

# 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

## Leavetaking of the Entry and Hieromartyr Clement of Rome

### 25 November / 8 December



**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 the Mother of God tone 4:** Today is the prelude of God's goodwill/ and the prophecy of the salvation of men./ The Virgin appears openly in the temple of God and foretells Christ to all./ So let us cry to her with loud voices:/ Rejoice, thou who art the fulfilment of the Creator's providence.

**Troparion of the Hieromartyrs Tone 3:** You were shown forth as trumpeters of divine knowledge/ and revealers of the ordinances of the Faith,/ Clement thou fruitful vine of life/ and Peter firm rock of the faithful./ Since you are seers of ineffable mysteries deliver us from every harm.

**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 the Mother of God Tone 4:** The most pure Temple of the Saviour,/ the most precious bridal chamber and Virgin,/ the sacred treasury of the glory of God,/ today enters into the house of the Lord,/ bringing with her the grace that is the Divine Spirit./ And the angels of God sing of her:/ This is the heavenly tabernacle.

**Kontakion of the Hieromartyrs Tone 4:** Unshakable divine towers of the Church,/ God-inspired and mighty pillars of piety:/ we praise you, Clement and Peter, guard us all by your intercessions.

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#### Vespers

Lord I have Cried, Tone 7, on 10: Octoechos 4; Feast: 3 (Let us join chorus today);  
Hieromartyr 3 (As a branch of the vine of life); G: Feast (After thy nativity); N: Sunday  
Dogmatic in the 7<sup>th</sup> tone. Aposticha: Octoechos; G/N: Feast (Assembling today).

#### Matins Gospel II

#### EPISTLE: Ephesians 2: 14-22

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, And that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, In whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

**YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH  
THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD**

Is this then the great privilege, it may be said, that we are admitted into the commonwealth of the Jews? ...What is this, 'both one?' He does not mean that He has raised us to that high heritage of theirs, but that he has raised both us and them to a yet higher. However, the blessing to us is greater, because to the Jews it had been promised, and they were nearer than we ...For this reason he says, 'And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy' (Rom. 15:9). The promise He gave indeed to the Israelites, but they were unworthy; to us He gave no promise, no, we were even strangers. We had nothing in common with them, yet He has made us one ....He calls 'the enmity in the flesh,' a middle wall, in that it is a common barrier, cutting us off alike from God. As the Prophet says, 'Your iniquities separate between you and Me' (Isa. 54:2) ...And this, while the law existed, was not only not abolished, but rather was strengthened; 'for the law,' says the Apostle, 'works wrath' (Rom. 4:15) ...The law was a hedge ...Listen again to the Prophet, where he says, 'I made a trench about it' (Isa. 5:2). And again, 'You have broken down her hedges, so that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit' (Ps. 80:12) ...It became a middle wall, no longer establishing them in security, but cutting them off from God ...His death, says the Apostle, has 'slain' the enmity ...How then is it that it does rise again? From our exceeding depravity. For as long as we abide in the body of Christ, as long as we are united, it does not rise again, but lies dead ...He calls those acts which the soul performs of herself 'natural,' and those which the body performs of itself 'carnal' ...The virtue of the flesh is her subjection to the soul. It is her vice to govern the soul ...He did not send Angels or Archangels on the mission, because to repair so many and such vast mischiefs and to declare what had been wrought was in the power of none other, but required His own coming. The Lord then took upon Himself the rank of a servant, no, almost of a minister.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homilies V and VI on Ephesians II. B#57, pp. 71-74.*

**Second Epistle Hebrews 9: 1-7**

**GOSPEL: ST. LUKE 13: 10-17**

Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound--think of it--for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

**"HYPOCRITE! DOES NOT EACH ONE OF YOU ON SABBATH LOOSE HIS OX OR DONKEY FROM  
STALL, AND LEAD IT AWAY TO WATER IT?"**

Is the law then broken when God shows mercy even on the sabbath day? Whom did He command to desist from labour? Himself? or was it not rather you? If Himself, let His providence over us cease on the sabbath: let the sun rest from his daily course; let the rains not fall; let the springs of waters, and the streams of ever-flowing rivers, and the winds be still: but if He commanded you to rest, blame not God because with power He has shown mercy on any even on the sabbath. And why did He command men at all to rest upon the sabbath? It was, you art told, that your manservant, and your ox, and your horse, and all your cattle might rest. When therefore He gives men rest by freeing them from their diseases, and you forbidd it, plainly you break the law of the sabbath, in not permitting those to rest who are suffering under sickness and disease, and whom Satan had bound.

But the ruler of the unthankful synagogue, when he saw the woman whose limbs were crippled, and her body bent and crooked even to the ground, receiving mercy from Christ, and made perfectly upright by the touch alone of His hand, and walking with that erect gait which becomes man, and magnifying God for her deliverance, is vexed thereat, and burning with rage against the glory of the Lord, is entangled in envy, and calumniates the miracle; nevertheless he passes by our Lord, Who would

have exposed his hypocrisy, and rebukes the multitudes, that his indignation might seem to be aroused for the sake of the sabbath day. But his object really was to prevail upon those who were dispersed throughout the week, and occupied with their labours, not to be spectators and admirers of the miracles of the Lord upon the sabbath, lest ever they also should believe.

