

16th Sunday After Pentecost

Hieromartyr Gregory of Armenia

30 September / 13 October



Resurrection Tropar, Tone 7: By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death / to the Thief, Thou didst open Paradise / for the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy! / and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God / to proclaim that Thou art risen / granting the world great mercy.

Troparion of St Gregory tone 3: Thou didst sow the knowledge of God in the hearts of the faithful,/ by cultivating the Faith;/ made radiant by the wounds of martyrdom/ thou didst shed thy light on all./ O Hierarch Gregory, pray to Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 7: The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, / for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. / Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: / The Saviour has come to those in faith, / enter, you faithful to the Resurrection.

Kontakion of St Gregory tone 2: Let us the faithful praise Hierarch Gregory/ who is a shepherd, teacher and enlightener;/ and he is an athlete for the Truth./ He intercedes with Christ our God that we may be saved.

Vespers

Lord I have Cried, Tone 7, on 10: Octoechos 6; Hieromartyr 4 (Having dyed thy sacred vesture); G: Hieromartyr (Who can recount); N: Sunday Dogmatic in the tone of the week. Aposticha: Octoechos; G: Hieromartyr (Noetically entering); N: Theotokion, Tone 6 (Christ the Lord).

Matins Gospel V

Epistle Corinthians 6:1-10

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We give no offence in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in sleeplessness, in fastings; By purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

What is the 'acceptable time'?

The 'acceptable time', what is this? That of the Gift, that of the Grace, when it is appointed not that an account should be required of our sins, nor penalty exacted, but besides being delivered, that we should also enjoy ten thousand good things, righteousness, sanctification, and all the rest. For how much toil would it have behoved us to undergo in order to obtain this 'time!' But, behold, without our toiling at all it has come, bringing remission of all that was before. He also calls it 'acceptable,' because He accepted those who had transgressed in ten thousand things, and not merely accepted, but advanced them to the highest honour ...Let us, too, therefore strive for the mastery in the time of this gift. It is a day of grace, of grace divine; wherefore even we will obtain the crown with ease.

For if, when laden with such great evils, He both received and delivered us, after being delivered from all and actually contributing our part, will He not accept us even more?...

He shows that afflictions are weapons which not only do not strike down, but do even fortify and make stronger ...And let us therefore, when we suffer anything for Christ's sake, not merely bear it nobly, but also rejoice. If we fast, let us leap for joy as if enjoying luxury; if we are insulted, let us dance as if praised; if we spend, let us feel as if gaining; if we bestow on the poor, let us count ourselves to receive: for he who does not give this way will not give readily. When therefore you have a mind to scatter abroad, do not look only at what you spend, but at the fact that you gain more. And not only in almsgiving, but also in every kind of virtue, compute not just the severity of the toils, but also the sweetness of the prizes, and before all the subject of this struggle: our Lord Jesus. And if you will readily enter upon the contest, you will love the whole time with pleasure.

For nothing is so apt to cause pleasure as a good conscience. Therefore Paul, though wounded every day, rejoiced indeed and exulted. But the men of this day, although they do not endure a shadow even of what he did, grieve and make lamentations from no other cause than that they do not have a mind full of heavenly philosophy.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XII on II Corinthians VI, 1, 3, 5. B#56, pp. 336-338, 340.

Second Reading: I Corinthians 16:13 - 24

GOSPEL: LUKE 6:31-36

The Lord said, as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

“LOVE YE YOUR ENEMIES”

Starting with the Sunday about “the talents,” the Sunday readings have been showing us how a talent (the strength given to each of us by God to fulfil His commandments of love for God and neighbour) was manifested in various Christian qualities of the human soul. On the Sunday about “the Canaanite woman”—in deep humility; on this Sunday about “the miraculous catch of fish”—in obedience to the word of God, in unshakable faith. And here in the Apostle and Gospel readings for this Sunday— in great patience in sorrows, in great spiritual comfort, and especially in the unspeakable joy which is hidden in mercy and love for one's enemies. The last one, by human standards, appears to be unnatural; but because of the strength of the Lord's talent, it is possible, joyous, wonderful.

This is what the Apostle says today: “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for ever, knoweth that I lie not” (II Cor. 11:31). What is this? What is the Apostle going to say further if he makes such a beginning in which he affirms, “I lie not”? Further on, he reveals what happened to him in Damascus: “In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands” (II Cor. 11:32-33). As you can see, a terrible epoch of martyrdom was opening up, which the first Christians lived through after the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, at the beginning of the preaching.

