

# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost Fathers of the Six Ecumenical Councils & Great Prince Vladimir

15 / 28 July

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 4:** When the women disciples of the Lord / learned from the Angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection / they cast away the ancestral curse / and elatedly told the Apostles / death is overcome / Christ God is risen / granting the world great mercy.

**Tropar of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils, Tone 8 Spec. Mel. ("Virgin Theotokos rejoice ..."):** Most glorious art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast established our fathers upon the earth as beacons, and hast thereby guided us all to the true Faith! O greatly Compassionate One, glory be to Thee!

**St Vladimir Troparion tone 4:** Sitting on the throne of God-protected Kiev, / thou wast like a merchant seeking goodly

pearls, O Vladimir. / Thou didst search and Send to the Imperial City / to know the Orthodox Faith. / Thou didst find Christ the Pearl of great price, / Who chose thee like Paul and enlightened thy blindness at the Font. / Thy people celebrate thy repose: / wherefore pray for Russia and all peoples, / that the Orthodox may be granted peace and great mercy.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 4:** My Saviour and Redeemer / as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains / He has shattered the gates of hell, / and as Master, / He has risen on the third day.

**Kondak of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils, Tone 8 Spec. Mel. ("As the firstfruits ..."):** The preaching of the apostles and the dogmas of the fathers sealed the one Faith of the Church; and clad in the robe of truth woven of theology from on high, it setteth aright and glorifieth the great mystery of piety.

**St Vladimir Kontakion tone 8:** Like the Apostle Paul, O Vladimir, thou didst abandon childish ways / and in manhood wast royally adorned with Baptism. / Now thou art joyfully standing in the presence of Christ our Saviour: / pray that Orthodox Hierarchs and people, and all creation, may be saved.



**Vespers: Gen. 14:14-20; Deut. 1:8-10, 15-17; Deut. 10:14-21; III Kings 8:22-23, 27-30; Isa. 61:10-11, 62:1-5; Isa. 60:1-16**

Lord I have Cried - Tone 4, on 10: Resurrection 3; Fathers 4 (Before the ages);  
Saint 3 (in word and deed); G: Fathers (Let us praise today the mystic clarions of the Spirit); N: Sunday Dogmatic Tone 4.

Aposticha: Octoechos; G: Fathers (This day let us, the assemblies of the Orthodox);  
N: Theotokion (Mercifully regard the supplications of thy servants).

**Matins Gospel V**

## **EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 10:1-10**

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) Or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

### **SEEKING TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, THEY HAVE NOT SUBMITTED TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD**

Observe how adroitly he favours them in the word, and yet shows their unseasonable obstinacy ... These things he says to show that it was from a petulance and love of power that they erred, rather than from ignorance ... For if Christ be 'the end of the Law,' he who does not have Christ, even if he seems to have righteousness, does not have it. But he who has Christ, even though he may not have properly fulfilled the Law, has received the whole. For the end of the physician's art is health ... He who does not know how to heal, though he may seem to be a follower of the art, comes short of everything: so is it in the case of the Law and of faith ... For what was the object of the Law? To make man righteous. But it did not have the power, for no one fulfilled it ... But to this end Christ gave a fuller accomplishment through faith. Be not then afraid, he says, as if you are transgressing the Law by having come over to the faith. For only then do you transgress it, when for the sake of the Law you do not believe in Christ.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XVII on Romans X. B#54, pp. 472- 473.*

Second Epistle (Holy Fathers): Heb 13: 7-16

Third Epistle (St Vladimir): Gal 1:1-19

### **GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 8:28 - 9:1**

When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region. So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

### **THE DEMONIACS**

The Gospel reading for last Sunday taught us a lesson on the deep humility of the Roman Centurion, who came to ask Christ for the healing of his servant. But today's Gospel does not give us a lesson of what we should do, but rather shows us what we should avoid, what we should not do. This shows us the striking reality of the existence of the power of evil. In our time such a reality doesn't even require proof. Every day, every newspaper tells about a whole list of crimes which simply cannot be explained without recognising that the person is possessed by an external, evil power.

Today's Gospel draws a terrible picture for us: two demoniacs came out from the tombs, "exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way" (Mt. 8:28). Christ permitted the demons to enter into a huge herd of swine. The possessed ones were healed, but the whole herd of swine jumped from the precipice into the sea. What a terrible force! A real, overt force of evil!

But here is the last verse of the Gospel: "And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus" (Mt. 8:34). And now you expect to find something gladdening: the whole town has united in order to meet the Lord. You want to think that it was faith that united them, that they, as once did the Samaritans, would ask the Lord to remain with them, would thank Him for His healing, for the salvation of two of their townspeople,

and also for freeing them from the danger present when passing that way. And what happened? Yes, they asked the Lord, but not to stay with them, but rather to “depart out of their coasts!” (Mt. 8:34).

Here is the most terrible passage in this Gospel. First the demons were in two possessed men. Later, we saw them in an entire herd of swine. And then, a whole town —possessed. With what? With the passion for profit. According to Jewish law, raising pigs was unlawful, sinful. But it made money, and huge amounts of money. And here an entire herd perished. And the people seemed to be saying to the Lord: “You have only set foot on our land and have caused us such a terrible loss. What will happen next if you stay here any longer? You will ruin us completely! We see, we understand your greatness: even the devils are obedient to you! But what does that do for us? What do the two healed men matter to us? We don’t need your miracles . We need thousands, millions of dollars. You are not for us. Go away, go away at once.”

