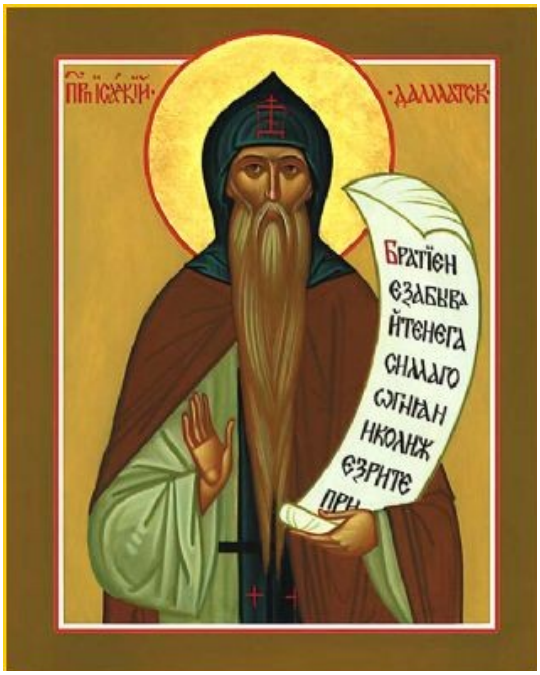

11th Sunday After Pentecost

Sts. Isaacius, Dalmatus and Faustus

3 / 16 August

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 2: When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendour of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, Glory to Thee!

Tropar of the Righteous Fathers tone 1: Let us honour the triple choir of righteous fathers,/ glorious Isaac, Dalmatus and Faustus./ They dispel the night of passions by the three-branched candlestick of Christ the Light/ and by their virtues illuminate those who cry:/ Glory to Him Who has made you wonderful; glory to Him Who has magnified you;/ glory to Him Who through you works healings for all.

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

Kondak of the Righteous Fathers tone 2: By asceticism you shone like lights in the world and by your faith you overthrew heresies./ O Isaac, Dalmatus and Faustus, we praise you with hymns/ as servants of Christ who are praying for us all.

Vespers: Lord I have Cried, Tone 2, on 10: Octoechos 7; Saints 3 (Making themselves like unto the incorporeal ones); G/N: Sunday Dogmatic in the 2nd tone. Aposticha: Octoechos; G/N: Theotokion in the Octoechos.

Matins Gospel XI

<u>Epistle: Corinthians 9: 2-12</u>

For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defence to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who ploughs should plough in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

IF WE HAVE SOWN SPIRITUAL THINGS FOR YOU,

IS IT A GREAT THING IF WE REAP YOUR MATERIAL THINGS?

'Are you not my work in the Lord?' For this is the great thing, and others avail nothing apart from this. Even Judas himself was 'an Apostle,' and 'free' and 'saw Christ,' but because he did not have 'the work of an Apostle,' all those things did not profit him. You see then why he adds this also, and calls them to be witnesses of it ...Upon this it follows that if from no other quarter, yet from you I have a right to receive. Nevertheless, from whom I had most right to receive, from you whose teacher I was, from those I did not receive ...The whole world had him for its Apostle ...'For I both exhibited miracles and taught by word, and underwent dangers, and showed forth a blameless life' ...And not only this does he establish by his illustrations, but he shows also what kind of man a priest ought to be. For he ought to possess both the courage of a soldier and the diligence of a husbandman and the carefulness of a shepherd, and after all these to seek nothing more than necessities ...For he did not say, What soldier serves and is not enriched? ...To prevent high thoughts in those who contribute to their teachers, he signified that they receive more than they give.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXI on I Corinthians IX, 2, 3, 4, 6. B#56, pp. 119-121.

Gospel Matthew 18: 23-35

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS

A terrible picture is drawn for us by this Sunday's Gospel. It begins with the following words: "Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants" (Mt. 18:23). Among those servants was one who was indebted to the lord for a great amount. This amount was so great that in spite of his desire, he could never repay it. There was only one way out: the lord could sell him, his wife, his children, and everything he had. "The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt" (Mt. 18:26-27). Listen, he did not postpone payment of the debt, he did not reduce the amount, but he forgave everything, completely, forever. It was as if nothing had happened, everything remained as before. A new, quiet life as before began. And even better: now this servant knew his master. He saw in him a loving father, and to work for such a father is bliss.

Suddenly something terrible happened: that servant walked out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him an utterly insignificant amount; and grabbing him, started to choke him, saying, Give back everything you owe me. Learning of this, his lord was angry and gave him over to the torturers until he had paid the whole debt.