The Apostle Paul was going to Damascus to persecute the Christians. But on the way, the Lord Himself appeared to him in a vision and said: “Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” (Acts 9:4). And here the truth was revealed to the Apostle Paul. The Messiah, the true Messiah appeared to him on the road to Damascus. And when he arrived in Damascus, instead of persecuting the Christians, he himself started to preach Christ. Knowing his past, they did not believe him at first. But later, when they did believe, they began to consider him a traitor, an enemy of the Jews. This is why the Apostle Paul begins this passage with the words: “I lie not.” Because in order to preach Christ as the Messiah Who had come, strength was required; and a special grace of God was needed, that talent which God gives to his servants, to strengthen such a preacher. And here the same talent which strengthened the Apostle earlier in Damascus, when he was almost caught to be martyred (and only a miracle delivered him from their hands); this same talent supported and encouraged him even now.

And further on in this Epistle, the Apostle Paul shows us in more detail what actually strengthened his spirit in such a difficult struggle. "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven" (II Cor. 12:2). A mysterious revelation. There, Christ appeared on the road, and here, Christ revealed to him a great mercy. He revealed the state in which the soul perceived "the third heaven," a state of spirit, a peace of heart which is ineffable.

So in giving us this reading today, the Holy Church shows us that there was something in the martyrdom of the first Christians which supplied them with that strength in which appeared an unearthly force, which is this same godly talent, the gift of God. This was a peace of soul which covered all suffering, covered all earthly sorrows, which was completely above everything. Here is the state of spiritual strength which is presented to us today for our edification. We must follow the Lord. But how do we start on this way? Today's Gospel shows us the beginning, the first steps which a Christian must make in order to walk. If you remember, the Gospel said: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. If ye love them which love you, what thank have ye?" (Lk. 6:31-32). And further, "If ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? ...But love ye your enemies, and do good [to those who hate you], and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest" (Lk. 6:34-35).

"Love ye your enemies." This is the first step which today's Gospel reading offers us, so that we may receive that strength which the Apostle Paul also received in a vision of the third heaven, as did all the martyrs. If we will fulfil what the Holy Church gives us in the words of the Gospel, then let us only start to do so; let us step on this new way. And we will receive that revelation which will help us in those terrible moments when grief invades our soul, when sorrows surround us. The grief and sorrows will go away. Yes, they will leave us, because in that moment these points of grace, this godly light of Christ, will be revealed to us and will give us strength to bear the burdens of our earthly life, so that we may be comforted in Eternal Life with Christ.

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful

Second Gospel: Matthew 24:42 - 47

Saints of the week

30 September / 13 October - St Gregory the Enlightener, Bishop of Armenia - Gregory was of a noble family, kin to the imperial house of Persia (to King Artaban) and Armenia (King Khosrov). When these two houses made war between themselves, Gregory withdrew to Caesarea in Cappadocia, where he first came into contact with the Christian faith, received baptism and married. He had two sons of this marriage, Rostanes and Aristanes, and dedicated them both to the service of the Church. After his wife's death, he returned to Armenia and entered the service of King Tiridates. Gregory served his king faithfully, and the king loved him, but, when he discovered that Gregory was a Christian, he was greatly enraged and put pressure on him to reject the Christian faith and worship idols. Having no success whatever in this, Tiridates put Gregory to harsh torture and, after cruel torment, threw him into a deep pit filled with every kind of poisonous reptile, meaning thus to kill him. But God, who is all-seeing, preserved Gregory alive in that pit for four-teen whole years. Tiridates continued the persecution of Christians in his kingdom, and attacked a women's monastery of thirty-seven nuns with their abbess, Gaiane. When he had slain them with terrible tortures, Tiridates went mad and was like a monstrous wild boar. A man appeared to the king's sister in a dream and told her that her mad brother would not be restored to sanity until Gregory was taken out of the pit. This being done, Gregory healed and baptised Tiridates. Then Gregory, at the king's desire, became Bishop of Armenia and, with the king's help and, above all, God's help, enlightened the whole of Armenia and the surrounding area with the Christian faith. St Gregory finished his life of great toil in old age, in about 335. In his place, his son Aristanes was consecrated bishop, and he continued his father's work. Aristanes was one of the 318 fathers at the First Ecumenical Council.

