



Sunday of the Dread Judgement (Meatfare Sunday)

10 / 23 February

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!

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 2: Hell became afraid, O Almighty Saviour, seeing the miracle of Thy resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee! And the world, O My Saviour, praises Thee forever.

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

Vespers:

Lord I have Cried, Tone 2, on 10: Octoechos 6; Triodion 4 (When Thou shalt come, O righteous Judge); G: Triodion (When the thrones are set); N: Sunday Dogmatic Tone 2. Aposticha: Octoechos, G: Triodion (Alas, black soul!); N: Theotokion, Tone 8 (O unwedded Virgin).

Matins Gospel II

Epistle: I Corinthians 8: 8 – 9: 2

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

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

SHALL THE WEAK BROTHER PERISH, FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED?

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

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

Gospel: St. Matthew 25: 31-46

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

And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

The Dread Judgment! The Judge comes in the clouds, surrounded by a countless multitude of bodiless heavenly powers. Trumpets sound to all the ends of the earth and raise up the dead. The risen regiments pour into the preordained place, to the throne of the Judge, having a foreboding of what verdict will sound in their ears. For everyone's works are written on the brow of their nature, and their very appearance will correspond to their deeds and morals. The division of those on His right hand and those on His left is accomplished in and of itself.

At last all has been determined. Deep silence falls. In another instant, the decisive verdict of the Judge is heard: to some, "Come," to the others, "Depart."

"Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us! May Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us!" they shall say, but then it will already be too late to plead.

We need to take the trouble now to wash away the unfavorable marks written upon our nature. At the Judgment, we may be ready to pour out rivers of tears in order to wash ourselves, but this would do us no good then. Let us weep now-if not rivers of tears, then at least streams; if not streams, then at least drops. If we cannot find even this much, then let us become contrite in heart, and confess our sins to the Lord, begging Him to forgive them, and promising not to offend Him any more through the violation of His commandments. Then, let us be zealous to faithfully fulfill this promise.

St. Theophan the Recluse. Thoughts for Each Day of the Year pg. 49

On this day we commemorate the inescapable second coming of Christ, ordained by the most divine Fathers to be observed after the second parable of the Prodigal, so that no one who has learned of the love of God for mankind from it will live in laziness saying, "God loves mankind, and when I am separated from Him by sin, all is prepared for my restoration." This fearsome day of judgment has been designated for commemoration at this point in time, that through fear of death and the expectation of future torment, those who live in laziness may be encouraged to the virtues, not trusting only in the love of God, but also realizing that He is the righteous Judge who will judge all men according to their deeds. In other words those souls who have passed over are obliged to undergo judgment. And this present feast is a type of symbol of this in that it is presented now as a final celebration just as it will be the last event after our death. For it behooves us to contemplate that as the beginning of the world and Adam's fall from Paradise are commemorated on the following Sunday, so this day is the end of all days and of the world itself.

The commemoration is appointed for this day of Meatfare, that in awe of this event we should limit our intake of earthly food, not giving ourselves over to gluttony, and be encouraged to love our neighbor. In other words, since we were banished from Eden, cursed and condemned through eating of the fruit, so the present event has been ordained at this time, as next Sunday we will be banished through Adam, until Christ comes again to raise us up to Paradise. It is called the Second Coming, since Christ appeared to us at His first coming in the flesh and delivered the human race, and He will come again to judge whether that which He commanded us has been observed. And when will this Second Coming occur? No one knows; for although He mentioned several preceding signs, the Lord concealed it from His Apostles. Before His coming the antichrist will appear.

