10th Sunday After Pentecost

The Holy Great Martyr Panteleimon

27 July / 9 August

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

Tropar tone 3: O holy prize-winner and healer Panteleimon,/ intercede with our merciful God/ that He may grant to our souls the forgiveness of our sins.

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

Kondak tone 5: Thou didst faithfully follow the Merciful One/ and wast granted the grace of healing./ O prize-winner and Martyr of Christ our God/ by thine intercessions/ heal the diseases of our souls/ and banish the snares of the enemy/ from those who cry with faith: Save us, O Lord.

Vespers: Isa. 43:9-14; Wisd. 3:1-9; Wisd. 4:7-15

Matins Gospel X

<u>Epistle: I Corinthians 4: 9-16</u>

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

GOD HAS DISPLAYED US, THE APOSTLES…

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

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

men: but in God's sight we fear no longer. From this, in fact, all the world's evils have originated: because in things really bad we do not reverence God but men.

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

Second Epistle: II Timothy 2: 1-10

Gospel Matthew 17: 14-23

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

HEALING THE POSSESSED YOUTH

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

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

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

And what treasure is being carried by the ship of the Church? These are the seven Sacraments of the Church which all have their foundation in Holy Scripture. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles relates to us about the ordination of priests and deacons from which comes our Sacrament of the Priesthood (Acts 6:3, 5-7). In His first

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

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

Second Gospel: John 15: 17-16:2

Saints of the Week

27 July / 9 August - The Holy and Great Martyr Panteleimon - born in Nicomedia of a Christian mother, Eubula, and a pagan father, Eustorgius, he studied medicine as a young man. The priest Hermolaus befriended him, instructed him in the Christian faith and baptised him. Panteleimon miraculously healed a blind man whom other doctors had treated in vain: he healed him by the name of Christ and baptised him. From jealousy, the doctors denounced Panteleimon as a Christian, and he went before the Emperor Maximian for judgement. 'He stood before the earthly ruler in the body, but in his mind he stood before the heavenly King.' He freely declared himself to be a Christian before the Emperor, and, in front of his eyes, healed a paralytic of a long infirmity. This miracle brought many of the pagans to the Christian faith. The Emperor put him to torture, but the Lord appeared to him on several occasions and delivered him whole and uninjured. Then St Hermolaus suffered, along with Hermippus and Hermocrates. Condemned to death, St Panteleimon knelt in prayer. At that, the executioner gave him a blow on the neck with his sword, and the sword broke as if made of wax. The executioner could not kill him until he had finished his prayer and had himself given the word to behead him. Panteleimon was beheaded under an olive tree, which after that became laden with fruit. 'Panteleimon' means 'all-merciful'. God the all-merciful received his righteous soul, and glorified him among His greatest saints, his relics remaining incorrupt. This wonderful martyr suffered with honour as a youth for Christ on July 27th, 304. St Panteleimon is invoked in the prayers at the blessing of water and the blessing of oil, together with St Hermolaus and the other unmercenaries and wonderworkers. The loveliest church dedicated to him is to be found on the Holy Mountain.

Glorification of St. Herman, wonderworker of Alaska - The Monk German (Herman) of Alaska, Apostle to America, was born in the city of Serpukhov, nigh to Moscow, in the year 1757 into a merchant's family. His worldly name and family name are unknown. At sixteen years of age he entered upon the path of monasticism. At first the monk did his obedience at the Sergiev-Trinity monastery, situated in the environs of Peterburg on the shore of the Bay of Finland (the monastery belonged to the Sergiev-Trinity Lavra).

The future missionary pursued asceticism at the monastery for about five years. Wanting complete solitude and silence, the Monk German settled at Valaamo. The Valaamo monastery, situated on the islands of Lake Ladozh (Ladoga), was cut off from the outer world for 8 months of the year.

After careful testing by various obediences the hegumen Nazarii gave blessing to the youthful ascetic for constant life in the forest, in a solitary wilderness. On feastdays, having come back to the monastery, the monk did choir obedience (he had a fine voice). Saint German took monastic vows at the Valaamo monastery.

It seems probable, that Saint German arrived at Valaamo in the year 1778. In this year the Monk Seraphim arrived at the Sarov monastery. The monastic life of the Monk German brings to mind the deeds of solitude of his great contemporary – the Sarov wonderworker. Like the Monk Seraphim, the Valaamo ascetic distinguished

himself with an exceptional and pervasive knowledge of the spirit and books of Holy Scripture, the works of the holy fathers and teachers of the Church.

The spiritual guide and father confessor of the future missionary was the hegumen Nazarii, a Sarov elder (starets), who introduced the Sarov ustav (rule) at Valaamo. By such manner, the grace-bearing methodology of Sarov asceticism – in which was accomplished the spiritual growth of the Monk German at Valaamo – became an integral part of his soul and made him related and exceptionally close in spirit to the Monk Seraphim, the Sarov Wonderworker. There is an account, that the Monk Seraphim made use in his turn of the guidance of the starets Nazarii during the time of his living at Sarov.

After a 15 year stay of the Monk German at Valaamo, the Lord summoned the humble monk to apostolic service and sent him to preach the Gospel and baptise the pagans of the sparsely populated and austere territory of Alaska and the islands of North America bordering on it. For this purpose there was organised in the year 1793 a spiritual Mission – receiving the title Kodiaksk, with its centre on the island of Kodiak. Archimandrite Joasaph (Bolotov), a monk of Valaamo monastery, was appointed leader of the Mission. Amidst the number of other co-workers of the Mission were also five other monks of Valaamo monastery – including among them the Monk German, whom the Lord gave blessing to labour at evangelisation longer and more fruitfully, than some other members of the Mission.