St. Michael, First Metropolitan of Kiev - Sainted Michael, the first Metropolitan of Kiev, according to the Joakim chronicle was a Syrian by birth, but according to the account of other chronicles - he was a Bulgarian or Serb. In the year 989 he arrived at Korsun together with other clergy for holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir (Comm. 15 July), not long after Vladimir's acceptance of Baptism (988). To the lot of the first metropolitan of the Russian Church felt a difficult, but graced service. He zealously made the rounds of the newly-enlightened Russian Land, preaching the Holy Gospel, baptising and teaching the newly-illuminated people, founding the first churches and religious schools. In Rostov he established the first wooden church in honour of the Uspenie-Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God and installed there as bishop Theodore the Greek. Saint Michael was a wise and gentle, but also strict hierarch. The

Russian Church has preserved the memory of the meritorious deeds of the saint: in the synodikon-lists of the Novgorod and Kiev Sophia cathedrals he is rightfully called the initiator. Saint Michael died in the year 992 and was buried in the Desyatin-Tithe church of the Most Holy Mother of God in Kiev. In about the year 1103, under the hegumen Saint Theoktist (afterwards Bishop of Chernigov, Comm. 5 August), his relics were transferred to the Antoniev Cave, and on 1 October 1730 into the Pechersk Great Church (Uspenie temple). In connection with this his memory was established under 30 September, and also 15 July - the day of his repose. Earlier, his memory was noted also under 2 September, together with the Monks Antonii and Theodosii of Pechersk. Evidence for this is contained in the service to him: in the 2nd verse of the "Praises" about Saint Michael it speaks thus: "The first passages of the new year having begun, we do offer unto thee first songs, O blessed one, for having been the first beginning of the hierarchy in the Russian land".

Venerable Gregory, abbot of Pelshme, wonderworker of Vologda - The Monk Gregory (Grigorii) of Pel'shemsk, Vologda, was born in the city of Galich, Kostroma governance. He was descended from the line of the Lopotov nobility. When the youth reached age 15, his parents wanted him to marry, but they died, not having succeeded in the wished for marriage. Young Gregory distributed to the poor the inheritance left him and entered a monastery of the Most Holy Mother of God, situated on the shore of Lake Galich. The hegumen of the monastery regarded the new monk with mistrust because of his youth and noble parentage. Therefore he put Gregory into obedience under an experienced elder. With great humility the Monk Gregory served all the brethren. After a certain while he was vouchsafed the dignity of priest. Soon afterwards for the Monk Gregory was affirmed his fame as pastor, and many began to arrive for spiritual guidance and counsels. The Galich prince besought the monk to be godfather for his children. Burdened by fame and the nearness of his kinsfolk, the monk departed to Rostov for veneration of the relics of Saint Leontii (Comm. 23 May), and he settled in the monastery of the Monk Avraamii (Abraham, Comm. 29 October). But here also quickly spread reports about the ascetic feats of the saint. The monks of the Saviour (Yakovlev) monastery turned to the Rostov archbishop Dionysii (1418-1425) with a request to assign the Monk Gregory to head their monastery. Out of humility the monk accepted the guidance over the monastery, but after two years he secretly left the monastery and withdrew into the Vologda forest. In the Sosnovetsk wilderness he became acquainted with the Monk Dionysii of Glushitsk (Comm. 1 June). When the Lord prompted the holy ascetic to found his own monastery, the Monk Dionysii gave approval to the intent of his friend. With a cross on his shoulders the Monk Gregory crossed over the River Pel'shema and erected the cross in a forested thicket at the river bank. The first monk in the new monastery was the priest Alexei, in monasticism Alexander. In 1426 was built at the monastery a church in honour of the Most Holy Mother of God. Its icons were written by the Monk Dionysii, and the Monk Gregory himself copied the sacred texts for the monastery. Gradually the number of monks increased, the monastery spread out and became all the more known. The Monk Gregory concerned himself over the nurturing of piety at the monastery, and at the same time he shared in the destiny of his fatherland. In the year 1433 he went to Moscow in order to prevail upon the Galich prince Yurii Dimitrievich, who had seized the Moscow principality from Vasili Vasilievich the Dark, to return Moscow to prince Vasili. Prince Yurii obeyed the monastic elder. But in 1434 the son of prince Yurii, Dimitrii Shemyaka, began to ravage the Vologda lands, belonging to Great-prince. The Monk Gregory, distraught over the discord and violence, set out to Dimitrii Shemyaka and turned to him with bold words. "Prince Dimitrii, - said the monk, - thou doest deeds not Christian. Better it were that thou had gone into a pagan land to a vile people not knowing God. Widows and orphans cry out against thee to God. How many people from thee wilt perish from hunger and cold, and if soon thou cease not the fratricide, the bloodshed and violence, then soon thou shalt lose both glory and principedom". After this bold denunciation, Shemyaka gave orders to throw the holy elder off a bridge. For several hours the monk lay there unmoving. But his denunciations produced the desired effect, and Shemyaka soon quit Vologda. The courage of the monk but heightened the veneration of him. Before his end, he communed the Holy Mysteries, spoke a guidance to the brethren, and appointed as hegumen of the monastery his fellow ascetic Alexander. The Monk Gregory reposed on 30 September 1442 and was buried in the monastery founded by him.