But tell me, O you slave of envy, what kind of work did the law forbid in commanding you to abstain on the sabbath day from all manual labour? Does it forbid the labour of the mouth and speaking? Abstain then from eating and drinking, and conversing, and singing psalms on the sabbath. But if you abstain from these things, and do not even read the law, what good is the sabbath to you? If however you confine the prohibition to manual labour, how is the healing of a woman by a word a manual labour? But if you call it an act because the woman was actually healed, you also perform an act in blaming her healing.

'But says he, He said, you are loosed from your infirmity: and she is loosed.' Well! do not you also unloose your girdle on the sabbath? Do not you put off your shoes, and make your bed, and cleanse your hands when dirtied with eating? Why then are you so angry at the single word "you art loosed?" And at what work did the woman labour after the word was spoken? Did she set about the craft of the brazier, or the carpenter, or the mason? Did she that very day begin weaving or working at the loom? 'No. She was made straight, he says. It was the healing absolutely that is a labour.' But no! you are not really angry on account of the sabbath: but because you see Christ honoured, and worshipped as God, you are frantic and choked with rage, and pine with envy. You have one thing concealed in your heart, and profess and make pretext of another; for which reason you art most excellently convicted by the Lord, Who knows your vain reasonings, and receive the title which befits you, in being called hypocrite and dissembler and insincere.

You wonder, He says, at Me, Who have loosed a daughter of Abraham; and yet you give rest to your ox and your ass, loosing them from their labours, and leading them away to watering: but when a human being suffering from sickness is marvellously healed, and God has shown mercy, you blame both as transgressors: the One for having healed, and the other for being delivered from her malady.

Behold, I pray, the ruler of the synagogue, how a human being is of less account in his sight than a beast, since at least he counts his ox and his ass worthy of care on the sabbath, but in his envy would not have Christ deliver from her infirmity the woman who was bowed together, nor wishes her to recover her natural form.

But the envious ruler of the synagogue would have preferred the woman who was made straight to be bowed down after the manner of four-footed beasts, rather than that she should recover the form fitting for man; having no other view than that Christ might not be magnified, nor he proclaimed as God by His deeds. But he is convicted of being a hypocrite, if at least he leads his dumb cattle upon the sabbath to watering, but is indignant that this woman, who was a daughter of Abraham by descent, and still more by her faith, should be freed from the chain of her infirmity. For he considers her deliverance from sickness as a transgression of the sabbath.

Shame fell then on those who had uttered these corrupt opinions: who had stumbled against the chief corner stone, and been broken; who had resisted the Physician, who had clashed against the wise Potter, when busied in straightening His crooked vessels: and there was no reply which they could make. They had unanswerably convicted themselves, and were put to silence, and in doubt what they should say. So had the Lord closed their audacious mouth. But the multitudes, who reaped the benefit of the miracles, were glad. For the glory and splendour of His works solved all inquiry and doubt in those who sought Him without malice.

*St. Cyril of Alexandria, Sermon 97 on Luke 13:10-17*

[Second Gospel: Luke 10: 38-42, 11: 27-28](#)

### **Saints of the week**

**25 November / 8 December — Apodosis of the Entry into the Temple — Nativity Fast - The Hieromartyr Clement Bishop of Rome** - Born in Rome and of royal blood, he was a contemporary of the apostles. His mother and two brothers were caught by a storm on a voyage and driven to different places. His father then went off to find his wife and sons, and himself disappeared. Clement, being then twenty-four years old, set off eastwards to look for his parents and brothers. In Alexandria, he made the acquaintance of the Apostle Barnabas, and afterwards became a friend of the Apostle Peter, who was already being followed by his two brothers, Faustinus and Faustinian. By God's providence, the Apostle Peter found Clement's aged mother, who was living as a beggar-woman, and then his father also. Thus the whole family was reunited, and they all returned to Rome as Christians. Clement remained linked with the great apostles, who made him bishop before their death. After Peter's death by martyrdom,

Linus was bishop in Rome, then Cletus—both of them only for a short time—and then Clement. He governed the Church of God with burning zeal and, from day to day, brought large numbers of unbelievers to the Faith. He set seven scribes to record the lives of the Christian martyrs who were at that time suffering for their Lord. The Emperor Trajan drove him out to Cherson, where Clement found about two thousand exiled Christians, who were all put to the hard toil of cutting stone in an arid region. The Christians welcomed Clement with great joy, and he was to them a living source of comfort. By his prayers, he brought water from the dry ground and converted so many of the pagan inhabitants to Christianity that there were seventy-five churches built in that place in one year. To prevent the further spreading of the Christian faith, Clement was condemned to death, and drowned in the sea with a stone round his neck in the year 101. His wonderworking relics were taken out of the sea only in the time of Sts Cyril and Methodius.