Upon arrival on Kodiak Island the missionaries quickly set about the construction of a church and the conversion of the pagans. "The year 1794, September – I live with 24 on the island of Kodiak. All glory to God, more than 700 Americans are baptised, more than 2,000 marriages joined together, a church built, and as time allows – we shall make another, then two, and then it will be necessary to make five" – remarks the archimandrite Joasaph in one of his letters.

Father German at this new place bore the obedience of baker and concerned himself with the domestic cares of the Mission.

Under the guidance of Archimandrite Joasaph (afterwards a bishop), the Mission was short-lived: during the time of a storm (in 1799) His Grace Joasaph with his companions perished in the waves of the ocean. To assist the missionaries remaining alive there was dispatched only one priest-monk from the Alexander Nevsky Lavra, – Gedeon. He headed the Mission for some time. He was concerned with the building up of a school for the children of the baptised Aleuts. In the year 1807 Priest-monk Gedeon left forever from the settlement of the missionaries, having placed all the responsibilities on the Monk German, who until the end of his life remained a spiritual father, pastor, and guardian of human souls entrusted to him by the Mission. They wanted to ordain the monk to the dignity of priest-monk and make him archimandrite, but the humble monk refused thus to be elevated and until the end of his days he dwelt as a simple monk.

For the local inhabitants, the Monk German was a true good pastor and he defended them, insofar as he was able, from evil and plundering persons, who saw the island people only as an object for merciless exploitation. It would be no wonder, if the newly-converted repudiated their faith of the new-comer, who came most frequently in the role of exploiter and oppressor (having come for the purpose of mercantile profit), returning to their own superstitions. That this did not happen is due to the great merit of the Monk German. Firmly and insistently, having no power save for his intense faith, the starets continued on with his defense of the outraged and the oppressed, seeing in this his duty and calling, the essence of which he wonderfully expressed with the simple words: – "I am the most humble servant and nurse of the local peoples".

The secret labours and cell prayers of the elder remained unknown to the world, but are seen as a light surrounding his grace-bearing life, having gone through conditions of complete self-renunciation, non-avariciousness and austere disregard for all comforts. His clothes were quite poor and very decrepit. By his whole appearance and all his habits, starets German in life reminded his contemporaries of the ancient hermits, glorified by the deeds of abstention and saintliness. In conversation the elder produced in irresistible impression on listeners. Those who conversed were particularly struck by the clarity of his mind, and his distinctness and rapidity of his discernment. The Divine grace, permeating the soul of the Monk German, transformed the hearts of people having contact with him. Vividly testifying about this occurrence was S. I. Yanovsky, governor administrator of the Russian-American Company, having entered upon his duties in the year 1817. Semen Ivanovich Yanovsky, an aristocrat by birth, was a man of manifold education and scholarship, but his religio-philosophic outlook consisted in the fashionable deism of the period. (Deism – a religio-philosophic teaching, which spread about in the XVII-XVIII Centuries, conceived of the existence of God only as a first-principle of the world and denied the existence of God as Person).

Christianity in its essence he did not know (although he was formally accounted a christian). Orthodoxy, the Church, the Sacraments – were for him mere notions, not worthy of serious consideration. The Monk German spoke much with him. S. I. Yanovsky afterwards wrote: "By such constant conversations and prayers of the holy elder, the Lord turned me completely around onto the way of truth, and I was made into a real Christian". He termed the starets "an holy man", "a great ascetic", and like a precious gem he kept his own letters from the Monk German. Many others of his contemporaries also experienced such reverence towards the person of the saint. Father German at first lived nearby the Mission temple on Kodiak, but later he settled on Elov (Spruce) Island, which he called "New Valaamo". Spruce Island was the final refuge in the multi-laboured apostolic wanderings of the holy elder.

The Monk German foretold to his spiritual children the time of his death and gave instructions how to bury him. On 13 December 1837 he requested candles be lit before the icons and to read the Acts of the Holy Apostles. During the time of the reading about the labours of the holy evangelists, the holy starets German passed over from earthly labours to heavenly rest, in his 81st year of life. Over the grave of the elder was at first constructed a simple wooden memorial, and afterwards was erected a modest wooden church, dedicated in the name of the Monks Sergei and German, Wonderworkers of Valaamo.

In this church is preserved an old-fashioned depiction of the Monk Seraphim of Sarov. This was situated in the cell of the Monk German during his lifetime: the elder loved and respected his celebrated contemporary and was of one accord with him in the great task in the fields of the Lord. It pleased the Lord to simultaneously bestow blessing on the great deeds of service to people of these two reverent lovers of silence and of mental action. The Monk German responded with love to the needs and sorrows of people during the days of his earthly life. And he does not leave in their misfortune those calling on him even after his death. The most famous case of the prayerful intercession of the Monk German is located in the autobiography of the first Orthodox Bishop in America – Sainted Innocent (Comm. 31 March and 23 September). In the year 1842 the sainted bishop on the brig "Okhotsk" was headed for Spruce Island. Because of a storm the ship was not able for a long while to come into port, and the lives of the crew and passengers was in peril. Sainted Innocent turned with prayer to the Monk German: "If thou, Father German, art pleasing to the Lord, then allow the wind to shift". And there passed not even a quarter of an hour as the wind shifted and became fair. And shortly thereafter the sainted bishop, having been saved from the storm, served a panikhida on the grave of the Monk German. In the 1860's the Russian Orthodox Church learned about the great local veneration of the memory of the elder German at Kodiak. In 1867 one of the Alaskan bishops compiled a record of his life and miracles.