Also commemorated on this day: New Hieromartyr Prokopius priest (1918). New Hieromartyrs Peter, Viacheslav, Peter, Symeon, Basil priests, Seraphim deacon, Virgin-martyr Alexandra, Martyrs Alexis and Matthew, Virgin Apollinaris (1937). New Hieromartyr Leonidas priest (1938). New Hiero-confessor Hieromonk Seraphim (Zagorovsky), of Kharkov (1943). Martyrs Rhipsima and Gaiana and companions, of Armenia (4th c.). St. Meletius, archbishop of Alexandria. St. Honorius, archbishop of Canterbury (653). St. Michael, great prince of Tver (1318). St. Theodore Yaroslavich of Vladimir (1246). Martyr-hermits Tancred, Torthred and Tova, of Thorney. Martyr Stratonicus. Martyr Mardonius.

1 / 14 October - The Protection of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary - The Church has always glorified the most holy Mother of God as the Protectress and Defender of the Christian people, entreating, by her intercession, God's loving-kindness towards us sinners. The Mother of God's aid has been clearly shown times without number, both to individuals and to peoples, both in peace and in war, both in monastic deserts and in crowded cities. The event that the Church

commemorates and celebrates today proves this constant protection of the Christian people by the Mother of God. On October 1st, 911, in the time of the Emperor Leo the Wise (or the Philosopher), there was an all-night vigil at the Blachernae church of the Mother of God in Constantinople. The church was crowded. St Andrew the Fool for Christ was standing at the back of the church with his disciple Epiphanius. At four o'clock in the morning, the most holy Mother of God appeared above the people with a veil spread over her outstretched hands, as though to protect them with this covering. She was clad in gold-encrusted purple and shone with an unspeakable radiance, surrounded by apostles, saints, martyrs and virgins. Seeing this vision, St Andrew gestured towards it and asked Epiphanius: 'Do you see how the Queen and Lady of all is praying for the whole world?' Epiphanius replied: 'Yes, Father; I see it and stand in dread.' As a result, this commemoration was instituted to remind us both of this event and of the Mother of God's constant protection whenever we prayerfully seek that protection, that shelter, in distress.

Also commemorated on this day: Apostle Ananias of the Seventy (1st c.). Venerable Romanus the Melodist of Constantinople (556). Venerable Sabbas, abbot of Visher (Novgorod) (1461). New Hieromartyr Alexis priest (1918). New Hieromartyr Michael priest (1920). New Hieromartyrs Alexander, Gregory, Nicholas priests, Martyr John (1937). New Hieromartyr Archpriest Ismael Rozhdestvensky, of Strelna (St. Petersburg) (1938). New Hieromartyr Theodore (1940). Martyr Dominus of Thessalonica (4th c.). Martyr Michael, abbot in Armenia, and 36 Fathers with him (790). Miracle of the Pillar with the Robe of the Lord under it at Mtskheta (330). Synaxis of All Saints of Moldova. Liublinsk, Pskov-Protection, Kasperovsk, Brailovsk, Gerbovetsk and Barsk Icons of the Mother of God. Venerable John Kukuzelis the Singer of Mt. Athos (ca. 1341). Venerable Gregory the Singer of Mt. Athos (1355). Venerable Bavo of Haarlem (659). St. Remigius of Rheims, apostle to the Franks (533). King Mirian and Queen Nana of Mtskheta, St. Abiathar of Mtskheta, and St. Sidonia, disciple of St. Nina (4th c.). St. Melchizedek, catholicos-patriarch of Georgia (11th c.). Martyr-prince Mylor of Brittany.

