Then the sisters became ashamed and begged both Pitirim and Isidora for forgiveness. From then on, everyone began to show respect for Isidora. And she, to escape the honours of men, fled the convent to a place unknown and died about the year 365 A.D.; Blessed Thais;

St. Conleth, hermit and bishop of Kildare (c.520) - Skilled worker in gold and silver, and manuscript illuminator. Hermit in a cell in Old Connell, Ireland near the Liffey river. His reputation for holiness attracted would-be disciples. Friend and co-worker with Saint Brigid; they ran first double monastery together. First bishop of Kildare, Ireland c.490. Baptised Saint Tigernach of Clogher Died while on pilgrimage to Rome.

Born c.450 in Ireland Died attacked by wolves on 3 May 519 in the forests of Leinster, Ireland; buried nearby; relics translated to the Kildare cathedral in 799; relics taken to Connell in 835 to protect them from Danish invaders.

11 / 24 May — Ss Cyril and Methodius, Equal to the Apostles - brothers from Salonica, of eminent and wealthy parents, Leo and Maria. The elder brother, Methodius, spent ten years as an officer among the Slavs in Macedonia, and thus learned the Slavic language. After that, Methodius went off to Olympus and gave himself to monastic asceticism, and Cyril (Constantine) later joined him there. When the Khazarite king, Kagan, sought preachers of the Christian faith from the Emperor Michael, the Emperor commanded that these two brothers be found and sent to the Khazars. They converted Kagan to the Christian faith and baptised him, together with a great number of his nobles and an even greater number of the people. After some time, they returned to Constantinople, where they compiled a Slavic alphabet of 38 letters and began to translate the service books from Greek into Slavonic. At the invitation of Prince Rastislav, they went to Moravia, where, with great devotion, they spread and confirmed the Faith, made more copies of the books, brought them priests and taught the young. They went to Rome at the invitation of the Pope, and Cyril fell ill and died there, on February 14th, 869. Then Methodius returned to Moravia and laboured at the confirming of the Faith among the Slavs until his death. After his death—he entered into rest in the Lord on April 6th, 885 —his disciples, the Five Followers, with St Clement as bishop at the beginning, crossed the Danube and moved towards the south, to Macedonia, where, from Ochrid, they continued the work among the Slavs that Cyril and Methodius had begun in the north; The Hieromartyr Mocius;

St Nicodemus, Archbishop of Pec - This great hierarch was a Serb by birth. He lived a life of asceticism on Holy Mt. Athos and was abbot of Hilendar Monastery. Following the death of Sava III, he was elected as the Archbishop of "All the Serbs and the Coastal Lands" in the year 1317 A.D. Nicodemus crowned King Milutin in the year 1321 A.D. He translated the Jerusalem Typikon into Serbian. [The Typikon is a book containing the rubrics (directions) for the celebration of the Divine Mysteries and other offices of the Orthodox Church.] In the introduction of this book, Nicodemus says: "Almighty God, Who knows our

weaknesses, will give us spiritual strength, but only if we first display effort." He sincerely loved the ascetical life and laboured to strengthen it throughout the Serbian land. He laboured relentlessly to uproot the Bogomil heresy and to strengthen the Orthodox Faith. He died in the Lord in the year 1325 A.D. His miracle-working relics repose in the monastery in Pec.; St. Comgall, founder and abbot of Bangor (c.601); St. Mayeul, abbot of Cluny (994).

12 / 25 May — St Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus - born a Jew, but, seeing the power of the Christian faith, was baptised together with his sister, Callithrope. He became a monk at the age of twenty-six, in the monastery of St Hilarion. He later founded a monastery of his own, and became famed throughout Palestine and Egypt for his asceticism, his spiritual wisdom and the wonders he worked. Fleeing the praise of men, he went off to Egypt. On the way, he met Paphnutius the Great, who prophesied that he would be a hierarch on the island of Cyprus. And indeed, many years later, by God's providence, Epiphanius came to Cyprus, where he was unexpectedly chosen as bishop. He became bishop of the town of Salamis at the age of fifty, and governed the Church of God for thirty-six years. In all, he lived nearly ninety years on this earth, and entered into rest from this life to live eternally in the Kingdom of Christ. Before his death, he was invited to Constantinople by the Emperor Arcadius and his wife, Eudoxia, for the Council of Bishops which was forced, at the desire of the Emperor and Empress, to condemn St John Chrysostom. Arriving in Constantinople, he came to the Emperor's court, where the Emperor and Empress talked with him at great length, endeavouring to make him declare against Chrysostom. The citizens and Chrysostom heard that Epiphanius had agreed with the Emperor against him. Chrysostom therefore wrote him a letter: 'My brother Epiphanius, I hear that you have advised the Emperor that I should be banished: know that you will never again see your episcopal throne.' To this, Epiphanius wrote in return: 'John, my suffering brother, withstand insults, but know that you will not reach the place to which you are exiled.' And these two prophecies of the two saints soon came about. Refusing to agree with the Emperor on the exile of Chrysostom, Epiphanius took ship and set off for Cyprus, but died on the voyage. The Emperor sent Chrysostom into exile in Armenia, but the saint died on the road. Saint Epiphanius entered into rest in the year 403. Of his many writings the best-known is his 'Medicine Chest', in Greek, in which he explains and refutes eight heresies;

St Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople - Germanus was the son of the head imperial senator who was killed by Emperor Constantine Pogonatus. This same evil emperor castrated the senator's son, Germanus, and forcibly banished him to a monastery. As a monk, Germanus shone like a star by his life and good works. Because of that, he was chosen as the first bishop of Cyzicus and, when Anastatius II was crowned emperor, Germanus was elected as patriarch of Constantinople. As patriarch he baptized the ill-reputed Copronymos who, during the time of his baptism, soiled the water with his uncleanness. Then the patriarch prophesied that this child, when he becomes emperor, will introduce into the Holy Church some impure heresy. And this happened. When Copronymos became emperor, he restored the heresy of the iconoclasts. Leo Isaurian, the father of Copronymos, initiated the persecution of icons and when Patriarch Germanus protested, the arrogant Leo cried out: "I am emperor and priest!" He removed Germanus from the patriarchal throne and banished him to a monastery where this saint lived for ten more years until the Lord called him to Himself and to the heavenly kingdom in the year 740 A.D.; The Holy Martyr Pancras.

13 / 26 May — Fast Day, Mid-Pentecost - The Holy Martyr Glykeria - daughter of a governor of Rome, she became poor after her father's death and went to live in Trajanopolis in Thrace. In the time of the wicked Emperor Antoninus, Glykeria was brought to offer sacrifice to the idol of Zeus. She traced the Cross on her forehead and, when the governor asked her where was her lamp (for they all carried lamps in their hands), Glykeria indicated the Cross on her forehead and said: 'This is my lamp!' At her prayers, the idol was struck by lightning and broken into pieces. The governor was furious with her and commanded that she be thrown into prison. He sealed the door of the prison, intending to starve the maiden to death, but an angel of God appeared to Glykeria and gave her heavenly food. After a certain time, when the governor reckoned that the maiden must have died of hunger, he opened the prison and was astounded to see her in good health, bright and merry. The warder, Laodicius, seeing this marvel, himself confessed Christ the Lord and was at once beheaded. After that Glykeria was thrown into a burning furnace, but she remained untouched by the flames. Standing in the midst of the fire, she praised the Lord, commemorating the wonder with the Three Children in the burning fiery furnace in Babylon. Finally, she was thrown to the lions and, praying to God, this holy maiden gave her soul into the hands of the Lord for whom she had heroically suffered much torture. She suffered with honour in the year 141. A healing myrrh flowed from her relics, which healed the sick of the gravest illnesses;

The Holy Martyr Alexander - a Slav. As an eighteen year old soldier in the army of Emperor Maximilian, he refused the order of the emperor to give honor to the Roman idols and for that which he was handed over to Captain Tiberian, to either counsel Alexander to deny Christ or else torture and kill him. Since all the counselling was in vain, Tiberian took Alexander with him across Macedonia to Constantinople where he traveled for duty. In every town along the way, the young Alexander was cruelly tortured but, in every town, Christians came out before him and begged him for a blessing and they encouraged him in his mortification. Pimonia, his mother, followed after him. During the course of this travel, an angel of God appeared many times to Alexander soothing his pains and encouraging him. In one place, Carasura, the martyr performed a miracle through prayer: when thirst overcame him and the soldiers who escorted him, he brought forth a well of cold water from an arid place. On the shore of the Ergina river, Tiberian ordered the executioner to behead Alexander and to toss his body into the water. When the executioner swung at the martyr's head, he saw radiant angels of God around Alexander and became frightened and his hand dropped. Alexander asked him why his hand dropped and the executioner replied that he sees some radiant young men around him. Yearning death and union with the Lord, Alexander prayed to God to withdraw the angels from him so that the executioner would not be frightened. And thus, the executioner carried out his work in the year 298 A.D. Pimonia removed the body of her son and honourably buried him. Many healings occurred at the grave of the martyr. After death, the martyr appeared to his mother and informed her of her imminent translation to the other world.; Our Holy Fathers John, Euthymius, George and Gabriel of Iviron.

