

10th Sunday After Pentecost

Translation of the Icon Not-made-by-hands & Afterfeast of Dormition

16 / 29 August

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 1: When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; / while the soldiers were guarding Thy Most Pure Body; / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour, / granting life to the world. / The Powers of Heaven therefore cried to Thee O Giver of Life: / glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ! / Glory to Thy Kingdom; / Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

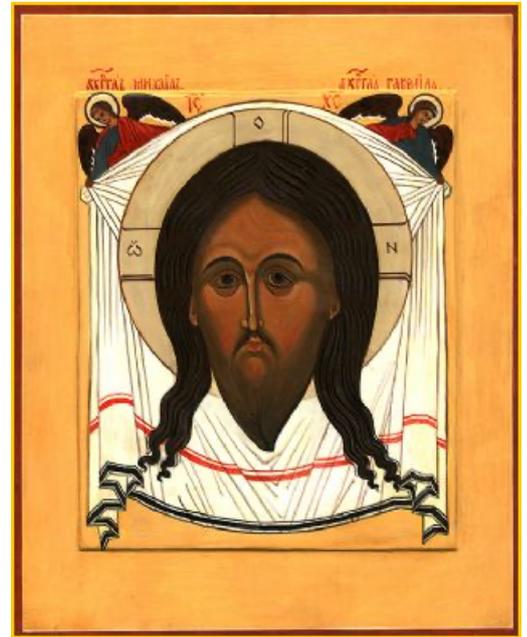
Troparion of the holy Icon tone 2: We worship Thine immaculate image, O Good One, / and ask the forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God; / for of Thine own will Thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh / to deliver from slavery to the enemy those whom Thou hadst created. / Therefore we thankfully cry to Thee: / Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, by coming to save the world.

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.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 1: As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, / Raising the world with Thyself. / Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. / Adam exults O Master, Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to Thee; / Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ.

Kontakion of the Holy Icon tone 8: The uncircumscribable word of the Father / was circumscribed when He took flesh of thee, O Mother of God; / and when He had restored the defiled image to its pristine state He suffused it with divine beauty. / And as we proclaim our salvation we record it by word and deed.

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.



Matins Gospel X

Epistle: Corinthians 4: 9-16

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonoured! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; Being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

GOD HAS DISPLAYED US, THE APOSTLES...

WE HAVE BEEN MADE A SPECTACLE TO THE WORLD, TO ANGELS AND TO MEN

There is a great depth of meaning and severity implied in his saying, 'us', and not even with this was he satisfied. He also added his dignity, hitting them vehemently: 'us the Apostles,' who are enduring such innumerable ills, who are sowing the word of godliness, who are leading you to this severe rule of life ...But what does 'unto angels' mean? It is possible to 'become a spectacle unto men,' but not so to angels when the things done are ordinary, but our wrestlings are such as to be worthy even of angelic contemplation ...We are driven about and persecuted, but you enjoy security and are much waited upon ...He sets himself against the noble and those who plumed themselves with external advantages ...We take no account of human things nor yet of any outward pomp, but we look only to God ...In God's sight men not only commit adultery and fornication, but many have dared and still dare to do other things much more dreadful ...Things even far less than these we fear to do before men: but in God's sight we fear no longer. From this, in fact, all the world's evils have originated: because in things really bad we do not reverence God but men.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XII on I Corinthians IV, 5, 6, 7. B#56, pp. 66-67.

For the Icon: Col. 1:12-18

Gospel Matthew 17: 14-23

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, And they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up."

HEALING THE POSSESSED YOUTH

As last Sunday's Gospel told us about a storm on the Tiberian Sea, in the same way today's Gospel also tells us about a storm, only about a storm which is even more terrible. Back then, there were waves on the sea, but here. . .listen to what the father of the youth said to Christ: "Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for oft times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water" (Mt. 17:15). There, Peter got out of the boat in which the other Apostles were sailing. Notice that Christ did not send him as He sent all the disciples across the sea. But Peter himself, filled with the rapture of faith at seeing Christ walking upon the waves, asked for permission to do the same. And what happened? He doubted and started to drown. And Christ said to him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Mt. 14:31).