2 / 15 October - St Andrew the Fool for Christ - By birth a Slav, he was bought as a slave by Theognostus, a rich man in Constantinople, in the time of the Emperor Leo the Wise, son of the Emperor Basil the Macedonian. Andrew was a handsome young man, both in body and soul. Theognostus took a fancy to him and allowed him to learn to read and write. Andrew prayed fervently to God and attended church services with great devotion, and, in obedience to a heavenly revelation, resolved on the asceticism of folly for Christ's sake. Once, when he went to the well for water, he cast off his clothes and cut them to pieces, feigning madness. Saddened by this, his owner Theognostus put him in chains and took him to the church of St Anastasia the Deliverer from Bonds, that prayers be read for him. But, as Andrew did not recover as far as his owner could see, he was freed as being sick in mind. Holy Andrew feigned madness all day and spent the nights in prayer. He lived without a roof over his head, spending the nights in the open and going about half-naked in a single, tattered garment and eating a little bread when kindly people shared theirs with him. Whatever he received, he gave away to beggars, and when he gave it to them he would mock them to avoid their thanks, for holy Andrew looked only for the reward from God. Therefore great grace from God abode in him, and he was able to discern men's secrets, see angels and demons, drive demons from men and turn men from sin. He had a most wonderful vision of Paradise and the exalted powers of heaven; he saw the Lord Christ on His throne of glory; he, with his disciple Epiphanius, saw the most holy Mother of God in the Blachernae church, sheltering the Christian people with her veil (see yesterday); he heard in heaven unspeakable words, which he dared not recount to men. After unprecedentedly harsh asceticism, he entered into rest and the eternal glory of his Lord in 911.

Hieromartyr Cyprian and the Virgin Justina - Cyprian moved from Carthage to Antioch, where Justina lived with her parents. Edesius and Cleodonia. Edesius was an idolatrous priest and his whole household was pagan, but when Justina, going round the Christian churches, came to know the true Faith, she brought both her father and mother to Christ the Lord and all three were baptised by the bishop, Optatus. Cyprian was a magician, and had links with unclean spirits and powers of divination. A dissolute youth Aglaidas, a pagan, tried to lead Justina astray, being enraptured by her beauty, and, when the holy maiden firmly rejected him, sought Cyprian's help. Cyprian invoked evil spirits, one after the other, on Justina, to set alight in her the passion of impurity towards Aglaidas, but they were totally unsuccessful in this, for St Justina, with the sign of the Cross and prayer to God, drove out the evil spirits. Then Cyprian came to know the power of the Cross, and was himself baptised, in time becoming priest and bishop. The wicked pagans seized both him and Justina, and they were sent for trial to Damascus, and then tortured and beheaded in Nicomedia at the end of the third century.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Theodore of Sanaskar (Ushakov), admiral of the Russian Navy (1817). Virgin-martyr Alexandra (1938). Venerable Anna of Kashin (1338). Venerable Cassian, monk, of Uglich (1504). Martyrs David and Constantine, princes of Argveti, Georgia (740). Blessed Cyprian of Suzdal, fool-for-Christ (1622). New Martyr George of Philadelphia in Asia Minor (Mt. Athos) (1794). Venerable Damaris of Athens (1st c.). Great-martyr Theodore (Gavra) of Atran in Chaldia of Pontus (1180). Venerable Theophilus the Confessor.