14 / 27 May — The Holy Martyr Isidore - in the reign of the Emperor Decius, this Isidore was taken by force by soldiers from the island of Chios. He had held the Christian faith from his youth, and had spent his life in fasting, prayer and good works. So when, in the army, he declared himself to be a Christian, the commander took him to task for it, and urged him to deny Christ and offer sacrifice to idols. The saint replied: 'Even if you kill my body, you have no power over my soul. I have the true and living God, Jesus Christ, who lives in me and will be with me at my death; and I am in Him and shall remain in Him, and will not cease to confess His holy name while the spirit is in my body.' The commander ordered that they first beat him with iron flails and then cut out his tongue. But, even without his tongue, Isidore was able to speak, and confessed the name of Christ by the Spirit of God. Meanwhile the punishment of God struck the commander, and he suddenly became mute. The mute commander finally gave the signal to behead Isidore. Isidore rejoiced at this sentence and, praising God, went out to the scaffold, where his head was cut off in the year 251. His friend, Ammon, buried his body and, after that, himself suffered and received the wreath of martyrdom; Our Holy Father Serapion the Sindonite; Blessed Isidore the Fool for Christ.

15 / 28 May — Fast Day - Our Holy Father Pachomius the Great - an Egyptian by birth and was a pagan in his youth. As a soldier, he took part in the Emperor Constantine's war against Maxentius. After that, learning from Christians about the one God and seeing their devout life, Pachomius was baptised and went to the Tabennisiot desert, to the famous ascetic Palamon, with whom he lived in asceticism for ten years. Then an angel appeared to him in the robes of a monk of the Great Habit at the place called Tabennisi and gave him a tablet on which was written the rule of a cenobitic monastery, commanding him to found such a monastery in that place and prophesying to him that many monks would come to it seeking the salvation of their souls. Obeying the angel of God, Pachomius began building many cells, although there was no-one in that place but himself and his brother John. When his brother grumbled at him for doing this unnecessary building, Pachomius simply told him that he was following God's command, without explaining who would live there, or when. But many men soon assembled in that place, moved by the Spirit of God, and began to live in asceticism under the rule that Pachomius had received from the angel. When the number of monks had increased greatly, Pachomius, step by step, founded six further monasteries. The number of his disciples grew to seven thousand. St Antony is regarded as the founder of the eremitic life, and St Pachomius of the monastic, communal life. The humility, love of toil and abstinence of this holy father were and remain a rare example for the imitation of monks. St Pachomius performed innumerable miracles, and also endured innumerable temptations from demons and men. And he served men as both father and brother. He roused many to set out on the way of salvation, and brought many into the way of truth. He was and remains a great light in the Church and a great witness to the truth and righteousness of Christ. He entered peacefully into rest in 346, at the age of sixty. The Church has raised many of his followers to the ranks of the saints: Theodore, Job, Paphnutius, Pecosius, Athenodorus, Eponichus, Soutus, Psois, Dionysius, Petronius and others; St Achillius, Bishop of Larissa; Our Holy Father Silvanus.

16 / 29 May — Our Holy Father Theodore the Sanctified - he was a disciple of St Pachomius, being born and growing up an unbeliever. Coming to the true Faith as a young man, he was baptised and, having heard of St Pachomius, fled to him in his monastery unknown to his parents. St Pachomius made him a monk and came to love him for his rare zeal and his obedience. When his mother came to fetch him back home, he would not let her see him, but prayed to God to enlighten her with the truth. And indeed, his mother not only did not take her son back home but herself did not return. Seeing a women's monastery, ruled by Pachomius's sister, close by, she entered it and was tonsured. After a certain time, Paphnutius, Theodore's brother, also came to the monastery and was tonsured. It once happened that the Bishop of Panopolis invited Pachomius to build a monastery for the many people who were desirous of the monastic life. Pachomius took Theodore with him, and entrusted to him the duty of building the monastery. Upon Pachomius's death, Theodore became abbot of all Pachomius's monasteries and lived until great old age, guiding a multitude of monks on the way of salvation. He entered peacefully into rest and went to the Kingdom of eternal light in the year 368.

St. Brendan the Voyager, abbot of Clonfert (578) - St. Brendan sailed in skin-covered coracles, from Ireland to Scotland, then to England and Wales. His most famous voyage in search of the promised land, was described in a famous saga known as the 'Navagatio,' which indicates that he reached Greenland or even North America. It is still possible to construct a coracle according to the instructions of the Navagatio, and to sail it from Ireland to Newfoundland. St. Brendan was born near Tralee on the west coast of Ireland, and he was brought up by a saint called Ita, who taught him three things that God truly loves: 'the true faith of a pure heart; the simple religious life, and bountifulness inspired by Christian charity.' (She added three things that God hates: 'a scowling face; obstinate wrong-doing; and too much confidence in money'.) He founded several monasteries the most renowned being at Clonfert, a centre famous for missionary work, where he is said to have directed three thousand monks.; The Blessed Maiden Musa; St Nicolas Mysticus, Patriarch of Constantinople; The Holy New Martyr Nicolas; Our Holy Fathers martyred at St Sava's.