**Hieromartyr Peter, archbishop of Alexandria** - Peter was a disciple and successor of St. Theonas, Archbishop of Alexandria, and was for a time a teacher at Origen's famous school of philosophy. He ascended the archiepiscopal throne in the year 299, and died a martyr's death in 311, beside the grave of the Holy Apostle Mark. He governed the Church in a most difficult era, when assaults were being made against the faithful by unbelievers from without, and by heretics from within. During his time, 670 Christians suffered in Alexandria. Often, whole families were led to the scaffold and executed. At the same time, the ungodly Arius was confusing the faithful with his false teaching. St. Peter cut him off from the Church and anathematized him, both in this world and in the next. The Lord Himself visited this great and wonderful saint in prison.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable Peter the Silent (c.303); St. Clement, bishop of Ohrid (Achrida), Enlightener of Bulgaria and Wonderworker (916); New Nun-martyr Magdalena (Zabelina) (1931); New Hieromartyrs Seraphim, archbishop of Smolensk, Alexander Vershinsky, Andrew Shershnev, Basil Pariysky, Victor Smirnov, Gregory Voinov, John Tarasov, John Yanushev, Cosmas Korotkikh, Yaroslav Savitsky, John Vladimírsky, Simeon Afonkin, Hilarion Soloviev, Varlaam Popov, priest, and Martyr Paul Kuzovkov (1937); Martyr Nicholas Koptinsky (†1938); Venerable Paphnutius.

**26 November / 9 December — Nativity Fast— St Innocent of Irkutsk** - Saint Innocent was born John Veniaminov in 1797 in the village of Anginskoye in Irkutsk province. The son of a church server, he entered the Irkutsk theological seminary at the age of 20. He married, was ordained a deacon of the Church of the Annunciation in Irkutsk, and became a teacher before being ordained at the age of 24. At 26 he volunteered to travel to the distant island of Unalaska in the Aleutians as a mission priest, accompanied by his aging mother, his wife, his son, and his brother. It took them more than a year to travel from Irkutsk to the island of Unalaska. He built churches, learned the local languages, translated the gospels and hymns, and expanded his mission to the surrounding islands. In Unalaska he wrote his famous "Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven." We went on to Sitka Island, to minister to the Tlingits (or Kolushchans), who had not heard the Gospel and served there for fifteen years before returning to St. Petersburg to report on the mission. In St. Petersburg he received news of the death of his wife, and he was tonsured a monk and given the rank of archimandrite, then bishop and then archbishop of Irkutsk. In 1865, the Holy Synod issued a decree appointing Archbishop Innocent a member of the Holy Governing Synod. In 1867, after the repose of Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow, he was appointed Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna and Archimandrite of the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra. Both in Moscow and in the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Innocent achieved, under the guidance of Divine Providence, a great deal for the missionary cause. His administration of his diocese brought fruitful results: many members of the Moscow and village clergy were provided with houses by their communities, and their standard of living improved, thanks to funds raised by Metropolitan Innocent; a home for retired clergymen was opened in 1871; a diocesan school of icon painting and other arts was opened for poor children and orphans of the clergy who were not able to attend ordinary schools (1873); a school for daughters of the clergy; and a church dedicated to the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God was built for the Moscow Theological Academy. He reposed in 1879.

One of his contemporaries wrote of St. Innocent, "His Eminence, Innocent stands out magnificently among all our Orthodox hierarchs, ancient and new, for his remarkable and unique qualities. Having grown up and worked up to the age of seventy in the midst of nature, surrounded by simple children of nature, he was himself approachable, kind and welcoming, straightforward and free of partiality, caring not for show or finery, nor prone to flaunt either his knowledge or his accomplishments, and his behavior at all times was simple and humble. His great natural intelligence was enriched with a wealth of knowledge that few possess. His heart had no place for envy and cunning, ambition and vanity, desire for riches or for earthly comforts. Since early childhood he had to wage a constant struggle with severe natural conditions and people, resisting need and privation, and he taught himself patience and industry, courage and perseverance, self-control and resourcefulness, restraint and the ability to be content with little, and implicit submission to the holy will of God in all circumstances." Preaching the Gospel was St. Innocent's main task in life, accomplished at great personal sacrifice and hardship, but with great joy. He wrote to his bishop in Irkutsk about his missionary expedition to the island of Unga in 1828: "Words cannot describe the zeal with which the Aleuts received my teaching, the gratitude with which they

honored me for having instructed them, or the spiritual pleasure which teaching them brought me. Thanks be to God the Word, for granting me His Word, and for enlightening and comforting them with the Word."