The first public report about Father German was published at Valaamo monastery in Finland in 1894. In the 1930's another Russian Orthodox monk – archimandrite Gerasim (Shmal'ts) arrived on Elov (Spruce) Island and for a long time he lived there, as did the Monk German an hundred and some years before him. Before his death in 1969, archimandrite Gerasim uncovered the remains of his famous predecessor and built there a small chapel. The healings, connected with the prayerful intercession of Saint German, have been recorded during the course of a long period (from the time of his life through 1970). In March 1969 the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Greek-Catholic Church in America under the presiding of the Archbishop of New York, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, Irenei – made the glorification of the Alaskan monk. The Church through this canonisation formally stamped with its seal that which many native Alaskans always knew: the Monk German worthily achieved his Christian calling and now continues to intercede before God for the living.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Sisinius the Wonderworker (4th C); Venerable Anthusa, abbess of Mantineus Convent, and her 90 monastic sisters (†759); Venerable Clement (†916), Angelar (†c.886), Gorazd (†896), Nahum (†910) and Sabbas (10th C), disciples of Sts. Cyril and Methodius; Blessed Nicholas Kochanov, fool-for-Christ of Novgorod (†1392); St. Ioasaph, metropolitan of Moscow (†1555); New Martyr Christodulus of Thessaloniki (†1777); New Hieromartyrs Ambrose, bishop of Sarapul, Platon Gornykh and Panteleimon Bogoyavlensky, priests (†1918); New Hieromartyr John Solovyev, priest (†1941); Movable feast on the Sunday before July 28th: Synaxis of the saints of Smolensk.

July 28 / August 10 — The Smolensk "Hodigitria" Icon of the Theotokos, or "She who leads the way," was, according to Church Tradition, painted by the holy Evangelist Luke during the earthly life of the Most Holy Theotokos. The holy hierarch Demetrius of Rostov suggests that this icon was painted at the request of Theophilus, the prefect of Antioch. From Antioch the holy image was transferred to Jerusalem. From there the empress Eudokia, the spouse of Arcadius, gave it at Constantinople to Pulcheria, the sister of the emperor, who put the holy icon in the Blachernae church.

In 1046, the Byzantine emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1054), gave his daughter Anna in marriage to Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavich, the son of Yaroslav the Wise. He blessed her on her way with this icon. After the death of Prince Vsevolod the icon went to his son Vladimir Monomachos, who transferred it at the beginning of the twelfth century into the Smolensk cathedral church in honor of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. From that time, the icon was known as the Smolensk Hodigitria.

In the year 1238, at the bespeaking of the icon, the self-sacrificing Orthodox warrior Mercurius went by night into the camp of Batu and killed many of the enemy, in whose number was their most powerful warrior. Having accepted a martyr's death in battle, he was included by the Church in the ranks of the Saints (November 24).
In the fourteenth century, Smolensk came into the possession of the Lithuanian princes. The daughter of prince Vitovt, Sophia, was given in marriage to the Moscow Great Prince Basil Dimitrievich (1398-1425). In 1398, she brought the Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God with her to Moscow. They set the holy image in the Annunciation cathedral of the Kremlin, on the right side of the Royal Doors.

In 1456, at the request of the inhabitants of Smolensk with Bishop Misael at the head, the icon was solemnly returned to Smolensk in a church procession, and at Moscow there remained two copies. One was put in the Annunciation cathedral, and the other, "a measure for measure," was put in the Novodevichi monastery, founded in memory of the return of Smolensk to Russia. The monastery was built on Devichi Pole (Virgin's Field), where "with many tears" the Muscovites handed over the holy icon to Smolensk. In 1602 an exact copy was painted from the wonderworking icon (in 1666 together with the ancient icon they brought a new copy to Moscow for restoration), which they placed in the tower of the Smolensk fortress wall over the Dneprovsk Gates, under a specially constructed cover. Afterwards, in 1727, a wooden church was built there, and in 1802, a stone church.

The new copy took on the power of the old image, and when the Russian armies left Smolensk on August 5, 1812, they took the icon with them for defense from the enemy forces. On the eve of the Battle of Borodino they carried this icon through the camp, to encourage and inspire the soldiers to great deeds. The ancient image of the Smolensk Hodigitria, taken to the Dormition cathedral on the day of the Battle of Borodino went in procession with the Iveron and Vladimir Icons of the Mother of God through the Belo and Kitai quarters and the Kremlin walls, and then they sent it to the sick and wounded at the Lefortovo palace. After leaving Moscow, the icon was taken to Yaroslavl.

Thus were these sister-icons preserved, and the Mother of God defended Russia through Her icons. After the victory over the enemy forces the Hodigitria Icon was returned to Smolensk together with its glorified copy.
The celebration in honor of this wonderworking icon on July 28 was established in the year 1525 in memory of the return of Smolensk to Russia.

There exist many venerated copies of the Smolensk Hodigitria, for which the celebration is set on this day. There is also a day of celebration for the Smolensk Icon (November 5), glorified in the nineteenth century when this image was returned to Smolensk on the orders of the commander-in-chief of the Russian army M. I. Kutuzov. In memory of the expulsion of the enemy from Russia, it was decided to celebrate this day annually at Smolensk.
The holy icon of the Hodigitria Mother of God is one of the chief holy objects of the Russian Church. Believers have received and do receive from it an abundant help of grace. The Mother of God through Her holy icon intercedes for and strengthens us, guiding us on the way to salvation, and we call out to Her, "Thou art the All-Blessed Hodigitria for faithful peoples, Thou art the affirmation, the Praiseworthy of Smolensk and all the Russian land. Rejoice, Hodigitria, salvation of Christians!"