He will live his life after the manner of Christ, performing miracles like those which Christ performed, and raising the dead. Yet all that he does will be an illusion. After this suddenly like lightning from heaven the Lord will come, going before His holy Cross, and a river of boiling fire will go before Him, cleansing the earth of its defilement. The antichrist will be seized immediately along with his servants and will be committed to eternal fire. And when the angels sound the trumpets, all the nations of mankind will gather from all places and from all the ends of the earth in Jerusalem, for it is the center of the earth. And there the thrones will be set for judgment. Then all souls will be reunited with their bodies and clothed in incorruptible beauty, transformed into one likeness. And with one word the Lord will separate the righteous from the sinners. Those who have done good will receive eternal life, and the sinners will be once more sent to eternal and everlasting torment. Let it be noted that Christ will not ask who fasted, or who was naked, or who performed miracles, for although these things are good, mercy and compassion are far better. He will question both the righteous and the sinners on six commandment-like virtues, of which everyone is capable: "For I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat. I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me. I was in prison, and ye came to me. Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it to me." Then all will confess the Lord Jesus Christ in the glory of God the Father.

Now the torments, according to the Holy Gospel are weeping and the gnashing of teeth, where their worm dies not and the fire is not quenched, and he shall be cast into outer darkness. For all the Church of God will joyfully delight in attaining the Kingdom of Heaven, being close to God in His holy place, and receiving everlasting glory and exaltation. But those who are separated from God through wasting the life of their souls in laziness and temporal nourishment will receive torment and darkness, and be eternally deprived of the divine radiance.

**In Thine ineffable love for mankind, O Christ our God,
make us worthy of Thy voice, which we long to hear,
number us among those at Thy right hand,
and have mercy on us.**

Amen.

Lenten Synaxarion, Meatfare Sunday

Saints of the Week

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

10 / 23 February — The Hieromartyr Charalampus - This great saint was bishop in Magnesia, and suffered for Christ at the age of 113. When a violent persecution broke out under the Emperor Septimus Severus, the aged Charalampus did not hide from his persecutors, but freely and openly preached the Christian faith. He endured all tortures as though not in the body, and when they flayed the living flesh from him, the godly saint said to the Emperor's soldiers: 'Thank you, my brethren, for scraping off the old body and renewing my soul for new and eternal life.' He performed many wonders and brought many to the Faith. Even the Emperor's daughter, Gallina, repudiated the paganism of her father and became a Christian. Condemned to death and led to the place of execution, St Charalampus raised his arms to heaven and prayed for all men, that God would give them bodily health and salvation of soul, and that He would grant them the fruits of the earth in abundance: 'Lord, Thou knowest that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Thy blessing on all.' After praying thus, the saintly elder gave his soul to God before the executioner had laid his sword to his neck. He suffered in 202. Gallina took his body and buried it.

Russian New Martyr Anatole, metropolitan of Odessa (1938) should be especially glorified for his spiritual courage in the grievous years of 1928-1937. He lived in the South of Russia and was respected for his spiritual deeds and his fearless professing of the true Russian Faith. Metropolitan Anatole suffered a slow martyrdom from the hands of the communists, who cruelly persecuted and humiliated him. Even before entering high school he dedicated his life to the service of God. After high school he was accepted by the Academy of Kiev, and while studying there, took the vows of monkhood. Soon after graduating from the Academy, the Rev. Anatole was ordained bishop. Bishop Anatole, young and inspired, won the hearts of his spiritual children. His ever increasing popularity was noted, of course, by the usurpers of power of the Russian government. Bishop Anatole was one of the first to be arrested by the communists. For a long time he languished in the prisons of the GPU(pre-KGB). During the hours of questioning the mild prelate was outrageously beaten by magistrates, to the point that his jaw was