Brothers and sisters, let us examine our soul. Doesn’t the same thing happen with us? Some kind of passion takes possession of us, but Christ becomes an obstacle. And in our soul, we whisper the same terrible words: “Go away from us.” May the Lord keep us from this! May our words directed to Him always be: “Come to us and never leave us.”

*The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei*

Second Gospel (Holy fathers): John 17: 1-13

Third Gospel (St Vladimir); John 10: 1-9

### Saints of the Week

**15 / 28 July - Holy, Equal-to-the-Apostles, St Vladimir, Great Prince of Russia** - Centuries before it was officially called 'Russia,' the vast territory inhabited by the various tribes of Eastern Slavs was sown with seeds of Christianity. But little fruit sprouted in the land's open steppes which dominated its southern reaches and provided a highroad for nomadic intruders. For over a thousand years a succession of Huns, Avars, Magyars and Pechenegs swept in from the east to establish a hegemony over an area whose waterways provided a potentially valuable trade link between the Baltic and the Black Seas. The eastern Slavs, who spread out along the great rivers as far as Lake Ladoga to the north, were a heterogeneous group which lacked the unity necessary to repel these invading hordes. They welcomed the assistance of the Varangians, Scandinavian adventurers from the north, whom they readily assimilated. According to the earliest written history of the area, the 11th century *Chronicle*, in the year 862 one of these Norsemen by the name of Rurik established himself in Novgorod as a leader with the aim of organizing a defence against the Pechenegs. The strategically superior location of Kiev to the south induced Rurik's successor Ole~ to move the capital in 882 and enabled him to consolidate most of the Eastern Slav tribes under his rule. In 912 Oleg was succeeded by Rurik's son Igor who had married a simple young countrywoman whom he had met by chance while on a hunting expedition in the area of Pskov. The unlikely match turned out to be providential; the girl's beauty was rivalled by her lofty wisdom which belied her humble origin and earned her the title 'most wise.' Olga proved to be a capable ruler when, after the death of Igor in 945, she became regent for their son Sviatoslav. As a ruler she naturally had contact with the neighbouring Greeks; the proximity of Constantinople, capital of the Christian East, may well have inspired her to examine its religion which had already gained enough adherents in Kiev to have a church. Olga's wisdom proved itself in her decision to embrace the Christian faith, and in 957 she journeyed to Constantinople to be baptized and to be instructed in its precepts. Having received divine illumination, Olga returned to the land of Rus bringing, as it were, the dawn's rays. To her sorrow, her son Sviatoslav was not interested in changing his pagan beliefs, although he was tolerant of the Christian faith and did not interfere in his mother's active missionary work. Fortunately, his frequent absence from Kiev on various campaigns gave Olga greater influence not only in administrative matters but also in the upbringing of her three grandsons, even though Sviatoslav forbade her to raise them in the Christian faith. But her life of prayer and charity commended her new religion and bore fruit in the generations that followed her blessed repose in the year 969. Sviatoslav was not interested in staying in Kiev and soon divided his realm among his three sons--Yaropolk, Oleg and Vladimir--while he himself went to Bulgaria. When he died in battle in 972, his sons began to quarrel over primacy of rule. Eventually, the cunning of the youngest son, Vladimir, gained for him the Kievan throne which he secured by having his eldest brother Yaropolk put to death. Oleg had died earlier in battle, leaving Vladimir sole ruler over a loose federation of city states whose geographical territory was widespread and ill-defined. Vladimir began his rule in the full tradition of his pagan predecessors, indulging in a warring and passionate life. Once, after a successful campaign, Vladimir wished to render special thanks to the pagan gods by offering a human sacrifice. The lot fell upon a young Varangian boy by the name of John who was a Christian together with his father Theodore. Theodore refused to give up his son, explaining to those who had come to fetch the boy that the pagan gods were lifeless idols and that the people should turn to the one true God of the Christians. The crowd became enraged and killed them both there in their own home. Truly it has been said that the blood of martyrs is the seed of