The Holy Apostles of the Seventy and Deacons: Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon & Parmenas — all four were of the number of the seven deacons and the seventy apostles. The other three deacons were Stephen, Philip and Nicolas. Stephen, the first martyr, is commemorated on December 27th, and Philip on October 11th. Nicolas was not included in the ranks of the saints because of heresy. These first four have no separate commemoration, and are commemorated together on this day. Prochorus was consecrated by the Apostle Peter as Bishop of Nicomedia. He served for a time with St John the Evangelist and, on the island of Patmos, wrote down the Revelation that he heard from St John's lips. After that, he returned to Nicomedia, where he made great efforts to bring the people to the Faith. He died a martyr in Antioch, where he was murdered by unbelievers. Holy Nicanor

suffered in Jerusalem on the same day as St Stephen the Archdeacon, quickly followed by two hundred others, killed by the wicked Jews. Timon was bishop in Arabia, and was crucified for Christ. Parmenas died before the eyes of the apostles, and was mourned and buried by them.

St. Samson, bishop of Dol in Brittany (c.565) - Bishop and confessor, born in South Wales; died 28 July, 565 (?). The date of his birth is unknown. His parents whose names are given as Amon of Dyfed and Anna of Gwynedd, were of noble, but not royal, birth. While still an infant he was dedicated to God and entrusted to the care of St. Illtyd, by whom he was brought up in the monastery of Llantwit Major. He showed exceptional talents in his studies, and was eventually ordained deacon and priest by St. Dubric. After this he retired to another monastery, possibly after that on Caldy Island, to practise greater austerities, and some years later became it abbot. About this time some Irish monks who were returning from Rome happened to visit Samson's monastery. So struck was the abbot by their learning and sanctity that he accompanied them to Ireland, and there remained some time. During h is visit he received the submission of an Irish monastery, and, on his return to Wales, sent one of his uncles to act as its superior. His fame as a worker of miracles now attracted so much attention that he resolved to found a new monastery or cell "far from the haunts of men", and accordingly retired with a few companions to a lonely spot on the banks of the Severn. He was soon discovered, however, and forced by his fellow-countrymen to become abbot of the monastery formerly ruled by St. Germanus; here St. Dubric consecrated him bishop but without appointment to any particular see. Now, being warned by an angel, he determined to leave England and, after some delay, set sail for Brittany. He landed near Dol, and there built a monastery which became the centre of his episcopal work in the district. Business taking him to Paris, he visited King Childebert there, and was nominated by him as Bishop of Dol; Dol, however, did not become a regular episcopal see till about the middle of the ninth century. Samson attained the age of 85 years, and was buried at Dol.

The Holy Martyr Eustathios - The Holy Martyr Eustathios was a soldier. For confessing the Christian faith he was arrested and brought before the head of the city on Ancyra. At the interrogation, the saint firmly and bravely confessed himself a Christian and was sentenced to tortures. They beat him without mercy, they bore into the heels and, having tied him about with rope, they dragged him in the city to the River Sagka (Sangara). At the bank of the river they put the martyr into a wooden chest and threw it in the water. An Angel of God brought the chest to shore. The saint, situated in the chest, was singing the 90th (91st) Psalm: "He that dwelleth in the help of the Most-High..." Beholding the miracle and sensing himself disgraced, the governor having drawn his sword killed himself. The holy martyr, having received Communion from the hand of an Angel, gave up his spirit to God (+ c. 316). His venerable relics were buried in the city of Ancyra.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Julian of Dalmatia (2nd C); Martyr Acacius of Apamea (†c.321); Venerable Paul of Xeropotamou, Mt. Athos (†820); Venerable Irene Chrysovalantou of Cappadocia (†921); Venerable George of Iveron, Mt. Athos (†1029); Venerable Moses, wonder- worker of the Kiev Caves (13th C); St. Pitirim, bishop of Tambov (†1698); New Hieromartyr Nicholas Ponomarev, deacon (†1918); New Hieromartyr Basil (Erekaev), Nun Martyrs Anastasia (Kamaeva) and Helen (Astashkina); Martyrs Aretha Yeriomkin, John Lomakin, John Selmanov, John Milioshkin, and Maura Moisieva (†1937); Martyr Drosida; Synaxis of the saints of Tambov; Icons of the Mother of God: “Tender Feeling’ (Umileniye) of Diveyevo, “Grebensk,” and “Kostroma.”

July 29 / August 11 —The Holy Martyr Callinicus - born in Cilicia and brought up in Christian piety, he left all and began to preach the Gospel. He was arrested in Ancyra by the pagan governor, Sacerdos. When the governor, in fury, threatened him with torture if he would not worship idols, St Callinicus replied: 'Every torture for my God is as welcome to me as bread is to a hungry man.' After harsh torture and beating, the governor shod him with iron shoes, with the nails sticking inwards, and ordered that he be driven out to the town of Gangra, for he did not dare to have him further tortured or killed in Ancyra, as many men, beholding the heroic endurance of the man of God, were turning to the Christian faith. On the way, the soldiers became thirsty and there was no water. St Callinicus prayed to God and brought forth water from a rock. When they arrived in Gangra, the torturers threw Callinicus into a fiery furnace. The saint prayed to God, saying: 'I thank Thee, O heavenly Father, that Thou makest me worthy in this hour to die for Thy holy Name ! ' He then went into the fire. When the fire was extinguished, his dead body was found whole and untouched by the flames. He suffered with honour, and was crowned with a wreath of eternal glory, in about 250.