permanently injured, so that his speech at times was not quite distinct. Two of his ribs were also injured. Bishop Anatole spent a long time in the prison hospital. His wounds had hardly healed when he was exiled to Solovky to the harsh conditions of a labour camp for the most dangerous political "criminals", especially for the clergy. Severe frosts, lack of satisfactory nourishment, and very heavy labour broke the health of the already not too robust bishop. He suffered this oppressive life for seven years. He owed his survival there only to the most unselfish care of his younger sister, whom he had raised as a daughter. She had left everything to follow her brother into exile. Upon release from exile, Bishop Anatole was promoted to the rank of Archbishop of Saratov and Samara. Shortly after this, he was taken ill with an ulcer of the stomach—the result of hardships suffered while at the labour camp. Upon recovery, he was appointed head of the Odessa-Kherson diocese in the South. He arrived in Odessa in the darkest hour of its existence. All religious affairs were in the hands of the NKVD inspector-of-the-cults, Vishnegorodsky at first, and later Baranovich. Both of them fully enjoyed using their power to inconvenience and humiliate the head of the local churches. The Archbishop was frequently ordered to get out of bed in the middle of the night and report to the NKVD headquarters. Sometimes the inspectors would appear in church during solemn services on an important holiday, and issue the same order. In such instances, the otherwise meek and humble Archbishop Anatole would curtly tell them that under no circumstances would he stop the church ritual; that he would come only after officiating in the church. His refusals were so positive that even the NKVD messengers gave up, inwardly furious. At the end of four or five hours of Church service, the Archbishop would hurry to the NKVD, without time to rest or eat. There he was kept waiting for one or two hours more, just to repay him for the delay. When he was finally received, Baranovich would stamp his feet and shout at the Archbishop, just as if he were a disobedient slave. Such were the conditions under which this highly respected priest carried on his spiritual work. The hardest trial for him was the arrest of almost all the clergy and the best preachers of Odessa in 1931. All of them (more than 20), were exiled during the same year, when the sacrilegious closing and destroying of the churches started. The majestic Cathedral of the Transfiguration was blown up before the eyes of the Archbishop, as was the beautiful Church of the Archangel Michael in the Devichy Monastery; the military Cathedral of St. Serge, and the churches of the port and many others. The repressions and persecutions of the clergy increased, leaving clergymen without food and lodgings. They found refuge in the Archbishop's home, while he himself went about to different government organisations pleading humbly for assistance and mercy for his unfortunate colleagues. But he was met only with mockery and insults. In 1932, Archbishop Anatole was promoted to the rank of Metropolitan. He remained head of the Odessa-Kherson diocese until his arrest in August, 1936. Before his arrest, Metropolitan Anatole had to suffer the humiliation of being dismissed by Baranovich and forbidden to perform church services. Upon his arrest, Metropolitan Anatole was removed to Kiev where he was kept under severe conditions for about six months. He again suffered from ulcer of the stomach with complications which affected his legs. Metropolitan Constantine, Exarch of the Ukraine, succeeded in obtaining permission for him to see his sister before he left for exile. The poor woman later told, with sobs, how Metropolitan Anatole was led into the room of their meeting supported on both sides—having nearly lost the complete use of his legs. In spite of his condition, Metropolitan Anatole was taken into exile by "etape". He was purposely placed among the gangs of the worst criminals, who systematically robbed him on the way. The sick prelate was actually forced by gun-butts to walk from one stop to another, farther and farther to the North, with no time to rest. When he collapsed in a dead faint, he was lifted onto a truck; but as soon as he regained consciousness he was forced again to walk. Men who witnessed the tortures of the saintly man, later declared with tears, that it would have been more merciful to have shot him on the spot. On the way, Metropolitan Anatole caught croupous pneumonia, but even this did not stop his tragic march. By winter he had reached his place of exile and, in the Far North, dying he pleaded for permission to see his sister, who had managed to reach his place of exile. The sister had received only postcards from him on which he had written: "I beg you to do everything you can. Plead, pray, implore, but obtain the permission for our meeting. I yearn before my death to see your dear face and bless you." But the meeting was not to be; the permission was refused. When Metropolitan Anatole was on the point of dying, the communists came to him and demanded his Gospel and his priest's cross. The Gospel was snatched from out of his weakened hands, but he clung to his cross. Protecting it on his chest with numbed hands, he fell back and died (1938). His body was thrown into a common grave in the frozen earth of the far North.