Christianity, for as accustomed as Vladimir was to bloodshed, he was strangely affected by the martyrdom of this father and son. He began to think seriously about religion. Feeling less and less satisfied with the paganism of his forebears, Vladimir thirsted for a knowledge of truth. This news spread abroad and attracted to Kiev advocates of various faiths in hopes of winning the Grand Prince to their respective persuasions. There came Bulgar Moslems, papal envoys from Germany, Jews from Taurid and finally an Orthodox Greek--each praising their religion as the best. Vladimir was predisposed to favour the wise arguments of the Greek, a righteous philosopher who gave a thorough explanation of the Orthodox faith beginning with God's creation of the World, the fall of man and his banishment from paradise, the promise of the Messiah, His humble birth, His miracles and teaching of an everlasting Kingdom beyond this world, His sufferings and death on the Cross for man's salvation, and His glorious Resurrection. He then unrolled before the Prince a scroll on which was depicted the last and dread Judgment. Vladimir was struck with the fear of God and said: "How good it will be for those on the right, but woe to them who are wicked and are cast to the left!" The Greek urged Vladimir to accept the truth of holy Orthodoxy and be baptized, but Vladimir recognized the importance of the decision he was to make and was not to be rushed. He summoned together his retinue and the Kievan elders to take counsel, explaining what he had heard from the various ambassadors. "Every man," they replied, "will commend his own religion. But send out your own envoys to examine how the different religions are practiced and the manner of worship," This suggestion seemed most judicious and ten men were promptly dispatched on this mission. On their return they related to the Grand Prince what they had witnessed: the Moslem religion was grim and full of fear; the Germans lacked beauty; but the Greek worship no tongue can describe, 'for during the service in their temple we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. No man, having tasted what is sweet, has any desire for what is bitter. So too, having experienced the Greek faith, we want no other." The elders supported the recommendation of the envoys: "If the Greek religion were not the best, your wise grandmother would not have adopted it." Vladimir needed no further persuading. Memories of his grandmother's righteous life and the witness of Kiev's Christian inhabitants settled his mind in favour of what he had heard. But it still remained for his heart to be converted. Pride hindered Vladimir from asking the Greeks outright for instruction and baptism. Applying a typically pagan solution, he went to war with the Greeks and captured their city of Kherson. As terms of peace, he demanded the hand of the Byzantine emperors' sister Anna in marriage. They agreed on condition that Vladimir accept the Christian faith. This accorded neatly with Vladimir's ultimate objective. But God was more interested in possessing his heart than his calculating mind. A few days before Princess Anna arrived in Kherson with her retinue of clergy and servants, Vladimir was struck with an eye disease which extinguished his sight. Fearing this to be a punishment from the pagan gods whom he was about to renounce, Vladimir wavered in his decision. Anna, upon hearing of this crisis, encouraged the Grand Prince to be baptized at once, and thereby to be healed not only of his physical blindness, but also of his spiritual blindness. Humbled by his helpless state, Vladimir sent immediately for the bishop of Kherson and, after a thorough preparation, the ceremony of baptism took place. No sooner had the bishop laid his hand on Vladimir's head and invoked the name of the All-holy Trinity than Vladimir's vision was restored, and he cried out: "Now have I come to know the true God!" This miracle confirmed the faith of the Grand Prince who became radically transformed. Returning to Kiev with his new Christian spouse and several priests, he set about cleansing the city from idolatry with orders to destroy the pagan statues and urging all to prepare for holy baptism. On August 1, 988, a countless multitude of young and old assembled in the waters of the Dneiper River. Vladimir stood on the bank and prayed for his people: "Creator of heaven and earth! bless these Thy new children, grant them to know Thee, the true God; strengthen them in the right faith! Be unto me a helper against evil temptation that I might worthily praise Thy holy name !" Vladimir's former passions were transformed into a zeal for good. From Constantinople he engaged skilled artisans to construct a magnificent church on the spot where, until so recently, the statue of Perun had stood. Another church, dedicated to the Theotokos, was built where the two Varangians, Theodore and John, had been martyred. The Prince shared the apostolic work of the Greek bishops and priests who went about the towns and villages spreading the true Faith which thousands willingly embraced, although many remained stuck in the mire of paganism. Vladimir grieved for them, but knew that enlightenment was not to be achieved with a sword. Instead, he established schools where even children of the poorest families could learn to read the Scripture and be trained as priests.

**Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Councils** - The Orthodox Church acknowledges Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils: The First Ecumenical Council (Nicea I) (Comm. 29 May, and also movably, on 7th Sunday after Pascha) was convened in the year 325 against the heresy of Arius, in the city of Nicea in Bithynia under the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine the Great.

The Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople I) (Comm. 22 May) was convened in the year 381 against the heresy of Macedonias, by the emperor Theodosius the Great.

The Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus) (Comm. 9 September) - was convened in the year 431 against the heresy of Nestorius, in the city of Ephesus by the emperor Theodosius the Younger.

The Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon) (Comm. 16 July) - was convened in the year 451, against the Monophysite heresy, in the city of Chalcedon under the emperor Marcian.

The Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II) (Comm. 25 July) - "Concerning the Three Chapters", was convened in the year 553, under the emperor Justinian the Great.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III) (Comm. 23 January) - during the years 680-681, was against the Monothelite heresy, under the emperor Constantine Pogonatos.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicaea II) (Comm. as moveable feastday on Sunday nearest 11 October) - was convened just like the First Council, at Nicaea, but in the year 787 against the Iconoclast heresy, under the emperor Constantine and his mother Irene. (Accounts about the Councils are likewise located under the days of commemoration).

The significance of a special Church veneration of the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils consists in this, that the Ecumenical Councils, and only they, are of themselves in entirety expressive of the faith, will and mind of the Ecumenical Catholic Church - of an Orthodox Plenitude, by virtue of the immutable promises of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and by the Apostolicity inhering in the hierarchy, - they possess the wherewithal to bring forth infallible and "of benefit to all" definitions in the areas of Christian faith and Church piety.