The Holy Martyr Seraphima - Seraphima was a maiden from Antioch. She lived in the home of Sabina, the wife of a senator whom she converted to the Faith of Christ. Hearing about her Virilus, a persecutor of Christians, ordered that Seraphima be brought before him. Since Seraphima remained unwavering in her faith, Virilus ordered that she be thrown into prison and sent some young men to spend the night with her to defile her. Seraphima prayed to God in the prison when the young men arrived before the prison gates. Suddenly, an angel of God flashed before them with a fiery sword in hand and they fell as dead, completely unconscious and were rendered incapable. The next day, the persecutor begged Seraphima and she, through her prayer, restored the young men to consciousness. Ascribing all of this to magic, Virilus ordered that this holy virgin first be burned with candles and after that to be beaten with rods. While they were beating her, a piece of the rod fell off, deflected and struck Virilus in the eyes and he was blinded. Finally they beheaded this handmaiden of Christ and she gave up her soul to God. The pious Sabina honorably buried her body from which began to flow healing for many. St. Seraphima suffered during the reign of Emperor Hadrian between the years of 117-138 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Simplicius, Faustinus and Beatrix (†303); Martyr Theodota and her three children (†304); Right-believing Emperor Theodosius the Younger (†450); St. Lupus, bishop of Troyes (†479); Martyr Eustathius of Mtskheta, Georgia (†589); St. Constantine, patriarch of Constantinople (†676); Monk-martyr Michael of Edessa (9th C); Martyr Olaf, king of Norway (†1030); Venerable Constantine (†1240) and Cosmas (13th C) of Kosina; Venerable Roman of Kirzhach (†1392); Hieromartyr Bessarion, bishop of Smolyan, Bulgaria (†1670); Martyr Daniel Mlievsky (†1766); New Nun-martyr Eudocia of Vernyi (†1918); New Monk-Martyrs Seraphim (Bogoslovsky) and Theognostus (Pivovarov) (†1921); New Hieromartyr Anatole (Smirnov) (†c.1930); New Hieromartyr Alexis Krasnovsky, priest, and Monk-martyr Pachomius (Rusin) (†1938); Finding of the relics of Venerable Manefa of Gomel (2006); The 'Tambov' and 'Rudoe Selo' Icons of the Mother of God.

July 30 / August 12 — Fast Day - The Holy Apostles Silas, Silvanus, Crescens, Epaenetus and Andronicus - these are all among the Seventy. St Silas was sent from Jerusalem to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, to settle a quarrel among the faithful concerning circumcision: namely, whether or not it was necessary to circumcise pagans who had embraced Christianity (Acts 15:22). After that, Silas travelled with Paul around Asia and Macedonia, and was installed as Bishop of Corinth, where he died peacefully. Silvanus helped the two greatest apostles (I Pet. 5:12; II Cor. 1:19) . As bishop in Salonica, he laboured much and suffered much, until he exchanged the earthly life for the heavenly. Crescens was a fellow-worker with the Apostle Paul (II Tim. 4:10), and then bishop in Galatia and a missionary in Gaul, where he died a martyr for Christ under Trajan. St Epaenetus is mentioned by the Apostle Paul (Rom. 16:5), and became Bishop of Carthage. Andronicus(Rom. 16:7), Bishop of Pannonia, is also commemorated separately on May 17th.

The Holy Martyr Valentine - Valentine was the bishop of the Italian City of Interamna. He cured the brother of the Roman tribune, Frontanus, of an illness. When Cherimon, the son of the renown philosopher Craton, took ill and at the advice of Frontanus, Craton summoned Bishop Valentine to Rome. Cherimon was completely crippled, so that his head was bent over between his knees. Valentine closed himself off in a room with Cherimon and spent the entire night in prayer. The next day he brought Cherimon out completely cured and handed him over to his father. Then Craton with his entire household and three of his disciples, was baptized. Cherimon left the home of his father and went with Valentine. Also baptized at that time was Abundius, the son of the Roman eparch. Enraged at this, the eparch arrested Valentine and after much torture he was beheaded. Also beheaded at this time were those three disciples of Craton: Proclus, Abibus and Apollonius. Their bodies were taken by Abundius and he buried them with honor. They all suffered in the year 273 A.D. and became citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom.

St. John the Soldier - John was secretly a Christian. He was sent by Emperor Julian the Apostate to slay Christians but he did not kill them rather assisted them to hide. Julian cast him into a prison in Constantinople. When the evil Emperor Julian was slain, John gave himself over to a life of asceticism, living in purity and holiness. He died peacefully in old age. After his death, he appeared to some who needed his help. Prayers directed to St. John help to seek out robbers.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyrs Polychronius, bishop of Babylon, Parmenius, Elimas, and Chrysotelus, priests, Luke and Mocius, deacons, Martyrs Olympius, and Maximus (†c.251); Martyrs Abdon and Sennen, princes of Persia (†251); St. Timothy II, the Confessor, patriarch of Alexandria (†482); Finding of the

relics of Right-believing Prince Vladislav of Serbia (1243); Finding of the Relics of Venerable Herman of Solovki (1484); Venerable Angelina, Despotina of Serbia (16th C); New Hieromartyr John Plotnikov, deacon (†1918); Venerable Anatole of Optina, the Younger (†1922); Synaxis of the Saints of Samara, Russia; The 'Okonskaya' Icon of the Mother of God.