Also commemorated on this day: Virgin-martyrs Ennatha, Valentina, and Paula of Palestine; Venerable Scholastica, sister of St. Benedict of Nursia; St. Anastasius II, patriarch of Jerusalem; Holy Right-believing Great Princess Anna of Novgorod; Venerable Prochorus of the Kiev Caves; Synaxis of the Hierarchs of Novgorod: Joachim, Luke, Germanus, Arcadius, Gregory, Martyrius, Anthony, Basil, Symeon, Gennadius, Pimen, and Aphthonius; Venerable John Chimchimeli; Righteous Juliana, mother of Blessed Nicholas Kochanov; Venerable Longinus of Koryazhemka; New Hieromartyrs Peter Grudinsky and Valerian Novitsky, priests; 'Areovindus' or 'Fiery Vision' Icon of the Mother of God.

11 / 24 February — The Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste - born in Cappadocia, Blaise was meek and God-fearing from early childhood. He was chosen for his virtues as bishop of Sebaste, and was a great spiritual and moral light in that pagan town. During a period of violent persecution of Christians, Blaise encouraged his flock and visited the martyrs in prison, among whom was the famous Eustratius.

When the city of Sebaste was left entirely denuded of Christians—some killed and others fled—Blaise, by then an old man, retired to the mountain of Argeos and lived there in a cave. Ferocious wild beasts, recognising a holy man, came to him and he gently tamed them. But the persecutors found the saint in that hidden spot and took him for trial. On the way there, Blaise healed a boy who had a bone stuck in his throat and, at the petition of a poor widow, made the wolf that had taken her pig return it to her. The benighted judges tortured him, flogging him terribly. By his steadfastness in the Christian faith, Blaise brought many unbelievers to the Faith. Seven women and two children were thrown into prison with him; the women were slain first, then Blaise and the two children. He suffered and was glorified in 316. Blaise's prayers are sought for the health and well-being of domestic animals and for protection from wild beasts. In the West, he is also invoked against sore throats.

Venerable Demetrius, monk of Priluki - The Monk Dimitrii of Prilutsk, Wonderworker, was born into a rich merchant's family in Pereyaslavl'-Zalessk. From the time of his youth the monk was uncommonly handsome. Having accepted monastic tonsure at one of the Pereyaslavl' monasteries, the saint later founded the Nikol'sk (Saint Nicholas) life-in-common monastery on the Borisoglebsk Hill at the shore of Lake Plescheevo near the city, and became its hegumen.

In 1534 Saint Dimitrii first met with the Monk Sergei Radonezh, who had come to Pereyaslavl' to bishop Athanasii. From that time he repeatedly conversed with the Monk Sergei and became close with him. The fame of the Pereyaslavl' hegumen so spread about, that he became godfather to the children of Greatprince Dimitrii Ioannovich. Under the influence of the Radonezh wonderworker, the Monk Dimitrii decided to withdraw off to a desolate place, and together with his disciple Pakhomii he set off North. In the Vologda forests, at the River Velika, in the Avnezhsk surroundings, they built a church of the Resurrection of Christ and they made ready to lay the foundations for a monastery. But the local inhabitants were fearful of losing out, and the wilderness-dwellers in their wish to be a burden to no one, set off further.