And what about today's Gospel? In today's Gospel, the father of the possessed son brought him first to the disciples of Christ. The power to cast out devils and to heal sicknesses had been given to them; this seemed to go along with their obedience. And yet they could not heal him. And when the father in deep grief related this to the Lord, Christ in anger exclaimed: "O faithless and perverse generation. . .how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him.... Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could we not cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. How be it this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Mt. 17 17-21).

This is what faith means! But where do we find this faith? Only in the Church. The Apostles, sailing in the boat in obedience to Christ, despite the storm, did not doubt. Their boat had sides which protected them from the pressure of the waves; it had a bottom which separated them from the water; it had a rudder which guided it. In the same way the ship of the Church has everything which is needed to sail over the sea of life, through its storms, to the other shore of Eternal Life. As in the boat the bottom is its foundation, so in the ship of the Church, the foundation is the teaching of Christ which points out the way to life through the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-11). Poverty of spirit, weeping for sins (that is, repentance), meekness, hunger and thirst for righteousness, mercifulness, purity of heart, peacemaking, suffering for the truth—this is the foundation of the Church ship. And its sides are the Apostolic rules. This is everything which Christ has passed on to His Apostles, which for the most part is again based on Holy Scripture, and partially is kept in the treasury of Church Tradition.

And what treasure is being carried by the ship of the Church? These are the seven Sacraments of the Church which all have their foundation in Holy Scripture. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles relates to us about the ordination of priests and deacons from which comes our Sacrament of the Priesthood (Acts 6:3, 5-7). In His first appearance after the Resurrection, Christ breathed on the Apostles and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted" (Jn.20: 22-23). Here is the foundation of the Sacrament of Confession. The words of Christ at the Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Lk. 22:19); and all the chapters from John where it speaks about the Bread of Life—this is the establishment of the Sacrament of Communion (Jn. 6:32-58). The teaching of the Apostle Paul about the relationship between husband and wife speaks of the holiness of the Sacrament of Marriage (1 Cor.7:2-17;Eph. 5:22-33). In the Epistle of James instructions are given about the anointing of the sick one with oil and about the prayer of faith for him (James 5:14-15). And so with all the sacraments. And still more: all Church establishments come from the Lord Himself Here in today's Gospel it tells about the necessity of fasting and prayer. And this is Christ Who says it to His disciples. In the Orthodox Church there is nothing invented by man or added; but neither is there anything subtracted, abbreviated from the teaching of Christ and His Apostles.

"I believe in one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church." Another Catholic and Apostolic Church does not exist on earth. So let us treasure our Church-ship. Let us never abandon it. It has everything for us. It also has this wonderful faith which even moves mountains, and with such faith nothing will be impossible. It will lead us through the storms of life and will bring us to the shore of Life Eternal.

[For the Icon: Luke 9:51-56, 10:22-24](#)