The dogmatic conciliar definitions - "orosoï" in Greek, are employed in the Orthodox Church as having an inalienable and constant authority, and such definitions always begin with the Apostolic formula: "It hath pleased the Holy Spirit and us" (Acts 15: 28).

The Ecumenical Councils were convened in the Church each time regarding a special need, in connection with the appearance of divergent opinions and heresies, so as to seek out the Orthodox Church teaching of faith and tradition. But the Holy Spirit has thus seen fit, that the dogmas - the truths of faith, immutable in their content and scope, constantly and consequently are revealed by the conciliar mind-set of the Church, and are given precision by the holy fathers within theological concepts and terms in exactly such measure, as is needed by the Church itself for its economy of salvation. The Church, in expounding its dogmas, is dealing with the concerns of a given historical moment, "not revealing everything in haste and thoughtlessly, nor indeed, ultimately hiding something" (Saint Gregory the Theologian).

A brief summary of the dogmatic theology of the First Six Ecumenical Councils is formulated and contained in the First Canon-rule of the Council of Trullo (also known as Quinisext), held in the year 692. The 318 Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council are spoken of in this Canon I of Trullo as having: "with one-mindedness of faith revealed and declared to us the oneness of essence in the three Hypostaseis-Persons of the God-original nature and, ... instructing to be worshipped - with one worship - the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, they cast down and dispelled the false-teaching about unequal degrees of Divinity".

The 150 Holy Fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council left their mark on the theology of the Church as regards the Holy Spirit, "repudiating the teaching of Macedonias, who wanted to chop apart the Undivided Unity, such that there should not perfectly be the mystery of our hope".

The 200 God-bearing Fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council expounded the teaching about "the One Christ, the Son of God Incarnate" and they confessed that "truly the God-begetter [Theotokos, Bogoroditsa, i.e. Mother of God] without seed hath given birth to Him, whilst being the Immaculate and Ever-Virgin".

The point of faith of the 630 God-chosen Holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council promulgated "One Christ, the Son of God... glorified in two natures". The 165 God-bearing Holy Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council "collectively gave anathema and repudiated Theodore of Mopsuetia, the teacher of Nestorius, and Origen, and Didymas, and Euagrios, renovators of the Hellenic teaching about the transmigration of souls and the transmutation of bodies and the impieties raised against the resurrection of the dead". The faith-confession of the 170 Holy Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council "explained, that we ought to confess two natural volitions, or two wills [trans. note: the one Divine, and the other human], and two natural operations (energies) in He That hath been incarnated for the sake of our salvation, our One Lord Jesus Christ, True God".

In decisive moments of Church history, the holy Ecumenical Councils promulgated their dogmatic definitions, as trustworthy delimitations in the spiritual militancy for the purity of Orthodoxy, which will last until such time, as "all shalt come into the oneness of faith in the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4: 13). In the struggle with new heresies, the Church does not abandon its former dogmatic concepts nor

replace them with some sort of new formulations. The dogmatic formulae of the Holy Ecumenical Councils need never to be superseded, they remain always contemporary to the living Tradition of the Church. Wherefore the Church proclaims:

"The faith of all in the Church of God hath been glorified by men, which were luminaries in the world, cleaving to the Word of Life, so that it be observed firmly, and that it dwell unshakably until the end of the ages, conjointly with their God-bestown writings and dogmas. We reject and we anathematise all, whom they have rejected and anathematised, as being enemies of Truth. And if anyone doth not cleave to nor admit the aforementioned pious dogmas, and doth not so think nor preach, let that one be anathema" (from Canon I of the Council of Trullo, ascribed to the Sixth Ecumenical Council).

**Translation of the relics of St. Swithun, bishop and wonderworker of Winchester (862)** - St. Swithun had been Prior of the monastery attached to the cathedral, before he was made Bishop of Winchester in AD 852. He was, say the chroniclers, a diligent builder of churches in places where there were none before and a repairer of those that had been destroyed or ruined. He also built a bridge on the east side of the city and, during the work he made a practice of sitting there to watch the workmen, that his presence might stimulate their industry. One of his most edifying miracles is said to have been performed at this bridge where he restored an old woman's basket of eggs, which the workmen had maliciously broken. It is more certain that Swithun was one of the most learned men of his time and the tutor, successively, of King Aethelwulf of Wessex and of his son, the illustrious Alfred. He died on 2nd July AD 862 and was buried, according to his own desire, in the churchyard of the Old Minster (Cathedral) at Winchester, where "passers by might tread on his grave and where the rain from the eaves might fall on it." His reputation as a weather saint is said to have arisen from the translation of his body from this lowly grave to its golden shrine within the Cathedral, having been delayed by incessant rain. Hence the weather on the festival of his translation (15th July) indicated, according to the old rhyme, what it would be for the next forty days: "St. Swithun's day, if thou dost rain, For forty days it will remain; St. Swithun's day, if thou be fair, For forty days 'twill rain na mair."

**Also commemorated on this day:** Martyrs Cyricus (Quiricus) and his mother Julitta of Tarsus. New Hieromartyr Peter deacon. Synaxis of All Saints of Kiev. Martyr Abudimus of the isle of Tenedos. St. Donald of Ogilvy. Finding of the head of St. Matrona of Chios. Martyr Lollianus.