Not far from Vologda, at the bend of a river in an isolated spot, the Monk Dimitrii decided to form the first of the life-in-common monasteries of the Russian North. The people of Vologda and the surrounding gladly consented to help the saint. The owners of the land intended for the monastery, Il'ya and Isidor, even trampled down a grain field, so that a temple might be built immediately. In 1371 the wooden Saviour cathedral was erected, and brethren began to gather. Many a disciple of the monk came thither from Pereyaslavl'. The deep prayer and quite strict asceticism was combined in the Prilutsk hegumen with kindness: he fed the poor and hungry, he took in strangers, he conversed with those in need of consolation, and he gave counsel. The monk loved to pray in private. His Lenten food was but prosphora with warm water, and even on feasts he would not partake of the wine and fish permitted by the ustav-rule. Both Winter and Summer he wore only his old sheepskin coat, and into old age he went off with the brethren on common tasks. Contributions to the monastery the saint accepted cautiously, so that the welfare of the monastery be not to the impairment of those living nearby. The Lord vouchsafed His servant the gift of perspicacity. The Monk Dimitrii died at an advanced age on 11 February 1392. The brethren approaching found him as though asleep, and his cell was filled with a wondrous fragrance. Miracles from the relics of Saint Dimitrii began in the year 1409, and during the XV Century his veneration spread throughout all Rus'. And not later than the year 1440, based on the narratives of Saint Dimitrii's disciple the hegumen Pakhomii, the Prilutsk monk Makarii recorded his life (Great Reading-Menaion, 11 February)

St. Theodora - Theodora, a Greek empress, was the wife of the nefarious Emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast. After the death of Theophilus, Theodora became the ruling empress and reigned together with her son Michael III. At the Council in Constantinople (842 A.D.), she immediately restored the veneration of icons. On this occasion, the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy was instituted which is still celebrated today on the First Sunday of the Honorable Fast [First Sunday in Lent]. This holy and meritorious woman of the Church gave up her soul to God on February 11, 867 A.D. It was at that time, by the divine and wonderful Providence of God, at the solemn triumph of Orthodoxy over all heresies, that St. Cyril and St. Methodius were sent as Christian missionaries to the Slavs.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Eutropius, bishop of Adrianople; Hieromartyr Lucius, bishop of Adrianople; Venerable Caedmon of Whitby; Venerable Benedict of Aniane; Holy Right-believing Prince Vsevolod (Gabriel in baptism), Wonderworker of Pskov; New Martyr George of Sofia.

12 / 25 February — St Meletius, Archbishop of Antioch - this great and holy man was an outstanding interpreter and defender of Orthodoxy. The whole of his life was devoted to the fight against the Arian heresy, which did not recognise the Son of God and blasphemed against the Holy Trinity. He was three times removed from his archiepiscopal throne by the heretics, and driven off into Armenia. The struggle between the Orthodox and the heretics became so bitter that once, while St Meletius was preaching to the people in church on the divine Trinity in unity, his own deacon, a heretic, ran up to the bishop and shut his mouth with his hand. Being unable to preach with words, Meletius preached by

signs. Thus, he raised his arms on high, opened three fingers to their fullest extent and showed them to the people, then closed his hand and raised the one fist. He took part in the Second Ecumenical Council in 381, where the Emperor Theodosius showed him specially great honour. At that Council, God showed a mystery through His archbishop. When Meletius was propounding the doctrine of the Holy Trinity to the Arians, he first raised three fingers, separated one by one, then brought them together; and at that moment lightning flashed from his hand before the gaze of all present. At that Council, Meletius established Gregory the Theologian in the seat of Constantinople. While the Council was still in session, St Meletius finished his earthly course in Constantinople. His relics were taken to Antioch.

St Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow - a great hierarch of the Russian Church in a difficult period of Tartar oppression of the Russian people. Once in childhood he went bird-hunting, then went to sleep and in a dream heard a voice that said: 'Alexis, why rush around so fruitlessly? I will teach you to catch men!' He became a monk at the age of twenty, and in time became Metropolitan of Moscow. He twice went among the 'Golden Horde' of the Tartars, once to sooth the wrath of Verdevir Khan against the Russian people, and the second time at the invitation of Amurat Khan, to cure his wife's blindness. This woman had been blind for three years, but was healed and her vision restored when Alexis prayed and anointed her with holy water. After a life of great endeavour and fruitfulness, Alexis entered into rest in 1378 at the age of 85, and went to the court of the Lord.