Saints of the Week

16 / 29 August - Afterfeast of the Dormition – Translation of The Icon of the Lord Jesus Christ Not-Made-With-Hands - in the time that our Lord was preaching the Gospel and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people, there was in the city of Edessa, on the banks of the Euphrates, a certain Prince Avgar, who was riddled with leprosy. He heard of Christ, the Healer of every pain and sickness, and sent a portrait-painter, Ananias, to Palestine with a letter to Christ, in which he begged the Lord to come to Edessa and heal him of his leprosy. In the event of the Lord's not being able to come, the prince commanded Ananias to paint His likeness and bring it, believing that the portrait would heal him. The Lord replied that he could not come, as the time of His Passion was at hand, and He took a napkin and wiped His face, leaving a perfect reproduction of His most pure face on the napkin. The Lord gave this napkin to Ananias, with a message to say that the prince would be healed by it, but not entirely, and He would therefore send him later an envoy who would rid him of the remainder of the disease. Receiving the napkin, Avgar kissed it and the leprosy fell from his body, with just a little remaining on his face. Later, the Apostle Thaddaeus, preaching the Gospel, came to Avgar, healed him secretly and baptised him. Then the prince smashed the idols that stood at the city's gateway and placed the napkin with the face of Christ above the entrance, stuck onto wood, surrounded with a gold frame and ornamented with pearls. The prince also wrote above the icon on the gateway: 'O Christ our God, no-one who hopes in Thee will be put to shame'. Later, one of Avgar's great-grandsons restored idolatry, and the Bishop of Edessa came by night and walled-in the icon above the gateway. Centuries passed. In the time of the Emperor Justinian, the Persian King, Chozroes, attacked Edessa, and the city was in great affliction. The Bishop of Edessa, Eulabius, had a vision of the most holy Mother of God, who revealed to him the secret of the icon, walled-in and forgotten. The icon was found, and by its power the Persian army was defeated. The Holy Martyr Diomedes; Our Holy Father Joachim of Osogov; The Holy Martyr Stamatius.

17 / 30 August -Afterfeast of the Dormition -The Holy Martyr Myron of Cyzicus - he was a priest in Achaia, of rich and eminent parents, by nature kind and meek, and loving towards God and man. In the time of the Emperor Decius, on the Feast of the Nativity itself, pagans rushed into the church, dragged Myron away from the service and put him to torture. While he was being tortured by fire, an angel appeared to him and strengthened him. They then cut off his skin in strips from head to foot. The martyr took one of these strips and, with it, struck the torturer on the face. The torturer, as though possessed, took a sword and killed himself. Myron was finally taken to the town of Cyzicus and there killed with the sword, in 250.; The Holy Martyr Patroclus; Our Holy Father Elias of Calabria; Our Holy Father Olympius the Iconographer of the Kiev Caves.

18 / 31 August -Afterfeast of the Dormition – The Venerable John of Rila - This great ascetic and saint of the Orthodox Church was born near Sophia, Bulgaria in the town of Skrino during the reign of King Boris. He was of poor but honourable parents. After the death of his parents, John was tonsured a monk and withdrew to a mountain wilderness and, began to live a life of strict asceticism in a cave. There, he endured many assaults, both from demons and men, from robbers and his relatives. After this, he moved to the Rila mountain and settled in a hollow tree. He fed only on herbs and broad beans, which, according to God's Providence began to grow in the vicinity. For many years, he did not see a man's face until again, by God's Providence, he was discovered by shepherders who were seeking their lost sheep. Thus, the saint was heard of among the people and they began to come to him seeking help in sickness and in sufferings. The Bulgarian King Peter himself visited John and sought counsel from him. Many who were zealots for the spiritual life settled in the proximity of John. There, a church and monastery was quickly built. St. John rested peacefully in the Lord on August 18, 946 A.D. at the age of seventy. After his death, he appeared to his disciples. At first, his relics were translated to Sophia, then to Hungary, then to Trnovo and finally to the Rila monastery where they repose today. Throughout the centuries, the Rila monastery was a beacon of light, a place of miracle-working power and a spiritual comfort for the Christian people of Bulgaria especially during the difficult times of bondage under the Turks.

The Holy Martyrs Florus and Laurus - Florus and Laurus were brothers in the flesh, and in spirit and in vocation. Both were zealous Christians and, by occupation, stonecutters. They lived in Illyria. A pagan prince hired them for the building of a temple to the idols. It happened that during their work, a piece of stone flew and struck the eye of the pagan priest's son who was observing the work of the builders with curiosity. Seeing his son blind and bloody, the pagan priest began to shout at Florus and Laurus and wanted to beat them. Then, the holy brothers said to him that if he would believe in the God in whom they believed, his son would be healed. The pagan priest promised. Florus and Laurus prayed with tears to the one, living, Lord God and traced the sign of the Cross over the child's injured eye. The child was immediately healed and his eye became whole just as it had been. Then the pagan priest Merentius and his son were baptized and, shortly after that, both suffered for Christ by fire. When they completed the temple, Florus and Laurus placed a cross on it, summoned all Christians and consecrated it in the name of the Lord Jesus with an all-night vigil of hymn singing. Hearing of this, the Illyrian deputy burned many of those Christians and threw Florus and Laurus alive in a well and then filled it with dirt. Later, their relics were revealed and translated to Constantinople. These two wonderful brothers suffered and were martyred for Christ and were glorified by Christ in the second century.