3 / 16 October - Fast Day - The Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite - He is counted among the seventy lesser apostles. This wonderful man was of a noble, pagan family in Athens. Finishing his education in Athens, he went to Egypt to learn more. One day while he was there, the Lord Christ breathed His last on the Cross, and the sun was darkened and it was dark in Egypt for the space of three hours. Then Dionysius cried out: 'Either God the Creator of the world is suffering, or the world is ending.' Returning to Athens, he married a woman called Damaris and had sons by her. He was a member of the highest court in Greece, the Areopagus, and was always thereafter known as the Areopagite. When the Apostle Paul preached the Gospel in Athens, Dionysius was baptised with his whole household (Acts 17:34). Paul consecrated him bishop of Athens (he having left his wife and children and status from love of Christ), and he travelled widely with Paul, coming to know all the other apostles. He went especially to Jerusalem, to see the most holy Mother of God, and wrote of his meeting with her in one of his works, being at the burial of the Most Pure along with the other apostles. When his teacher, St Paul, suffered martyrdom, Dionysius desired to die such a death himself, so he went off to Gaul to preach the Gospel among the barbarians, accompanied by Rusticus, a priest, and a deacon called Eleutherius. They endured much but met with great success. By their labours, many were turned to the Christian faith and Dionysius built a small chapel in Paris where he celebrated divine service. When he was ninety years old, he was seized and tortured for Christ, together with Rusticus and Eleutherius, until they were all three beheaded with the sword. The severed head of St Dionysius jumped a long way and fell in front of a Christian woman, Catula, who buried it with his body. He suffered in the time of Domitian, in the year 96. He wrote several famous works: on the names of God, on the heavenly and ecclesiastical hierarchies, on mystical theology and on the most holy Mother of God.

Also commemorated on this day: New Hiero-confessor Agathangelus (Preobrazhensky), metropolitan of Yaroslavl (1928). Finding of the relics (1988) of Venerable Ambrose of Optina (1911). St. Jerome of Aegina (1966). Venerable Dionysius, recluse of the Kiev Caves (15th c.). Venerable John the Chozebite, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine (532). Blessed Hesychius the Silent of Mt. Horeb (6thc.). Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos "Trubchevsk" (1765). Hieromartyr Dionysius, archbishop of Alexandria and eight martyrs with him (257-8). St. Leger of Autun (679). Hieromartyrs Hewald the White and Hewald the Black, at Cologne. Martyr Theoctistus. Martyr Theagenes.

4 / 17 October - The Hieromartyr Hierotheos - He was a friend of Dionysius the Areopagite, and received the Christian faith from the Apostle Paul a little after Dionysius. This Apostle later made him bishop in Athens. At the time of the Dormition of the most holy Mother of God, Hierotheos arrived in Jerusalem and took part in the funeral. With his divine singing, he brought heartfelt joy to many and showed himself to be greatly inspired. He laboured greatly for the sake of the Gospel, brought many pagans to the truth, governed his flock well and finally ended a martyr for Christ, who gave him a twofold wreath in His heavenly Kingdom: of the hierarch and of the martyr.

Uncovering of Relics of Sainted Gurii, Archbishop of Kazan (1563), and Sainted Varsonophii, Bishop of Tver (1576) - Occurred at Kazan in the year 1595. During the construction of a new stone church in honour of the Transfiguration of the Lord at the Saviour-Transfiguration monastery, which had been founded by Sainted Varsonophii, were dug up graves with the bodies of the sainted-hierarchs in the location of the altar-wall of the former wooden church. The unusual aspect of incorrupt graves filled Sainted Ermogen (Comm. 17 February) with a pious daring to open up the graves before a large crowd of the people. Saint Ermogen himself thus describes this event: "We beheld a marvel we had not hoped for. The coffin of the saint was full of fragrant myrh, like pure water, and the relics of Saint Gurii were above the myrh, like as a sponge beareth itself. God did endow his venerable and much-toiling body with incorruption, as now is seen by all. Decay touched only very little of the upper lip, his other limbs were whole, and nothing was disappeared. We touched his burial robe and it held up very firm. Then we opened up the coffin of the Monk Varsonophii and we looked: the relics of Saint Varsonophii were esteemed of God with much non-decay. Decay had touched the feet of the monk, though however the bones were not very destroyed, but rather held up quite firm and there was no other weakness in the condition of the effects, as likewise Saint Gurii. The burial robe, as also with the Monk Gurii, strong like new". Many sick were healed, having been anointed with the holy myrh flowing from the relics of Saint Gurii. In the Iconographic Originals under 4 October is said: "Gurii is in likeness grey and bearded, like Basil of Caesarea, in mitre, in omophor, in the hands a Gospel, and robe of a sainted-hierarch. Varsonophii is in likeness greyed and of beard, like Gurii, parted at the end, in mitre, robe of sainted-hierarch, omophor and Gospel".