**Our Holy Father Alypius the Stylite** - Born in Hadrianopolis, a city in Paphlagonia, he was from his youth dedicated to the service of God. As a deacon, he served in the church in that city with Bishop Theodore. But, desiring a solitary life of prayer and meditation, Alypius withdrew to a Greek cemetery outside the city, from which people fled as from a place of terror, as demonic visions had been seen there. Here he erected a Cross, and built a church in honour of St Euphemia, who had appeared to him in a dream. Near the church, he built a high pillar, climbed up onto it and spent fifty-three years there in fasting and prayer. Neither the mockery of men nor the evil demons could drive him away or shake his purpose. This saint endured endless assaults from the demons. They not only tried to terrify him with demonic apparitions, but also stoned him and gave him no peace day nor night for a long time. But Alypius courageously defended himself against this diabolical power with the sign of the Cross and the name of Jesus. Finally, the vanquished demons left him and fled, and men began to revere him and to come to him for his prayers, comfort, teaching and healing. Two monasteries were built beside his pillar, on one side for men and on the other for women. His mother and sisters lived in the women's monastery. St Alypius guided the monks and nuns from his pillar by word and example, and shone like the sun in the sky for them all, showing them the way of salvation. This man of God had such grace that he was often bathed in heavenly light, and a pillar of this light stretched above him to heaven. Alypius was a great and mighty wonderworker, both in his lifetime and after his death. Living for a hundred years, he entered into rest in the year 640, in the time of Emperor Heraclius. Of his holy relics, the head is preserved in the monastery of Koutloumousiou on the Holy Mountain.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable James, hermit of Syria (457); St. Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople (471); Venerable Stylianos of Paphlagonia (5th C); St. Peter of Jerusalem, patriarch of Jerusalem (552); Venerable Nikon the preacher of repentance (988); Consecration of the Church of the Great Martyr George at Kiev (1037); Martyr George of Chios (1807); New Hieromartyrs Basil Agafonikov, Basil Kolosov, Basil Studnitsyn, George Kolokolov, Daniel Meshaninov, Elijah Zachatesky, John Vinogradov, Michael Zelentsovsky, Nazarius Gribkov, Nicholas Zamaraev, Nicholas Postnikov, priests, and New Monk-martyr Tikhon (Buzov) (1937); New Hieromartyr Peter Tsarapkin (1937).

**27 November / 10 December — Nativity Fast -The Holy Martyr James the Persian** - Born in the Persian town of Elapa, or Vilat, of Christian parents, he was brought up in the Christian faith and married a Christian wife. The Persian king, Yezdegerd, loved James for his gifts and for his skill, and made him a noble at his court. Flattered by the king, James was deluded and offered sacrifice to idols, which the king also worshipped. His mother and wife, hearing of this, wrote him a reproachful letter in which they grieved over him as an apostate and one spiritually dead, begging him at the end of the letter to repent and return to Christ. Moved by this letter, James repented bitterly, and courageously confessed his faith in Christ the Lord before the king. The furious king condemned him to death, and added that his body was to be cut to pieces, little by little, until he breathed his last. The executioners fulfilled this command of the accursed king to the letter, and first cut off James's fingers, then his toes, his legs and arms, his shoulders and finally his head. During the entire process, the repentant martyr gave thanks to God. A fragrance came from his wounds as of cypress. Thus this wonderful man repented of his sin, and his soul went to Christ his God in the heavenly Kingdom. He suffered in about 400. His head is to be found in Rome, and a part of his relics in Portugal, where he is commemorated on May 22nd.

**St. James, bishop and Wonderworker of Rostov** - Sainted Iakov (James), Bishop of Rostov, according to a local tradition, received monastic tonsure at Kopyrsk monastery on the River Ukhtoma, 80 kilometers from Rostov. For a long time he was hegumen of this monastery, and in the year 1385 he was made Bishop of Rostov when Pimen was Metropolitan and Dimitrii Donskoy was Great Prince.

In defending a woman condemned to execution, the saint, following on the example of the Saviour, bid cast at her the first stone, whomsoever considered themselves without sin, and he then sent forth the woman to repentance. The prince and the Rostov boyar-nobles, disgruntled over the bishop's judgement, threw Saint Iakov out of Rostov. Leaving the city, the saint proceeded on to Lake Nero, spread on the water his hierarch's mantle, and having signed himself with the Sign of the Cross, he sailed off on it as though on a boat, guided by the grace of God. Having gone off one and an half versts from the city, Saint Iakov emerged on shore at the place of his future monastery. The prince and the people, repenting their actions, besought forgiveness of the saint. The gentle bishop forgave them, but he did not return back again. On the shore of Lake Nero he made himself a cell and built a small church in honour of the Zachatie-Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Mother of God, marking the beginning of the Zachat'evsk Iakovlevsk monastery. Saint Iakov died there on 27 November 1392.

The opinion has circulated, that Saint Iakov contended against the Iconoclast heresy of a certain fellow named Markian, who appeared in Rostov towards the end of the XIV Century. The more ancient of the vitae of the saint make no mention of this, and even the great hagiographer Sainted Dimitri of Rostov

was unaware of it. More recent hagiographers were wont to take into account the service to Saint Iakov of Rostov. But the service itself, preserved in copies from the XVI-XVII Centuries, was compiled by way of borrowings from the service on 6 February to Saint Bukolos (+ c. 100), who struggled against the I Century heretic Marcian, and from the service to Saint Stephen of Surozh (VIII, Comm. 15 December), who contended against the emperor Constantine Kopronymos (741-775).