July 31 / August 13 — Forefeast of the Procession of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord — Righteous Eudocimus - born in Cappadocia of devout parents, Basil and Eudocia. In the time of the Emperor Theophilus (829-842), Eudocimus was a young army officer. Even as a soldier, he endeavoured with his whole heart to live according to the precepts of the Gospel. He kept his purity unstained and avoided converse with any woman except his mother. He was liberal to the poor, assiduous in the reading of holy books and yet more assiduous in prayer to God. He fled vain chatter and idle talk. 'Among all the chaos and vanity of the world, he was like a lily among thistles, and like gold in the furnace.' For his rare virtues, the Emperor made him military governor of Cappadocia. In this high state, Eudocimus strove to be righteous before God and man . By God's providence, he died early, at the age of thirty-three, and his relics were found to have healing power. An insane man touched his tomb and was healed, and a paralytic child stood upright and was made whole. After eighteen months, his mother opened his coffin, and found his body as though still alive, with no mark of corruption—and a wonderful fragrance arose from the saint's body. His relics were later translated to Constantinople and buried in the new church of the holy Mother of God, built by Eudocimus's parents.

Righteous Joseph of Arimathea - a rich man, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin and a secret follower of Christ (Matt. 27:57; Jn 19:38), took Christ's body down from the Cross together with Nicodemus, and laid it in his own new tomb. For this, he was fettered by the Jews and cast into prison. The risen Lord appeared to him and brought him to belief in His Resurrection. The Jews then released him from prison and drove him from his fatherland. He travelled around the world, preaching the Gospel of Christ, and took this Good News to England, where he entered into rest in the Lord.

St. Neot, hermit in Cornwall (c.877) - the son of King Ethelwulf of Kent and Wessex. Like Zaccheus, who had to climb up in a tree in order to see our Saviour, St Neot was very short. When he was old enough to become a soldier, he was not allowed to join the army because he was too short, so he decided to become a soldier for Christ instead, and he became a monk. At first, Saint Neot lived in the Glastonbury monastery. Here, he was made a presbyter, but because he was so short, he had to stand on a little stool when he served the Divine Liturgy. The saint was a great struggler, fasting, praying and reading the Scripture all the time. Because of his great struggles and faith, God gave him many gifts of Grace. He healed people of both bodily and spiritual illnesses, and he had great wisdom. Soon, he became famous, and people from all over Britain came to see him. St Neot did not like for all these crowds of people to come to him. He no longer had time for his prayers, and besides, he was afraid that he might fall into pride. With the blessing of his elder, the saint took one other monk, Father Barrey, and went to a wild valley in the deep forests of Cornwall. Even here, however, the saint became famous, and people walked through the dense forests to see the saint, ask for his prayers and his help. Even the great King Alfred came to the saint and asked for a blessing. The saint did not bless the king, but began to chastise him for his proud harshness and sinful way of life. Then the saint prophesied that King Alfred would be beaten in war, "but if you repent of your sins and help the poor, God will help you and you will finally have victory over your enemies." This happened just as the saint foretold. King Alfred had to flee from his enemies, the Danes, but the saint (who had reposed the year before) appeared to him one night and comforted him. "Because you have wept for your sins, God will help you. You will be given victory on the Seventh Week after Pascha." Not only did King Alfred receive his victory, but his enemy, King Guthrum of Denmark was later baptised at Cirncester, as were many of his soldiers. The rest of King Alfred's reign passed in peace, justice and mercy. When the saint reposed in Christ, a wonderful fragrance came from his body.

Also commemorated on this day: Righteous Ehud, judge of Israel (15th C. BC); Martyr Julitta of Caesarea (†304); St. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre (†448); Venerable Arsenius of Ninotsminda, Georgia (†1082); New Monk-martyr Dionysius of Vatopedi (†1822); New Hieromartyrs Benjamin, metropolitan of Petrograd, Archimandrite Sergius (Shein), and Martyrs George Novitsky and John Kovsharov (†1922); New Martyr Maximus Rumyantsev (†1928); New Hieromartyr Vladimir Kholodkovsky, priest (†1937); New Hieromartyr John Rumyantsev, priest, Righteous Constantine Razumov, priest and confessor, Martyr Anna Serova, and Righteous Elizabeth Rumyantseva, confessor (†after 1937); New Hieromartyr Nicholas Pravdolubov, priest (†1941); New Hieroconfessor Basil, bishop of Kineshma (†1945).

August 1 / 14 — Fast Day - Procession of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord — (First of the three "Feasts of the Saviour" in August) Beginning of the Dormition Fast – Wine & Oil Allowed - Lesser Blessing of Water (Epistle: 1st Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 14: 6-19; Gospel: St. Matthew 20: 17-28) Prayer: O Lord our God, who art mighty in counsel, and wonderful in deeds, the Creator of all things, who keepest thy covenant and thy mercy unto those who love thee and keep thy commandments, and receivest the contrite tears of all who are in distress: (For this cause thou didst come in the similitude of a servant, scorning not our image, but giving true health to the body, and saying, thou art healed, sin no more; and with clay thou didst make the man's eyes whole, and having commanded him to wash, didst make him, by thy word, to rejoice in the light, putting to confusion the floods of passion of enemies, and drying up the bitter sea of the life of the same, and subduing the waves of sensual desires heavy to be endured): Do Thou, the same King who lovest mankind, who hast granted unto us to clothe ourselves in the garment of snowy whiteness, by water and the Spirit, send down upon us thy blessing, through partaking of this water, and through sprinkling therewith, washing away the defilement of passions. Yea, we beseech thee, visit thou our weakness, O Good One, and heal our infirmities, both spiritual and bodily; by thy mercy; Through the prayers ...

In the Greek Chasoslov (Orologion) of 1897 is explained thus the derivation of this feast: "By reason of the sicknesses, often everywhere occurring in August, from of old customarily it was done at Constantinople to carry out the Venerable Wood of the Cross along the roads and streets for the sanctifying of places and for the driving away of sicknesses. On the eve (31 July), carrying it out from the imperial treasury, they placed it upon the holy table of the Great Church (in honour of Saint Sophia – the Wisdom of God). From this feast day up to the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, making litia throughout all the city, they then placed it forth for all the people to venerate. This also is the Issuing-forth of the Venerable Cross".