**16 / 29 July - The Hieromartyr Athenogenes, Bishop of Sebaste** - He lived in a monastery near the town with ten of his disciples. In the time of Diocletian, a fierce persecutor of Christians called Philomarchus came to Sebaste. He arrested and killed many of the Christians in the town. When he saw Athenogenes and his disciples, he told the elder to sacrifice to idols, that they should not perish as had the other Christians. Athenogenes replied: 'O Torturer, those whom you describe as having perished have not perished, but are in heaven and make merry with the angels!' There was a touching moment when a deer, which had been hand-fed by the compassionate Athenogenes, ran up to him, and, seeing him in such straits, shed tears. Wild animals of the hills had more pity on the martyrs than did the pagans! After harsh torture, during which an angel of God comforted them, they were all beheaded, first the priests and fellow-workers of Athenogenes and then Athenogenes himself, and went to their heavenly home in the year 311.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Hieromartyrs Seraphim, Theognostus, and others of Alma-Ata. St. Magdalena, schema-abbess of New Tikhvin Convent in Siberia. New Confessor Matrona Belyakova, fool-for-Christ of Anemnyasevo. New Hieromartyr James archbishop of Barnaul and with him Hieromartyrs Peter and John priests, Hieromartyr Theodore and Martyr John. Hieromartyr Ardalion. Martyrs Paul and two sisters, Chionia (Thea) and Alevtina (Valentina), at Caesarea in Palestine. Martyr Antiochus, physician of Sebaste. Virgin-martyr Julia of Carthage. Commemoration of the Fourth Ecumenical Council. "Chirsk" (1420) ("Pskovsky") Icon of the Mother of God. Synaxis of Russian Saints glorified on Moscow Councils in 1547 and 1549. Martyr Helier of Jersey. 1,015 Martyrs of Pisidia. Martyr Athenogenes. New Martyr John of Turnovo. St. Plechelm, bishop of Odilienberg. St. Tenenan, bishop of Leon. Martyr-hermit Hilier of Jersey.

**17 / 30 July - The Holy Martyr Marina (Margaret)** - born in Pisidian Antioch of pagan parents, Marina only heard of the Lord Jesus at the age of twelve, of His incarnation of the most pure Virgin, His many miracles, His death by crucifixion and His glorious Resurrection. Her little heart was inflamed with love for the Lord, and she vowed never to marry and, further, desired in her soul to suffer for Christ and be baptised with the blood of martyrdom. Her father hated her for her faith, and would not regard her as his daughter. The imperial governor, Olymbrius, hearing of Marina and learning that she was a Christian, at first desired her for his wife. When Marina refused, he ordered her to sacrifice to idols. To this, Marina replied: 'I shall not worship nor offer sacrifice to dead idols, lacking the breath of life, which have no awareness of themselves and are not even aware of our honouring or dishonouring them. I will not give them that honour that belongs to my Creator alone.' Then Olymbrius put her to harsh torture, and threw her into prison all wounded and bleeding. Marina prayed to God in the prison, and, after she had prayed,

there appeared to her first the devil in the form of a terrible serpent, which twined itself about her head. When she made the sign of the Cross, the serpent split asunder and disappeared. Then she was bathed in heavenly light; the walls and roof of the prison disappeared and a Cross was revealed, resplendent and lofty. On the top of the Cross was perched a white dove, from which there came a voice: 'Rejoice, Marina, thou dove of Christ, daughter of the Sion that is on high, for the day of thy joy is drawing near!', and Marina was healed by the power of God of all her wounds. The demented judge tortured her the next day by fire and water, but Marina endured it all as if not in her own body. She was finally sentenced to death by beheading. At the moment of her death, the Lord Jesus appeared to her, accompanied by angels. She was beheaded in the time of the Emperor Diocletian, but remains alive in soul and in power in heaven and on earth. One of her hands is preserved in the monastery of Vatopedi on the Holy Mountain. Even in Albania, in the Langa mountains overlooking Lake Ochrid, there is a monastery of St Marina with some of her wonderworking relics. Numerous miracles have been wrought in this monastery and still are, witnessed not only by Christians but also by Moslems. The Turks have such a veneration for this holy place that they have never laid hands on either the place or the monastery's possessions. At one time, a Turk was caretaker of the monastery.

**Child Martyr Prince Kenelm of Wales (c.821)** - Son of King Coenwulf of Mercia in England. By tradition he was murdered in the forest of Clent and buried in Winchcombe.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable Irenarchus, abbot of Solovki. Venerable Leonid, abbot of Ust-Neduma. Translation of the relics of Venerable Lazarus, monk, of Mt. Galesion near Ephesus. "Svyatogorsk" (1569) Icon of the Mother of God. Martyrs Speratus and Veronica. St. Euphrasius of Ionopolis, bishop. St. Timothy, fool-for-Christ of Svyatogorsk near Pskov.