**The Icon of the Mother of God, named the "Sign" ("Znamenie")** - This icon images the Most Holy Mother of God seated and with prayerfully uplifted hands; at Her bosom, against the background of a circular shield (or sphere) - in blessing is the Divine Infant - the Saviour-Emmanuel. Such like depiction of the Mother of God is regarded as among the very first of Her iconographic images. In the mausoleum of Saint Agnes at Rome is a depiction of the Mother of God with hands outstretched in prayer with the Infant-Christ sitting upon Her knees. This depiction is ascribed to the IV Century. Moreover, there is known an ancient Byzantine image of the Mother of God "Nikopea" from the VI Century, where the Most Holy Mother of God is depicted sitting upon a throne and holding with both hands before Her an oval shield with the image of the Saviour-Emmanuel. Icons of the Mother of God, known under the name "Znamenie-Sign", appeared in Rus' during the XI-XII Centuries, and were called such after a miraculous "Sign" from the Novgorod Icon, which occurred in the year 1170.

In that year the allied forces of Russian appanage princes, headed by a son of the Suzdal' prince Andrei Bogoliubsky, marched to beneath the very walls of Great Novgorod. For the Novgorod people the only hope remaining was in the help of God. Day and night they prayed, beseeching the Lord not to forsake them. On the third night the Novgorod bishop Ilia heard a wondrous voice, commanding to be taken out from the church of the Saviour-Transfiguration on Il'ina street the image of the Most Holy Mother of God, and to carry it about on the city walls. When they carried about the icon - the enemy let loose at the church procession an hail of arrows, and one of them pierced the iconographic countenance of the Mother of God. From Her eyes trickled tears, and the icon turned its face towards the city. After such a Divine Sign there suddenly fell upon the enemy an inexpressible terror, they began to strike at one another, and taking encouragement from the Lord the Novgorodians fearlessly gave battle and gained the victory.

In remembrance of the miraculous intercession of the Queen of Heaven, archbishop Ilia there upon established a feast day in honour of the Znamenie-Sign of the Mother of God, which down through the present all the Russian Church celebrates. The Athos priestmonk Pakhomios the Logothete, present at the festal celebration to the Icon in Russia, wrote two canons for this feast. On certain of the Novgorod Icons of the Znamenie-Sign, besides the Mother of God with the Praeternal Divine-Infant, there were depicted the miraculous occurrences of the year 1170. For 186 years afterwards, the wonderworking icon remained situated in the self same Saviour-Transfiguration church on Il'ina street. But in 1356 there was constructed for it in Novgorod a temple in honour of the Znamenie-Sign of the Most Holy Mother of God, serving as cathedral for the Znamenie-Sign monastery.

Numerous copies of the Znamenie-Sign Icon are known of throughout all Russia. Many of them subsequently also were glorified by miracles in their local churches, and were then named for the place of the appearance of the miracle. Such like copies of the Znamenie-Sign Icon are the icons of Dionysievo-Glushitsk, Abalatsk, Kursk, the Seraphimo-Ponetaevsk and others.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable Nathaniel of Nitria (c.375); Venerable Pinuphrius of Egypt (4thC); 17 Monk-martyrs in India (4th C); Venerable Romanus of Cilicia, wonderworker (c.400); Venerable Palladius of Helenopolis (c.430); St. Maximus, bishop of Riez (460); Venerable Palladius of Thessalonica (7th C); Righteous Oda of Brabant (726); Finding of the relics of Right-believing Vsevolod (Gabriel in baptism), prince of Pskov (1192); Venerable Theodosius of Turnovo (1363); Venerable Diodorus of Yuriev (1633); Venerable Andrew, fool-for-Christ of Simbirsk (1841); New Hieromartyrs Nicholas, archbishop of Vladimir, Alexei Speransky, Boris Ivanosky, Basil Sokolov, Vladimir Smirnov, Dimitri Belyayev, John Glazkov, John Smirnov, John Khrustalev, Nicholas Andreyev, Nicholas Pokrovsky, Sergius Amanov, Sergius Brednikov, Theodore Dorofiev, priests, Monk-martyrs Alexei (Gavrin), Appolos (Fedoseyev), Ioasaph (Boyev), Ioasaph (Krymzin), Cronides (Lyubimov) of Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra, Xenophont (Bondarenko), Nicholas (Saltykov), Nikon Belyaev, Seraphim (Krestianinov), and Martyr John Emelyanov (1937); Finding of the relics of Domnica Aleshkovskaya (2008); Synaxis of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Radonezh.