New Martyr Alexis (Bui) - in 1926, he took over administration of Voronezh diocese. He was tall and thin, an inspired preacher, a great father and true monk. He did not have a theological education, and had been superior of a monastery in Kozlov. He celebrated the Divine services with heedful concentration. In mid 1927 the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius was published, and Voronezh was divided like all of Russia. All eyes were on Bishop Alexis, and he responded with a bold rejection of the Declaration and his announcement that he had chosen to be a follower of Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. For his epistle Bishop Alexis was suspended, and then on February 21, 1930 he was arrested by the GPU, dying in prison. Soviet researchers have made Bishop Alexis out to be the founder of a 'sect' called the "Buevtsy" (Bui-ites). It is clear from the material, however, that this movement was simply the local part of a larger catacomb movement amongst Orthodox Christians in Russia. Thus we can see the considerable influence of Bishop Alexis on the future development of the True Orthodox or Catacomb Church in Russia. Holy New Martyr Alexis, pray for us!

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyr Urban, bishop of Rome; Venerable Mary (known as the Monk Marinus), and her father, the Venerable Eugene at Alexandria; St. Ethilwald, bishop of Lindisfarne; Venerable Callia of Constantinople; St. Anthony II, patriarch of Constantinople; Venerable Prochorus, Luke, and Nicholas (Dvali), and the holy fathers of the Georgian monasteries in Jerusalem; Venerable Bassian of Uglich; New Martyr Christos of Albania; St. Meletius, archbishop of Kharkov; St. Basil the Confessor, archbishop of Kanevsk; 'Iveron' Icon of the Mother of God (9 th C).

13 / 26 February — Our Holy Father Martinian - The life of this saint is wonderful beyond measure and is worth reading in full. What did he not endure to fulfil the Law of God? At the age of eighteen, he went off into a mountain in Cappadocia called the Ark and there spent 25 years in fasting, vigils and prayer, and struggling with manifold temptations. When a woman came to tempt him and he saw that he would fall into sin with her, he leapt barefoot into the fire and stood in it until the pain brought forth tears from his eyes and he had killed all lust within himself. When other temptations arose, he fled to a lonely rock in the sea and lived there. When, though, in a shipwreck, a woman swam to the rock, he leapt into the sea intending to drown himself. But a dolphin took him upon its back and brought him, by God's providence, to the shore. He then decided to make nowhere his permanent home but to travel incessantly. Thus he passed through 164 towns in two years, exhorting and advising the people. He finally arrived in Athens, where he died in 422.

SS. Zoe and Photina - At first Zoe was a prostitute and a temptress of St. Martinian. When she saw this ascetic leap into the fire in order to subdue in himself all lust, she bitterly repented, retreated to a convent in Bethlehem where, as an ascetic and recluse, heroically lived a life of mortification. Repenting of all her sins, she received from God the gift of working miracles. By the winds of the sea St. Photina was cast on the island where St. Martinian had isolated himself. Martinian immediately fled the island and Photina remained there in fasting and prayer where she died.

Also commemorated on this day: Holy Apostle Aquila and his wife Priscilla; St. Timothy, archbishop of Alexandria; Righteous Castor of Karden, priest; St. Eulogius, archbishop of Alexandria; St. Symeon the Myrrh-gusher (Stephen in the world), prince of Serbia; St. George, archbishop of Mogilev; New Hieromartyrs Basil Triumfov and Gabriel Preobrazhensky, priests; New Hieromartyr Sylvester, archbishop of Omsk; New Hieromartyrs, Basil Gorbachev, Vladimir Pokrovsky, Zosimus Trubachev, John Kalabukhov, John Kosinsky, John Pokrovsky, Leontius Grimalsky, Michael Popov, Nicholas Dobroliubov, Parthenius Gruzinov, priests, Eugene Nikolsky, deacon, Nun-martyrs Anna (Korneeva), Vera (Morozova)

and Irene (Khvostova), and Martyr Paul Sokolov; St. Serafim, archbishop of Boguchar (†1950); Synaxis of the Saints of Omsk.