**18 / 31 July - Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Emilian** - in the time of Julian the Apostate, in the town of Dorostolon in Thrace, there lived the young Emilian, a servant of the governor. When the Emperor Julian began to persecute the Christians with fire and the sword throughout the Roman Empire, the imperial delegate arrived in Dorostolon to kill the Christians. But he did not find a single one there. Delighted by this, he gave a great feast for the citizens of Dorostolon and ordered the offering of sacrifices to the idols, and merrymaking day and night throughout the town. That night, holy Emilian went round the temples, squares and streets of the town and, with a hammer, smashed all the idols. On the following day, the whole town was in uproar; everyone was searching for the destroyer of their gods. A villager, who was seen passing near the temples that morning, was arrested and Emilian, seeing that an innocent man would suffer, said within himself: 'If I conceal my action, what sort of use has it been? Shall I not stand before God as the slayer of an innocent man?' He therefore presented himself before the imperial legate and confessed the whole. The legate, in a rage, questioned Emilian, asking him on whose instructions he had done such a thing. Christ's martyr replied: 'God and my soul commanded me to destroy those dead pillars that you call gods.' Then the judge ordered that he be flogged, and, after flogging and other tortures, be burned. Thus St Emilian finished his earthly course and moved to the heavenly life, on July 18th, 362.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Martyr Hyacinth of Amastris. New Hieromartyrs Appolinarius. Venerable John the Long-suffering of the Kiev Caves. Venerable Pambo, recluse of the Kiev Caves. Venerable Pambo, hermit of Egypt. Venerable Leontius, abbot of Karikhov. "Kaluga" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. St. Frederich, bishop of Utrecht. Martyr Marcel. Martyrs Dasius and Maron. Sts. Stephen, archbishop of Constantinople (928), and John the Confessor, metropolitan of Chalcedon. Great-martyr Athanasius of Klyasma, Egypt. Hieromartyr Kozman.

**July / 1 August --Our Holy Mother Macrina** - The eldest sister of St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nyssa, she was as a girl betrothed to a young nobleman and, when her betrothed died, Macrina vowed never to enter into marriage, saying: 'It is not right for a girl, having once been betrothed, to turn to another; according to natural law there must be one marriage, as there are one birth and one death.' She justified this by her belief in the resurrection of the dead, regarding her betrothed not as dead, but as alive in God. 'It is a sin and a shame', she said, 'if the spouse does not keep faith when the partner goes to distant climes.' Then, with her mother Emilia, she became a nun in a monastery of virgins, where she lived in asceticism with the other nuns. They lived by the work of their hands, devoting the greater part of their time to pondering on God, to prayer and to a ceaseless lifting-up of their minds to Him. After a time, her mother died, and then her brother Basil. In the ninth month after Basil's death, Gregory came to visit his sister and found her on her deathbed. At the time of her death, Macrina made this prayer to God: 'Thou, O Lord, givest rest to our bodies in the sleep of death for a little time, then Thou wilt waken them again with the Last Trump. Forgive me, and grant that, when my soul is parted from my body, it may be presented before Thee stainless and without sin, and that it may be as incense before Thee.' She then made the sign of the Cross on her brow, eyes, face and heart, and breathed her last. She entered into rest in the Lord in 379.

**New Martyr Bishop Victor of Glazov** - Victor (Ostovidov) was the son of a church chanter. He entered a monastery early in life and spent many years there. Nonetheless, he acquired also a good theological education and in 1912 published a detailed study on "The New Theologians," criticizing a new theological trend that had found expression particularly in the book of Metropolitan (later "Patriarch") Sergius, *The Doctrine of Salvation* (Kazan, 1898). After the Revolution of 1917 he was a vicar bishop of the Vyatka diocese, with the title of Glazov and Votkinsk, with his headquarters in Vyatka. In 1922 he was arrested and was in prison until 1925. When the "Declaration" of 1927 came out his was the first voice of protest, and his flock joined him in separating from Metr. Sergius, which led to his arrest and incarceration in the concentration camp of Solovki, where he was from 1928 to 1930, working as a bookkeeper at the rope factory a mile from the main Kremlin of the former monastery of Solovki. The little house where he lived and worked was located in a clearing of the forest; deep within this forest he celebrated secret church services with other members of the Catacomb Church. In Solovki, despite the tragic state of Soviet Russia, Bishop Victor preserved an optimistic view of the future and even tried to infect with this the more realistic Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov. But within a few years this optimism apparently vanished, for a witness who saw him in the spring of 1931 at the concentration camp of Mai Guba in the Far North heard him say: "Ahead there is nothing but suffering." In the summer of the same year he was released from this camp and exiled for three years to the bank of the Onega River in the Archangelsk region, where, according to some reports, he was in contact with the catacomb hierarchs, Metropolitan Joseph and Bishop Damaskin. Late in 1933 he was sent to an even more remote exile in Siberia, and after this nothing more was ever heard of him. But if little is known of the life and sufferings of this new confessor, his courageous and uncompromising spirit is set forth in the documents which he has left behind, which accuse Sergianism as a profound error that denies the very nature of the Church of Christ.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable Dius, abbot, of Antioch. Uncovering of the relics (1903) of Venerable Seraphim of Sarov. Synaxis of All Saints of Kursk. Blessed Romanus, prince of Ryazan (1270). Venerable Paisius of the Kiev Caves. Blessed Stephen Lazarevich, king of Serbia, and his mother St. Militza (Eugenia in schema). Sts. Demetrius, metropolitan of Rostov, Metrophanes and Tikhon (Tychon) of Voronezh. Icon of the Mother of God "Umileniye" ("of Tender Feeling") (1885) of Diveyevo, before which St. Seraphim reposed. Venerable Abba Diocles of The Paradise. St. Theodore, bishop of Edessa.