**28 November / 11 December — Nativity Fast — Our Holy Father, the Martyr Stephen the New** - As aforetime Hannah the mother of Samuel, so Anna the mother of Stephen prayed God to give her a son. Praying thus at one time in the Blachernae church in front of the icon of the most holy Mother of God, a light sleep fell on her, in which she saw the holy Virgin, radiant like the sun, and heard her voice: 'Woman, go in peace; in fulfilment of your prayer, you have a son in your womb.' Anna indeed conceived and bore a son, this holy Stephen. He received the monastic habit at the age of sixteen on Mount St Auxentius near Constantinople, at the hands of the elder John, from whom he learned divine wisdom and

asceticism. When John entered into rest in the Lord, Stephen remained on that mountain in strict asceticism, taking on himself labour upon labour. His holiness drew many disciples to him. When the Emperor Constantine Copronymos began to persecute the icons even more ferociously than his foul father, Leo the Isaurian, Stephen showed himself to be a zealous defender of the veneration of the holy icons. The demented Emperor listened to various slanders against Stephen, and himself devised a number of intrigues, solely to break Stephen and get him out of the way. Stephen was exiled to the island of Proconnesus, and then taken to Constantinople, put in chains and cast into prison. There he met three hundred and forty-two captive monks, brought from all sides and thrown into prison for their veneration of icons. In the prison, they followed the whole order of church services as in a monastery. The wicked Emperor condemned Stephen to death. The saint foresaw his death forty days before, and took his leave of the brethren. The Emperor's servants took him from the prison and, beating and buffeting him, dragged him through the streets of Constantinople, calling on all who were on the Emperor's side to stone this 'enemy of the Emperor'. One of the heretics aimed a blow at the saint's head with a piece of wood, and the saint breathed his last. As Stephen the Protomartyr suffered at the hands of the Jews, so this Stephen suffered at the hands of the iconoclast heretics. This glorious soldier of Christ suffered in the year 767, at the age of fifty-three, and was crowned with unfading glory.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Martyr Irenarchus and with him seven women at Sebaste (303); Martyrs Timothy and Theodore, bishops; Peter, John, Sergius, Theodore, and Nicephorus, priests; Basil and Thomas, deacons, Hieroteus, Daniel, Chariton, Socrates, Comasius, and Eusebius, monks; Etymasius, layman (361); St. Theodore, bishop of Theodosiopolis (6th C); Martyrs Basil, Stephen, Gregory, another Gregory, John, and others (767); Martyrs Andrew and Peter (8<sup>th</sup> C); Martyr Anna (8th C); Blessed Theodore, archbishop of Rostov (1394); St. Michael, bishop of Smolensk (1402); Martyr Christos of Constantinople (1748); New Hieromartyrs Seraphim, metropolitan of Petrograd, Alexius Veselevsky, Alexius Smirnov, Basil Zavgorodnego, Vincent Nikolsky, Peter Voron, priests, Monk-martyrs Alexius (Senkevich), Raphael (Tiupin), and Martyr Anysia Maslanovoy (1937); New Martyr Paraskeva Fedorov (1938); New Hieromartyr Nicholas Krylov, priest (1941); Finding of the relics of Venerable Sergius (Srebriansky) (2000)

**29 November / 12 December — Nativity Fast — The Holy Martyr Paramon, and 370 others** - In Asian Bithynia, the governor, Aquilinus, was ferociously persecuting Christians. He once seized three hundred and seventy Christians and took them with him in bonds to some place where there was a temple to the god Poseidon. Here, the wicked governor tried to force them to offer sacrifice to idols. Although he threatened with death any who refused to obey his command, not a single one of the Christians submitted to it. At that time, there passed along the road running beside the temple a respected man called Paramon. He stopped beside the group of bound men and learned what was happening, then cried out: 'Oh how many innocent and righteous men does this foul governor desire to slaughter because they will not bow down to his dumb and dead idols? Paramon then continued on his way, and the furious governor sent servants to kill him. They caught up with him and seized him, first piercing his tongue with a thorn and then stripping him and stabbing him all over. Holy Paramon, with prayer in his heart, gave his soul into God's hands. After that, these three hundred and seventy martyrs, great sons of God and innocent lambs, were beheaded with the sword and thus entered into the immortal Kingdom of Christ the Lord. They suffered in the year 250.

**St. Brendan of Birr** - Friend and brother monk with Saint Brendan the Navigator at Clonard abbey. Spiritual student of Saint Finian. Founded the monastery at Birr in central Ireland c.540, and served as its abbot. Friend and advisor of Saint Columba. At Brendan's death, Columba had a vision of the abbot's soul being carried away by angels.

Tropar of Saint Brendan of Birr, Tone 8: Most glorious ascetic and chief of Ireland's Prophets, O Father Brendan, thou wast a bright beacon in the western isle guiding many to salvation. At thy heavenly birthday the Angels rejoiced and miraculously announced their joy to our Father Columba. The prayers of the righteous avail much for us sinners. Wherefore O Saint, pray to God for us that He will find us a place in the Mansions of the Blest.

**Saint Sadwen of Wales** - Brother of Saint Illtyd. Disciple of Saint Cadfan. Sixth century hermit. Several Welsh churches are dedicated to him.