14 / 27 February — St. Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Teacher of the Slavs - brother of Methodius, originally from Salonica of eminent and wealthy parents, Leo and Maria. 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 and baptised him together with a great number of nobles and an even greater number of the people. After some time they compiled a Slavic alphabet of 38 letters and began to translate the service books from Greek to Slavonic. At the invitation of Prince Rattislav they went to Moravia, where, with great devotion, they spread and confirmed the Faith. They went to Rome at the invitation of the Pope and Cyril fell ill and died there in 869.

The Venerable Issac, Recluse of the Monastery of the Kiev Caves - Issac lived during the time of Saints Anthony and Theodosius. He came to the monastery as a wealthy merchant. He left all and distributed everything to the poor and dedicated himself to the most strict form of asceticism in an enclosed cell. St. Anthony himself passed one prosfora through an opening every other day. Deluded by demons who appeared to him in angelic light he bowed down to them and, after that, he bowed down before Satan himself believing that he was Christ. Because of that he became ill, and remained ill for two years after which he regained his health and became a more cautious and a more experienced ascetic. Because of this, before his death, God bestowed upon him abundant Grace. He died in the year 1090 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Auxentius of Bithynia; Venerable Maron, hermit of Syria; St. Abraham, bishop of Charres; The 12 Venerable Greek Master-Builders of the Dormition Cathedral in the Lavra of the Kiev Caves; Martyr Nicholas of Corinth; Translation of the relics of Prince-martyr Michael of Chernigov and his counselor Theodore; Martyr George of Mytilene; St. Hilarion the Georgian of Mt. Athos; New Hieromartyr Onesimus, bishop of Tula; New Hieromartyr Tryphon of Radonezh, deacon; St. Raphael, bishop of Brooklyn. Movable feast on Cheesefare Thursday: Venerable Shio of Mgvime, Georgia (6 th C)

15 / 28 February — Apostle Onesimus of the Seventy (ca 109) - he was a slave of Philemon, a rich and distinguished citizen of Colossae in Phrygia. He offended his master in some way and fled to Rome, where he heard the Gospel from the Apostle Paul and was baptised. By this time, Paul had brought Philemon also to the true Faith, and he reconciled the two of them, Philemon and Onesimus, master and slave, writing a special epistle to Philemon—one of the most moving writings to be found in the New Testament: 'I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds . . . Perhaps he departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever, not now as a servant, but above a servant; a brother beloved.' Deeply moved by this letter, Philemon received Onesimus as a brother indeed and gave him his freedom. Onesimus was later made bishop and received the see of Ephesus after the death of the Apostle Timothy. This is recorded in the epistles of Ignatius the God-Bearer. At the time of the persecution under Trajan, Onesimus, by then an old man, was arrested and taken to Rome. There he testified before the judge Tertylus, was imprisoned and finally slain. A wealthy woman took his body, placed it in a silver coffin and buried it, in the year 109.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Major of Gaza; Venerable Eusebius, hermit of Syria; Venerable Paphnutius and his daughter Euphrosyne; St. Theognius, bishop of Bethelia near Gaza; Venerable Paphnutius, hermit of the Kiev Caves; Martyr John of Thessaloniki; New Hieromartyrs Michael Pitaev and John Kuminov, priests; New Hieromartyrs Alexius Nikitsky, Alexius Sironov, Nicholas Morkovin, priests, Symeon Kuliamin, deacon Monk-martyr Paul (Kozlov), and Nun-martyr Sofia (Seliverstova); Venerable Anthimos of Chios; 'Vilnius' and 'Dalmatov' Icons of the Mother of God.