**20 July / 2 August - Fast Day - The Holy Prophet Elijah** - a man who saw God, a wonderworker and a zealot for faith in God, Elijah was of the tribe of Aaron, from the city of Tishba, whence he was known as 'the Tishbite'. When Elijah was born, his father Sabah saw angels of God around the child, swaddling it with fire and feeding it with flames. This was a foreshadowing of Elijah's fiery character and his God-given fiery powers. He spent his whole youth in prayer and meditation, withdrawing often to the desert to ponder and pray in tranquillity. At that time, the Jewish Kingdom was divided into two unequal parts: the Kingdom of Judah consisted only of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with its capital at Jerusalem, while the Kingdom of Israel consisted of the other ten tribes, with its capital at Samaria. The former kingdom was ruled by the descendants of Solomon, and the latter by the descendants of Jeroboam, a servant of Solomon's. The prophet Elijah came into the greatest conflict with the Israelite king, Ahab, and his evil wife Jezebel, for they worshipped idols and turned the people from the service of the one, living God. On top of this, Jezebel, being a Syrian, persuaded her husband to build a temple to the Syrian god, Baal, and appointed many priests to the service of this false god. Elijah performed many miracles by the power of God: he closed the heavens, that no rain should fall for three years and six months; called down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice to his God, while the priests of Baal were unable to do this; brought rain from the heavens at his prayers; miraculously multiplied corn and oil in the widow's house at Zarephath, and restored her dead son to life; prophesied to Ahab that the dogs would lick up his blood, and to Jezebel that the dogs would devour her—which came to pass; and performed many other miracles and foretold many events. He talked with God on Horeb, and heard His voice in the calm after the great wind. At the time of his death, he took Elisha and appointed him his heir as a prophet; he parted the Jordan with his mantle and was finally borne to heaven in a fiery chariot drawn by fiery horses. He appeared, together with Moses, to our Lord Jesus Christ on Tabor. At the end of the world, Elijah will appear again, to break the power of antichrist (Rev. 11).

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Abramius of Galich or Chukhloma Lake, disciple of Venerable Sergius of Radonezh. Uncovering of the relics of St. Athanasius, abbot, of Brest-Litovsk. New Hieromartyrs Constantine and Nicholas priests. Priest Philosoph Ornalsky and those with him, Juvenal, deacon. New Hieromartyrs Alexander, George, John, John, Sergius and Theodore priests, Hieromartyrs Tykhon, George, Cosmas and Martyrs Euphymius and Peter. New Hieromartyr Alexis priest. New Hieromartyr Theodore. St. Alexis Medvedkov, archpriest of Ugine (1934), Elias Fondaminskii (1942), Priest Demetrius Klepinine (1944), George Skobtsov (1944), and Nun Maria (Skobtsova) (1945), of Paris. "Galich-Chukhlomsk" "Tenderness" (1350), "Abalatsk" ("Sign") (1637) and Orshansk (1631) Icons of the Mother of God. Righteous Aaron the High Priest, brother of Prophet Moses the God-Seer. Sts. Elias and Flavius, confessors, patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch. St. Ilia the Righteous.



St. Ethelwida, widow of King Alfred the Great. New Martyrs Lydia, and with her, soldiers Alexei and Cyril. Venerables Leontius and Sabbas of Stromyn. Martyr Salome of Jerusalem and Kartli, who suffered under the Persians.

**21 July / 3 August - Our Holy Fathers Simeon and John** - these two young men left their homes and kinsfolk: Simeon his old mother and John his wife, and were made monks in the community of St Gerasim, at the hands of Abbot Nikon. They went off into the desert, where they spent many years in the strictest asceticism. They mortified their bodies with this ascesis until they were like two pieces of dry wood. One day, Simeon said to John that, at God's command, he must leave the desert and return to the company of men, there to serve God. John gave him this advice: 'Keep your heart from all that you see in the world. Whatever there may be that touches your hand, let it not take hold of your heart. When food passes your lips, let not your heart be sweetened by it. If your feet have to move, let there be peace within you. Whatever you do outwardly, let your mind remain tranquil. Pray for me, that God may not part us from each other in the world to come.' Holy Simeon accepted his friend's advice, embraced him and then left the desert and went among men, to teach them through folly and turn them to the Christian faith. He made himself appear mad to men, but his heart was a temple of the Holy Spirit, a temple of unceasing prayer. He had abundant gifts from God, having discernment into all men's secrets, both close at hand and afar off, and healed men of evil spirits and other infirmities. Dancing through the streets like a mad-man, he drew near to people and whispered their sins in their ears, calling them to repentance. He appeared to sinners in dreams, reprimanding them for their sins and calling them also to repentance. Thus St Simeon appeared in a dream to a pagan actor, Bali, who publicly mocked the holy things of the Christians. He rebuked him and threatened him, and Bali repented and became a good Christian. A dissolute youth went out of his mind with lust. Seeing him, St Simeon, feigning madness, struck him a blow on the face, and said: 'Do not commit adultery!' At that moment, the unclean spirit left the young man and he was healed;.