Tropar of St Sadwen, tone 8: The remoteness of the Welsh mountains was thy desert, O Father Sadwen, where thou didst serve God in fasting and humility./ May thy continual intercession avail for us sinners that our souls may be saved.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Hieromartyr Dionysius, bishop of Corinth (c.182); Hieromartyr Saturninus, bishop of Toulouse (257); Martyr Philoumenus of Ancyra (274); Venerable Pitirim of Egypt (4th C); Righteous Tiridates, king (4th C); Hieromartyr Abibus, bishop of Nekressi (552); Venerable Brendan of Birr (571); Venerable Acacius of Sinai (6th C); Venerable Nectarius the Obedient, of the Kiev Caves (12th C); St. Mardarije, bishop of American and Canada (1935) (Serbian); New Hieromartyr Sergius Kochurov, priest (1941).

**30 November / 13 December — Nativity Fast — The Holy Apostle Andrew, the First-Called** - He was the son of Jonah and brother of Peter, born in Bethsaida and a fisherman by profession. He was first a disciple of St John the Baptist, but, when John pointed to the Lord Jesus and said: 'Behold the Lamb of God' (Jn. 1:36), St Andrew left his first teacher and followed Christ. After that, Andrew brought his brother Peter to the Lord. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, it fell to the lot of the first of Christ's apostles, St Andrew, to preach the Gospel in Byzantium and Thrace, then in the lands along the Danube, in Russia and around the Black Sea, and finally in Epirus, Greece and the Peloponnese, where he suffered. In Byzantium, he installed St Stachys as its first bishop; in Kiev he raised the Cross on high and prophesied a Christian future for the Russian people; in Thrace, Epirus, Greece and the Peloponnese, he brought many people to the Faith and gave them bishops and priests. In the city of Patras he performed many wonders in the name of Christ and brought many to the Lord, among whom were the brother and wife of the imperial governor, Aegeatus. Aegeatus, infuriated by this, put Andrew to torture and then crucified him. While he was still alive on the cross, the Apostle of Christ taught the Christians who were gathered round him. The people wanted to take him down from the cross, but he would not let them. Finally, the Apostle prayed to God and a strange radiance surrounded him. This light lasted for half an hour and, when it disappeared, the Apostle gave his holy soul into God's hands. Thus the first-called Apostle, who first of the twelve Great Apostles came to know the Lord and followed Him, finished his earthly course. St Andrew suffered for his Lord in the year 62. His relics were translated to Constantinople, but his head was later taken to Rome and one hand to Moscow. In the 3rd century some of his relics were taken by a monk, Regulus, to Scotland and given to Oengus, King of the Picts on the eve of a mighty battle in 747 and that night the king and his army saw a huge St. Andrew's Cross blazed in fire across the face of the heavens; so they went forth to battle and triumphed. After this St. Andrew became the Patron Saint of Scotland. His remains were taken to the ancient Pictish city of Muckcross and deposited there. That city is the modern St. Andrews. St. Frumentius, Enlightener of Abyssinia;

**St Tudwal, bishop in Wales & Brittany** - A Welsh monk Saint Tudwal (died c. 564) was one of the seven founder Saints of Brittany. He travelled to Ireland to learn the scriptures, then became a hermit on what is now called Saint Tudwal's Island East. St Tudwal later emigrated to Brittany, settling in Lan Pabu with 72 followers, where he established a large monastery. Tudwal was made Bishop of Tréguier on the insistence of Childebert I, king of the Franks. Tudwal is shown in iconography as a bishop holding a dragon.

Tropar of St Tudwal, tone 1: Having left thy native Wales/ thou didst serve God in Brittany, O Father Tudwal,/ and both by thy zealous preaching and thy piety thou didst win souls for Christ./ Wherefore we hasten to thee, O radiant Hierarch,/ that thou wouldst intercede for us that our souls may be saved.

**Also commemorated on this day:** St. Frumentius, archbishop of Abyssinia (380); Saint Alexander, bishop of Methymna (4th C); Sts. Peter and Samuel, catholicoi of Mtskheta (5th C); Right-believing king Vakhtang Gorgasali (502); Saint Andrew, bishop of Transylvania (1873); Blessed Sergius of Molchensk, fool-for-Christ (1879); New Hieromartyr John Chestnov, priest (1937).

**1 / 14 December — Nativity Fast — The Holy Prophet Nahum** - Born of the tribe of Simeon in a place called Elkosh, on the further side of the Jordan, he lived seven hundred years before Christ and foretold the fall of Nineveh two hundred years after the Prophet Jonah. The people of Nineveh had repented after hearing Jonah's preaching, and God had protected them and not destroyed them. But, with the passage of time, they came to forget God's mercy and turned again to evil. Nahum foretold their doom, warning them that, if they showed no repentance, they would receive no protection. The entire city was so utterly destroyed by earthquake, flood and fire that its location is no longer known. Holy Nahum lived for forty-five years before going to his rest in the Lord, leaving us a small book of his true and genuine prophecies.