Also commemorated on this day: Synaxis of All Saints of Kazan. New Hieromartyr Demetrius priest (1918). New Hieromartyrs Demetrius priest Nicholas, Micael, Jacob and Tikhon priests, Martyr Basil (1937). St. Khionia confessor (1945). St. Vladimir Yaroslavich, prince of Novgorod (1052), and his mother, St. Anna of Novgorod (1050). Venerables Helladius and Onesimus of the Near Caves in Kiev (12th-13th c.). Venerable Ammon of the Far Caves in Kiev (13th c.). Martyrs Gaius, Faustus, Eusebius,

and Chaeremon of Alexandria (3rd c.). Venerable Peter of Capitolia, bishop of Bostra (715). Martyrs Domnina and her daughters Berenice (Bernice) and Prosdoco, of Syria (4th c.). Venerable Paul the Simple (340) and Venerable Ammon (350), of Egypt, disciples of St. Anthony the Great. Martyr Adautus and his daughter St. Callisthene, of Ephesus (4th c.). Martyr Stephen (Stiljanovich) of Serbia (1515) and his wife, St. Elena. Blessed Elizabeth of Serbia. St. Theodore the Wonderworker, bishop of Tamassos in Cyprus (2nd. c.). St. John (Lampadistes) of Cyprus (10th c.). Sts. Jonah and Nectarius of Kazan, monks (16th c.). Martyr Evdemoz the Catholicos of Georgia (1642). Venerable Peor recluse of the Kiev Caves (13 c.). St. Peter (Michurin) of Siberia (1820).

5 / 18 October - Sts. Peter, Alexis, Jonah, Philip, Hermogenes (Germogen), Philaret, Innocent (Veniaminov), and Tikhon, metropolitans of Moscow. - The celebration of a day in common to honour the All-Russian Sainted Hierarchs Peter, Alexei and Jona was established by Patriarch Job on 5 October 1596. Sainted Philip was enumerated to it in the year 1875, by petition of Sainted Innocent (Innokentii), Metropolitan of Moscow (Comm. 31 March and 23 September); and Sainted Ermogen - was added only in the year 1913. Celebrating the memory of the Sainted-Hierarchs on a day in common, the Church offers each of them equal honour, as heavenly protectors of the city of Moscow and prayerful intercessors for the Fatherland.

The Holy Martyr Charitina of Amisus - Orphaned young, she was adopted by an eminent Christian man called Claudius, who brought her up as his own daughter. Charitina was meek, humble, obedient and silent. She studied the law of God day and night and vowed to live in perpetual virginity as a true bride of Christ. But, Charitina having brought others to the Christian faith, the Emperor Diocletian's governor, Dometius, heard of her and sent soldiers to take her from her foster-father for trial. The judge asked her: 'Is it true, little girl, that you are a Christian, and that you delude others by bringing them to this dishonourable faith?' Charitina courageously replied: 'It is true that I am a Christian, and a lie that I delude others. I lead those in error to the way of truth, bringing them to my Christ.' The wicked judge ordered that her hair be cut off and live coals put on her head, but the maiden was preserved by God's power. They threw her into the sea, but God delivered her from it. She was bound to a wheel which began to turn, but an angel of God stopped the wheel and Charitina remained unharmed. Then the wicked judge sent some dissolute youths to rape her. Fearing this dishonour, St Charitina prayed to God to receive her soul before these dissolute men could foul her virginal body and so, while she was kneeling in prayer, her soul went out from her body to the immortal Kingdom of Christ.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Gabriel confessor (1959). Venerable Damian the Healer (1071), and Venerables Jeremiah (1070) and Matthew (1085), clairvoyants of the Kiev Caves. Venerable Charitina, princess of Lithuania (1281). Hieromartyr Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria (265). Martyr Mamelta (Mamelchtha) of Persia (344). Venerable Gregory (Grigol) the Archimandrite of Chandzoe in Klarjeti, Georgia (861). Venerable Fathers and Mothers of the Klarjeti Wilderness (9th c.). Venerable Cosmas, abbot in Bithynia (10th c.). Uncovering of the relics (1841) of Venerable Eudocimus the Unknown, monk of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos. Venerable Methodia of Cimola (1908). St. John (Mavropos), metropolitan of Euchaita (1100). St. Sabbas of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos (1350). St. Varlaam, desert-dweller of Chikoysk (1846). Uncovering of the relics of New Hieromartyr Bishop Basil of Kineshma (1945).