The Priestly Martyr, Emilian of Trevi - Emilian was born in Armenia. According to his wishes and seeking martyrdom, he traveled to Italy to preach Christ during the reign of Diocletian. He was elected bishop of Trevi. As a result of the many miracles during the time of his torture, approximately one thousand pagans believed in Christ. He was slain by the sword together with Hilarion, his spiritual father and two brothers, Dionysius and Hermippus.

19 August / 1 September - Fast Day - 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 [Berocia] 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 - Fast Day - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Apostle Thaddeus - One of the Seventy, he was not that Thaddaeus who was one of the Twelve. St Thaddaeus 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 Thaddaeus to Edessa, Thaddaeus'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 Thaddaeus 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 Thaddaeus, 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 Thaddaeus said to him: 'Having abandoned my own, do I accept another's?' St Thaddaeus 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 - 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!

HYMN OF PRAISE

PRINCE ABGAR

A gentle God, Who reveals mysteries, Wonderful mysteries, never before dreamed of, Once by the lake, You proclaimed That many pagan peoples From throughout the east, to the west With Abraham to sit at the table, And the unbelieving sons of the Jews To utter darkness, will be expelled Because of their hardened heart. The mystery You spoke and the mystery came about: The Jews in Your face gazed, Behind Your back, death, were preparing. And from distant regions, Prince Abgar, A leprous body and a wretched soul From a false faith of paganism, Heard of You from mouth to mouth, Heard of Your words and miracles, Heard of You and, in You, believed Of Your All-pure face, saw the likeness With tears, kissed the likeness In both body and soul, became whole His soul in Paradise, took up abode With Abraham to rejoice eternally.

REFLECTION

The Orthodox Church surpasses all other Christian groups in the richness of her Tradition. The Protestants want only to adhere to Holy Scripture. But, not even Holy Scripture can be interpreted without Tradition. The Apostle Paul himself commands: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or our epistle" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). The tradition of Prince Abgar, without doubt, is of Apostolic Tradition even though the apostles do not mention him in their writings. The Apostle Thaddaeus, did not write anything at all and, according to Protestant thinking, did not say anything and neither did he teach the faithful. According to what then was he an apostle of Christ? St. John Damascene [Damaskin] mentions the tradition of Prince Abgar in his defense of the veneration of icons. How wonderful and touching is the letter of Abgar to Christ. And since he previously wrote that he heard of His miraculous power, that He cures the sick and since he implored Him to come and to heal him, Abgar further writes: "I also hear that the Jews hate You and that they are preparing some evil against You. I have a city, not large, but beautiful and bountiful in every good: come to me and live with me in my city, which is sufficient for the both of us for every need." Thus wrote a heathen prince while the princes of Jerusalem were preparing death for the Lord, the Lover of Mankind.

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate God's wondrous help to Jonathan, the son of Saul (1 Samuel 13-14 1 Kings 13-14): 1. How the Philistines rose up against the Jews and the army of the Philistines was: "as the sand which is on the sea shore" (1 Samuel 13:5 - 1 Kings 13:5); 2. How Jonathan with his young man that bore his armor [armorbearer], attacked the Philistines, trusting in God and how he confused and defeated them; 3. How even we should know the truthfulness of Jonathan's words: "It may be the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few" (1 Samuel 14:6 1 Kings 14:6).

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