**The Holy Prophet Ezekiel** - the son of a priest from the city of Sarir, he was taken into captivity in Babylon with King Jehoiachin and many other Israelites. Living in captivity, Ezekiel prophesied for twenty-seven years. He was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah. As Jeremiah taught and prophesied in Jerusalem, so Ezekiel taught and prophesied in Babylon. Jeremiah's prophecies were known in Babylon, as were Ezekiel's in Jerusalem. Both these holy men were in agreement in their prophecy, and they were both ill-treated and tormented by the faithless Jewish people. Ezekiel had vivid and indescribable visions. By the river Chebar, he saw the heavens open, and a cloud like fire and lightning, and four living creatures like molten copper. One of the living creatures had the face of a man, the second that of a lion, the third that of a calf and the fourth that of an eagle. The human face signified God incarnate as man, the lion's face His divinity, the calf's His sacrifice and the eagle's His Resurrection and Ascension. In another image, he was shown the resurrection of the dead. The prophet saw a valley filled with the dry bones of the dead, and when the Spirit of God came upon them, they came to life and stood on their feet. He also saw the terrible destruction of Jerusalem, when the wrath of God cut down all except those who had earlier been marked with the mark, that of the Greek Tav, our letter 'T', which is also the sign of the Cross. The malice of the Jews did not spare this holy man. Embittered against him for having denounced them, the Jews bound him to the tails of horses and he was torn asunder. He was buried in the self-same place in which Shem, the son of Noah, was buried.

**Also commemorated on this day:** New Hieromartyr Peter priest. Uncovering of the relics of St. Romanus Medved' the Confessor, priest. New Hieromartyrs Simo Banjac and Milan Stojisavljevic and his son Martyr Milan of Glamoc, Serbia. Venerable Onuphrius the Silent of the Kiev Caves (12th c.) and St. Onesimus, recluse of the Kiev Caves. Uncovering of the relics (1649) of Venerable Anna of Kashin. Martyr Victor of Marseilles. Martyr Acacius of Constantinople. Venerable Eleutherius of "Dry Hill". St. Parthenius of Radovizlios, bishop (Greek). St. Anna, mother of Venerable Sabbas the Serbian (Serbia). Hieromartyr Zoticus of Comana in Armenia. Martyrs Justus, Matthew, and Eugene of the 13 who suffered at Rome together with the Martyrs Trophimus and Theophilus. Martyr Bargabdesian, deacon, at Arbela in Assyria. St. Paul, bishop, and St. John, presbyter, ascetics near Edessa.

## ‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡

**Monday** - Romans 16:17-24; Matthew 13:10-23

**Tuesday** - 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; Matthew 13:24-30; 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 (Great-martyr); Luke 7:36-50 (Great-martyr)

**Wednesday** - 1 Corinthians 2:9-3:8; Matthew 13:31-36; 1 Corinthians 3:18-23; Matthew 13:36-43

**Thursday** - Matthew 11:27-30 (Matins Gospel); Galatians 5:22-6:2 (Saint); Luke 6:17-23 (Saint)

**Friday** - Luke 4:22-30 (Matins Gospel); James 5:10-20 (Epistle, Prophet); Luke 4:22-30 (Gospel, Prophet)

**Saturday** - Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 9:18-26; 1 Corinthians 4:5-8; Matthew 13:44-54

## HOMILY

### About grace and peace

***"Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2).***

Brethren, grace and peace multiplies "through the knowledge of God." However, brethren, through the knowledge of creation outside of God, as cut off from God or contrary to God, sorrow and unrest multiplies. Sorrow and unrest is multiplied among those who are familiarizing themselves with things without the knowledge of God; does it not sufficiently witness to the multitude of suicides precisely among those who chose, as a trade for themselves, to study the nature and life of mankind without God? O how great a multitude among them are nervous, irritated, embittered, darkened and hysterical souls who are only separated by a day or a month from suicide. However, grace and peace multiplies "through the knowledge of God." That, the apostle personally experienced and his precious experience he passes on to others.

Neither grace nor peace are the gifts of the earth but rather are the gifts of heaven. God bestows these gifts to those who labor to multiply their knowledge about Him.

Brethren, what is the quickest path which leads to the knowledge of God? Without a doubt, through "Christ Jesus our Lord." He is the Revealer and He is the Revelation, He is the Wise and the Wisdom, He is the Teacher and the Knowledge. Grace is from Him. Peace is from Him. He who knows God through the knowledge of created beings in nature and through the laws of nature, as the heathens do, does nothing wrong but progresses along the path in a round about manner and proceeds on an indirect path upon which many go astray and are lost. But he who comes to the knowledge of God through conscience and destiny of men, as the moralists do, does nothing wrong but that one also goes by in a round about manner and difficult path and can go astray and become lost. But he who knows God by knowing the Lord Christ is on the shortest and surest path.

O Lord Jesus, help us on the path to You and to Your Father and the Holy Spirit.

**To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.**