In the Russian Church this feast is combined also with a remembrance of the Baptism of Rus', on 1 August 988. In the "Account about the making of services in the holy catholic and apostolic great church of the Uspenie-Dormition", compiled in 1627 by order of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Philaret, there is provided suchlike an explanation of the feast: "And on the day of the procession of the Venerable Cross there occurs a church-procession for the sanctification of water and for the enlightenment of the people, throughout all the towns and places".

Knowledge of the day of the actual Baptism of Rus' was preserved in the Chronicles of the XVI Century: "The Baptism of Great-prince Vladimir of Kiev and all Rus' was on August 1".

In the practice now of the Russian Church, the service of the Lesser Sanctification of Water on 1 August is done either before or after Liturgy. Together with the Blessing of Waters, there is made a Blessing of Honey (i.e. first-honey for the Saviour: "Saviour of the Water", "Saviour Moisture" [apparently in place of the vinegar and gall offered Him on the Cross?]). And from this day the newly harvested honey is blessed and tasted.

Holy Seven Maccabees, their Mother Solomonia and Eleazar the Priest - they all suffered for the purity of the Israelite faith under King Antiochus, called by some 'Epiphanes'—God manifest—and by others, 'Epimanes'—mad. For the great sins of Jerusalem, and especially for the wresting-away of the high-priestly power and the wickedness that ensued, the Lord let loose great calamity on the Holy City. Antiochus desired after that to bring the Jews to idolatry in place of their faith in the one, living God, and did all he could to this end. He was helped in his intention by several disaffected high priests and elders of Jerusalem. The king once came himself to Jerusalem and commanded that all Jews eat pork, which was against the Law of Moses and was therefore a recognisable sign of apostasy from the Jewish faith. The elder Eleazar, a priest and one of the seventy translators of the Old Testament into Greek, refused to eat pork . He was therefore tortured and burned . Returning to Antioch, the king took the seven young men, the Maccabees, and their mother Solomonia (II Macc. 6:18-7:41). The seven Maccabean brothers were called: Avim, Antonius, Eleazar, Gurius, Eusebon, Achim and Marcellus. Before their mother's eyes, the wicked king tortured her sons one after the other, flaying the skin from their faces and then throwing them into the flames. They all endured torture and death with courage, remaining steadfast in their faith. Finally their mother, when she saw her three-year-old son in the fire, threw herself into the flames and perished, giving her soul into God's hands. They all suffered with honour for their faith in the one, living God in about 167BC.

St. Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester (984) - born there of good parentage in the early years of the tenth century; d. 1 Aug., 984. After a youth spent at the court of King Athelstan, Ethelwold placed himself under Elphege the Bald, Bishop of Winchester, who gave him the tonsure and ordained him priest along with Dunstan. At Glastonbury, where he was dean under Saint Dunstan, he was a mirror of perfection. In 955 he became Abbot of Abingdon; and 29 November, 963, was consecrated Bishop of Winchester by Dunstan, with whom and Oswald of Worcester he worked zealously in combating the general corruption occasioned by the Danish inroads. At Winchester, both in the old and in his new minster , he replaced the evil-living seculars with monks and refounded the ancient nunnery. His labours extended to Chertsey, Milton (Dorsetshire), Ely, Peterborough, and Thorney; expelling the unworthy, rebuilding and restoring; to the rebellious "terrible as a lion", to the meek "gentler than a dove". The epithets "father of monks" and "benevolent bishop" summarize Ethelwold's character as reformer and friend of Christ's poor. Though he suffered much from ill-health, his life as scholar, teacher, prelate, and royal counsellor was ever austere. He was buried in Winchester cathedral, his body being translated later by Elphege, his successor. Abingdon monastery in the twelfth century had relics of Ethelwold.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs of Perge in Pamphylia: Leontius, Attius, Alexander, Cindeus, Minsitheus, Cyriacus, Mineon, Catanus, and Eucleus (3rd C); Martyr Elessa of Kythira (†375); Venerable Friard (†c.573) and Secundel, deacon, of Vindomitte (6th C); St. Timothy the Wonderworker, bishop of Proconnesus (6th C); New Hieromartyr Demetrius Pavsky, priest (†1937); Finding of the relics of the Venerable Sophia, great princess of Suzdal (1995).

August 2 / 15 — Dormition Fast —The Finding and Translation of the Relics of St Stephen - when the wicked Jews stoned St Stephen to death, they left his body for the dogs to eat. But God's providence disposed otherwise. The martyr's body lay in an open place outside the town a night and two days, then, on the second night, Gamaliel, Paul's teacher and a secret follower of Christ, came and took his body to Caphargamala, and there buried it in a cave on his own land. Gamaliel buried his friend Nicodemus, who died lamenting over Stephen's grave, in the same cave. He also buried his godson Abibus there and, in accordance with his wishes, was buried there himself. Centuries passed, and no-one living knew the whereabouts of Stephen's grave. But in 415, in the time of Patriarch John of Jerusalem, Gamaliel appeared three times in a dream to a priest, Lucian, in Caphargamala, and told him in minute detail about the burial of all the above-mentioned, indicating precisely the forgotten place of their burial. Moved by this dream, Lucian informed the Patriarch and, with his blessing, went with a group of men and dug up the four graves, Gamaliel having already told him in the dream which grave was which. A strong and fragrant odour from the relics of these saints filled the cave. St Stephen's relics were solemnly translated to Sion and there buried with ceremony, and the relics of the others were taken to a hill above the cave and laid to rest in a church there. Many healings of the sick were performed in those days over the relics of St Stephen. Later, they were taken to Constantinople. Thus the Lord crowned with great glory him who first shed his blood for His name.