16 February / 1 March — TWELVE HOLY MARTYRS WHO SUFFERED DURING THE REIGN OF EMPEROR DIOCLETIAN - Pamphilus, the first of the martyrs, was a presbyter of the church at Caesarea in Palestine. He was a learned and devout man who corrected the text of the New Testament from the errors of the various copiers. He alone, recopied this salvific book and gave it to those who desired it. The second was the Deacon Valentine, old in years and grey in wisdom. He was an excellent authority of Holy Scripture and knew them completely by heart. The third was Paul, an honourable and distinguished man who, during a previous persecution, was cast into the fire for Christ. Besides them, there were five brothers, according to the flesh and spirit, who were born in Egypt and were returning to their homeland after being forced to work in the mines of Cilicia. At the gates of Caesarea they declared that they were Christians for which they were brought to court. To the question: "What are your names?" They responded: "The pagan names which our mother gave to us, we discarded and we call ourselves: Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Samuel and Daniel." To the question: "Where are you from?" They responded: "From Jerusalem on High." All of them were beheaded and with them a young man Porphyrius who sought the bodies of the martyrs in order to bury them. Porphyrius they burned alive as well as Seleucus, formerly an officer who had approached and kissed the martyrs before the sword fell on their heads.

Also the aged Theodulus, a servant of a Roman judge, who, during the funeral kissed one of the martyrs. Finally Julian, who revered and praised the lifeless bodies of the martyrs. And so they gave little for much, the inexpensive for the precious and mortality for immortality and took up habitation with the Lord in the year 308 A.D. The Holy Venerable Martyr Roman – a simple and illiterate peasant from Carpenesion. Learning of the heroism and glory of the martyrs of Christ, the young Roman desired martyrdom for himself. He went to Thessalonica where he began to praise the Faith of Christ on the streets and referred Islam as a fable. The Turks tortured him horribly and then sold him to a galley captain. Christians ransomed him from the captain and sent him to the Holy Mountain [Athos] where he was tonsured a monk by the illustrious Elder Acacius. But Roman further desired martyrdom for Christ. With the blessing of the Elder Acacius, Roman traveled to Constantinople pretending insanity and began to lead a dog along the Turkish streets. To the question: "What are you doing?" Roman responded that he is feeding the dog as Christians feed the Turks. The Turks threw him into a dry well, where he remained without bread for forty days. They then removed him from the well and beheaded him. A light emanated from his body for three days. An Englishman removed his body and took it to England. A certain monk dipped a towel in the blood of the martyr. This towel is preserved, even today, in the Dochiariu Monastery [Mt. Athos]. This glorious soldier of Christ suffered in the year 1694 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Maruthas, bishop of Martyropolis in Mesopotamia; Venerable Roman of Karpenision; Righteous Basil of Pavlovo-Posadsky; St. Macarius (Nevsky), metropolitan of Moscow. Movable feast on Cheese-fare Saturday: Commemoration of all the saints who showed forth in asceticism.

‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡

Monday - 3 John 1:1-14; Luke 19:29-40; 22:7-39

Tuesday - Luke 1:39-49, 56 (Matins Gospel); Jude 1:1-10; Luke 22:39-42, 45-23:1; Hebrews 13:17-21 (St. Alexis); Luke 6:17-23 (St. Alexis)

Wednesday - Joel 2:12-26 (6th Hour); Joel 3:12-21 (Vespers)

Thursday - Jude 1:11-25; Luke 23:1-34, 44-56

Friday - Zechariah 8:7-17 (6th Hour); Zechariah 8:19-23 (Vespers)

Saturday - Romans 14:19-23, 16:25-27; Galatians 5:22-6:2 (Venerables); Matthew 6:1-13
Matthew 11:27-30 (Venerables)

Icon Of The Feast

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



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

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



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

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

Before the throne, the progenitors of the human race, Adam and Eve, bow before Christ. (2.)In the center of the icon is the Archangel Michael. He is holding the scales of judgment and is surrounded by the books that contain the works of each person (Revelation 20:11-13). (3.) Also shown are the angels with trumpets announcing the return of Christ and signaling the resurrection of the dead and the commencement of the Last Judgment (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). (4.)



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

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



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

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

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

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

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