6 / 19 October - The Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas - He was one of the twelve Great Apostles. Through his doubt of the Resurrection of the Lord Christ, a new confirmation was given of that wonderful and saving event, for the risen Lord appeared again to His disciples, to convince Thomas. The Lord said to Thomas: 'Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing', and Thomas cried: 'My Lord and my God! (John 20). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the apostles cast lots to see who would go where to preach the Gospel, it fell to Thomas to go to India. He was somewhat saddened at having to go so far away, but the Lord appeared to him and comforted him. In India, St Thomas converted many, both rich and poor, to the Christian faith, and founded a Church there, making priests and bishops. Among others, St Thomas converted two sisters, Tertiana and Mygdonia, wives of Indian princes. Both sisters were ill-treated for their faith by their husbands, who would not live with them after their baptism, and divorced them. Being freed from their marriages, they lived godly lives till their deaths. Dionysius and Pelagia, a couple at first betrothed to each other, heard the Apostle's teaching and did not live together, but devoted themselves to the ascetic life. Pelagia died a martyr for the Faith and Dionysius was made bishop by the Apostle. Prince Misdæus, the husband of Tertiana, whose wife and son Iuzanes Thomas baptised, condemned the Apostle to death, and sent five soldiers who ran him through with their lances, and thus the holy Apostle Thomas gave his soul into the hands of his Christ. Before his death, he, with the other apostles, was miraculously borne to Jerusalem for the funeral of the most holy Mother of God. Arriving late, he grieved bitterly and, at his request, the tomb of the Most Pure was opened, but the body was not there; the Lord had taken His Mother to His heavenly home. Thus St Thomas first, by his unbelief, confirmed the faith in the Resurrection of the Lord and then, by his late arrival, revealed to us the wondrous glorification of the Mother of God.

Also commemorated on this day: New Hieromartyr John priest (1937). Virgin-martyr Eroteis of Cappadocia. New Martyr Macarius at Kion in Bithynia (Mt. Athos) (1590). Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos "O All-Hymned Mother". Venerable Cindeus of Cyprus, monk.

‡ **Daily Scripture Readings** ‡

Monday - Luke 1:39-49, 56 (Matins Gospel); Hebrews 9:1-7 (Epistle, Theotokos); Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (Gospel, Theotokos)

Tuesday - Ephesians 2:19-3:7; Luke 6:37-45; Ephesians 1:22-2:3; Luke 6:24-30; 1 Timothy 1:12-17 (Saints); John 10:9-16 (Saints)

Wednesday - Ephesians 3:8-21; Luke 6:46-7:1; Acts 17:16-34 (Hieromartyr); Matthew 13:44-54 (Hieromartyr)

Thursday - Ephesians 4:14-19; Luke 7:17-30

Friday - John 10:9-16 (Matins Gospel); Ephesians 4:17-25; Luke 7:31-35; Hebrews 13:17-21 (Saints); Matthew 5:14-19 (Saints)

Saturday - John 21:15-25 (Matins Gospel); 1 Corinthians 14:20-25; Luke 5:27-32; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16 (Apostle); John 20:19-31 (Apostle)

REFLECTION

Marvelous changes occur daily in the destiny of men-in the present, as in times past. Those humiliated for the sake of God's righteousness are raised to great heights, and the blasphemers of the Faith are converted to servants of the Faith. King Tiridates threw St. Gregory into a deep pit. The saint spent fourteen years in that pit, forgotten by the entire world, but not by God. Who among men could have thought that the greatest light of the Armenian people was to be found in the darkness of a pit? And who would have ever thought that the powerful and tyrannical King Tiridates would one day save the life of that same Gregory, whom he had condemned to death, and would help him more than the rest of the whole world could help him? After fourteen years, God revealed Gregory as still alive. Gregory then miraculously healed the insane king. King Tiridates, the unrestrained persecutor of Christ, was baptized and became the greatest zealot for the Christian Faith! It could be said that, with God's help, Gregory and Tiridates were both drawn out of the pit of darkness-Gregory a physical one, and Tiridates a spiritual one. Oh, the infinite wisdom of God in governing the destinies of men! The formerly wild and passionate Tiridates was softened and ennobled so much by repentance and the Christian Faith, that he came to resemble St. Gregory more than his old, unrepentant self.