Blessed Basil the Fool for Christ of Moscow - Basil's father was named Jacob and his mother Anna. At age sixteen, he dedicated himself to a life of asceticism as a "Fool for Christ" and in this difficult mortification persevered for seventy-two years. Altogether, he lived to be eighty-eight years old. He traveled barefooted, bareheaded and in rags. He did not have any permanent dwelling place. He admonished sinners, reprimanded the noblemen, prophesied the truth and had visions of distant places. Having suffered greatly from hunger, frost and from the insults of men, Blessed Basil presented his holy soul to God. Tsar Ivan, with the Metropolitan, attended his funeral. He is buried in Moscow in the Church of the Most-holy Birth-giver of God, later named after him; Fr. Alexis (Medvedkov), priest of France, whose relics are incorrupt (1934).

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyr Stephen, pope of Rome, and those with him (†257); Hieromartyr Fructuosus, bishop of Tarragon and with him Eulogius and Augrius, deacons (†259); Finding of the Relics of Righteous Nicodemus, Gamaliel, and Abibus (415); Blessed Basil of Kubenskoye Lake (†1472); Venerable Marko of Belavinsk (†after 1630); Martyr Theodore of Dardanelles (†1690); New Monk-martyr Platon (Kolegov) (†1937); Icon of the Mother of God 'Achair'.

† Daily Scripture Readings †

Monday – Epistle: II Cor. 2:3-15 (§171); Gospel: Matt. 23:13-22 (§94)

Tuesday – Epistle: I Cor. 15:29-38 (§161); Gospel: Matt. 21:23-27 (§85)

Wednesday –Epistle: II Cor. 3:4-11 (§173); Gospel: Matt. 23:29-39 (§96)

Thursday – Epistle: for Thursday: II Cor. 4:1-6 (§175); for Friday: II Cor. 4:13-18 (§177)
Gospel: for Thursday: Matt. 24:13-28 (§99); for Friday: Matt. 24:27-33, 42-51 (§100)

Friday - Epistle: for the Procession: I Cor. 1:18-24 (§125); for the Martyrs: Heb. 11:33-12:2 (§330)
Gospel: for the Procession: John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35 (§60); for the Martyrs: Matt. 10:32-33, 37-38; 19:27-30 (§38)

Saturday –Epistle: I Cor. 1:3-9 (§123); Gospel: Matt. 19:3-12 (§78)

The Dormition Fast

The Dormition fast was established as preceding the great feasts of the Transfiguration of the Lord and of the Dormition of the Mother of God. It lasts two weeks—from August 1/14–August 14/27 (old style/new style).

The Dormition fast comes down to us from the early days of Christianity.

We find a clear reference to the Dormition fast in a conversation of Leo the Great from around the year 450 A.D. "The Church fasts are situated in the year in such a way that a special abstinence is prescribed for each time. Thus, for spring there is the spring fast]—the Forty Days[Great Lent; for summer there is the summer fast… [the Apostles' fast]; for autumn there is the autumn fast, in the seventh month [Dormition fast]; for winter there is the winter fast [Nativity fast]."

St. Symeon of Thessalonica writes that, "The fast in August [Dormition fast] was established in honor of the Mother of God the Word; Who, foreknowing Her repose, ascetically labored and fasted for us as always, although She was holy and immaculate, and had no need for fasting. Thus, She especially prayed for us in preparation for being transported from this life to the future life, when Her blessed soul would be united through the Divine spirit with Her Son. Therefore, we also should fast and praise Her, emulating Her life, urging Her thereby to pray for us. Some, by the way, say that this fast was instituted on the occasion of two feasts—the Transfiguration and the Dormition. I also consider it necessary to remember these two feasts—one which gives us light, and the other which is merciful to us and intercedes for us."

The Dormition fast is not as strict as the Great Fast, but it is stricter than the Apostle's and Nativity fasts.

On Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays of the Dormition fast, the Church rubrics prescribe xerophagy, that is, the strictest fast of uncooked food (without oil); on Tuesdays and Thursdays, "with cooked food, but with no oil"; on Saturdays and Sundays wine and oil are allowed.

Until the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, when grapes and apples are blessed in the churches, the Church requires that we abstain from these fruits. According to the tradition of the holy fathers, "If one of the brethren should eat the grapes before the feast, then let him be forbidden for obedience's sake to taste of the grapes during the entire month of August."

On the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the Church rubrics allow fish. After that day, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the fruits of the new harvest would always be included in the meals.

The spiritual fast is closely united with the bodily, just as our soul is united with the body, penetrates it, enlivens it, and makes one united whole with it, as the soul and body make one living human being. Therefore, in fasting

bodily we must at the same time fast spiritually: “Brothers, in fasting bodily let us also fast spiritually, severing all union with unrighteousness,” the Holy Church enjoins us.

The main thing In fasting bodily is restraint from abundant, tasty and sweet foods; the main thing in fasting spiritually is restraint from passionate, sinful movements that indulge our sensual inclinations and vices. The former is renunciation of the more nourishing foods for fasting food, which is less nourishing; the latter is the renunciation of our favorite sins for exercise in the virtues which oppose them.

The essence of the fast is expressed in the following Church hymn: “If you fast from food, my soul, but are not purified of the passions, in vain do we comfort ourselves by not eating. For if the fast does not bring correction, then it will be hateful to God as false, and you will be like unto the evil demons, who never eat.”

The Great fast and the Dormition fast are particularly strict with regard to entertainment—in Imperial Russia even civil law forbade public masquerades and shows during these fasts.

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