**St. Philaret the Merciful** - Philaret was from the village of Amnia in Paphlagonia. Early in life, Philaret was a very wealthy man, but by distributing abundant alms to the poor he himself became extremely poor. However, he was not afraid of poverty, and, not heeding the complaints of his wife and children, he continued his charitable works with hope in God, Who said: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (Matthew 5:7). Once, while he was plowing in the field, a man came to him and complained that one of his oxen had died in the harness and that he was unable to plow with only one ox. Philaret then unharnessed one of his oxen and gave it to him. He even gave his remaining horse to a man who was summoned to go to war. He gave away the calf of his last cow, and when he saw how the cow pined for her missing calf, and the calf for the cow, he called the man and gave him the cow too. And thus the aged Philaret was left without food in an empty house. But he prayed to God and placed his hope in Him. And God did not abandon the righteous one to be put to shame in his hope. At that time the Empress Irene reigned with her young son, Constantine. According to the custom of that time, the empress sent men throughout the whole empire to seek the best and most distinguished maiden to whom she could wed her son, the emperor. By God's providence, these men happened to stay overnight in Philaret's house, and they saw his most beautiful and modest granddaughter Maria, the daughter of his daughter Hypatia, and took her to Constantinople.



The emperor was well pleased with her, married her, and moved Philaret and all his family to the capital, giving him great honors and riches. Philaret did not become proud as a result of this unexpected good fortune, but, thankful to God, he continued to perform good works even more than he had before, and thus he continued until his death. At the age of ninety he summoned his children, blessed them, and instructed them to cleave to God and to God's law, and with his clairvoyant spirit he prophesied to all of them how they would live out this life, as once had Jacob. After that he went to the Rodolfia Monastery and gave up his soul to God. At his death his face shone like the sun, and after his death an unusual, sweet fragrance came forth from his body and miracles took place at his relics. This righteous man entered into rest in the year 797. His wife, Theosevia, and all his children and grandchildren lived a God-pleasing life and reposed in the Lord.

**Also commemorated on this day:** St. Eligius, bishop of Noyon (660); Venerable Anthony of Chios (865); Saint Theokletos, bishop of Sparta (870); Venerable Ioannicius of Devich (15th C); Martyr Ananias of Persia.

### ‡ **Daily Scripture Readings** ‡

**Monday** - 2 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Luke 19:37-44

**Tuesday** - Luke 1:39-49, 56 (Matins Gospel); 2 Thessalonians 1:10-2:2; Luke 19:45-48; Hebrews 9:1-7 (Theotokos); Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (Theotokos)

**Wednesday** - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; Luke 20:1-8

**Thursday** - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-3:5; Luke 20:9-18

**Friday** - Matthew 4:18-23 (Matins Gospel); 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18; Luke 20:19-26; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16 (Apostle); John 1:35-51 (Apostle)

**Saturday** - Galatians 1:3-10; Luke 12:32-40

**HYMN OF PRAISE**  
**The Hieromartyr Clement, Bishop of Rome**

The aristocrat Clement, of noble birth, Became a zealous servant of the Living Lord. Scorning the vanity of opulent Rome, He elevated his spirit above all illusion. Spiritual kinship with Peter bound him, And loosened his fleshly kinship to the emperor.

He shone in Rome as a radiant star, Dispelling dense darkness with the Honourable Cross; He adorned and strengthened the Apostolic Church, And embittered the weak powers of the demons. A tempest arose from demonic powers Seeking to slay the saint of God. His body they killed; his soul then fled to Paradise. At the bottom of the waters of the sea, his holy body remained. After eight centuries solid iron would have wasted away, But not the body of this knight of Christ. He gloriously manifested many miracles, And through Christ God Clement was glorified. O holy Clement, help even us By your prayers before the throne of God.

**REFLECTION**

It is said of St. Peter of Alexandria that he never climbed the steps and sat on the patriarchal throne in church, but rather stood or sat before the steps of the throne. When the faithful complained that their hierarch did not sit in his place, he replied: ``Whenever I approach the throne, I see a heavenly light and power upon it, and that is why I do not dare climb and sit on it." Beside this vision, St. Peter had another, yet more wondrous vision. While he was in prison, the impious heretic Arius hypocritically pretended that he had repented of his heresy, and sent word to the captive Peter that he had renounced his heresy, with an appeal to Peter to receive him into the Church again. Arius did this only because he thought that Peter would be martyred, and he could then acquire the patriarchal throne and disseminate and strengthen his heresy. Before he gave any reply, Peter prayed to God in the prison. During prayer, a mystical light illumined the prison, and the Lord Jesus appeared to him as a twelve-year-old boy, shining brighter than the sun, so that it was not possible to look at Him directly. The Lord was clothed in a white tunic, rent down the front from top to bottom. He clutched the garment around Himself with His hands, as though to hide His nakedness. At this, St. Peter was in great fear and horror. He cried out: ``Who, O Savior, has torn Thy garment?" The Lord replied: ``The madman Arius. He tore it, for he alienated My people from Me, whom I acquired by My Blood. Be careful not to receive him in communion with the Church, for he has cunning and diabolical thoughts against Me and My people." At this, St. Peter sent word to his priests, Achilles and Alexander, that he could not receive Arius's petition, for it was false and cunning; and the saint pronounced a curse on Arius in both worlds. He also prophesied that Achilles, and then Alexander, would succeed him as patriarch, and so it was.