And so it is with us. We have received everything from the Lord but have proved to be unpaid debtors. And we have asked for forgiveness and have received it. And God has accepted us into His family, the Church of Christ, and in her we can sail over this stormy sea of life as in a safe ship. A ship has everything necessary to protect those sailing in it from the water: it has a strong foundation, a bottom, sides, sails, oars, a rudder. In the same way, the Church of Christ has a rudder by which it is guided by her Godly Pilot, our Lord Jesus Christ; also has sails, oars—these are the godly sacraments; also has a strong foundation —the commandments of Christ of

which the main one is love. And if we keep this His main commandment, love, then we will be in His family, that is in the Church, and will rejoice. How much the Lord spoke about it in His farewell talk with His disciples: "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn.15: 12). "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (Jn.15:17). Yes, it is impossible to be in the Church and not to abide in His love. To be in the Church of Christ is possible only by keeping His main commandment, that commandment which has become the foundation of His entire Church, which is the fragrance of Christ—and this commandment is LOVE!

And so that unfortunate servant lost everything: the forgiveness of God, release from the whole debt, and the return to freedom of himself, his wife and his children. Everything that he had received, he lost in one moment, in that terrible moment when he did not forgive his debtor. And so we too can lose everything: forgiveness which we have received in the Sacrament of Confession, and the Grace which we have received in the Sacrament of Holy Communion—in one moment—in that moment when we will not forgive our debtors.

God grant that such a moment never come to us. And therefore, for the sake of our own salvation, our own well-being and the well-being of those close to us, let us wholeheartedly forgive our debtors. And let us rejoice that we have such debtors, because only by forgiving them their debts, can we prove to the Lord how much we value His forgiveness. And let us also rejoice, because our Lord forgives us enormous things, and all that we can forgive is so small and insignificant. Let us rejoice every time when we say in the Lord's Prayer: "and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

The One Thing Needful –
Archbishop Andrei

Saints of the Week

August 3 / 16 — Dormition Fast — Holy Salome the Myrrh-Bearer - the mother of the holy Apostles James and John, the wife of Zebedee and daughter of Joseph, the betrothed of the most holy Mother of God, she served the Lord during His earthly life, and was made worthy to be among the first bearers of the tidings of His Resurrection.

Our Holy Fathers Isaac, Dalmatus and Faustus - - Isaac is commemorated separately on May 30th. St Dalmatus was first an officer under the Emperor Theodosius the Great, who held him in great honour, but, when his spirit awakened within him, he scorned all that is of this world, abandoning his rank, and took his only son Faustus off to the outskirts of Constantinople, to St Isaac's community, where they were both tonsured as monks. Dalmatus consecrated himself utterly to please God in his life, which was a joy to the elder, Isaac. When Isaac came to the hour of death, he installed Dalmatus as abbot in his place, and the community later came to be called after Dalmatus. He sometimes fasted for forty days at a time, conquering by his fasting the invisible power of the demons. He took part in the Third Ecumenical Council in 431, and battled against the Nestorian heresy. Being pleasing to God, he entered peacefully into rest in the 5th century. His son Faustus supported his father in everything and, after a godly life, died peacefully in that community.

Venerable Anthony the Roman - The Monk Anthony the Roman was born at Rome in the year 1067 of rich parents, keeping to the Orthodox confession of faith, and he was raised by them in piety. As an orphan having lost his parents at age 17, he took up the study of the fathers in the Greek language. Afterwards he distributed part of his inheritance to the poor, and the other portion he put into a wooden box and threw it into the sea. And then he took monastic vows at one of the wilderness skete-monasteries, where he lived for 20 years. A persecution of the Latins against the Orthodox forced the brethren to separate. The Monk Anthony wandered about, going from place to place, until he came upon a large rock upon the solitary shore of the sea, where he lived for a whole year in fasting and prayer. A terrible storm, happening on 5 September 1105, tore away the stone on which the Monk Anthony was situated, and threw him into the sea. On the Feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God the stone halted 3 versts from Novgorod on the banks of the River Volkhov near the village of Volkhovsk. This event is testified to in the Novgorod Chronicles. At this place the monk, with the blessing of Sainted Nikita the Hermit (+ 1109, Comm. 14 May), founded a monastery in honour of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God. In another year fishermen fished out the box with the inheritance of the Monk Anthony, cast into the sea many years before. Having declared what was in the box, the monk took the box and bought land for the monastery. Spiritual asceticism was combined at the monastery with intense physical work. The Monk Anthony was concerned, that from the monastery income help should be rendered for the needy, and for orphans and widows. In the year 1117 the monk began construction with stone at the monastery. Up until our own day there has been preserved a cathedral in honour of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God –

built during the lifetime of the monk in the years 1117-1119 by the reknown Novgorod architect Peter, and with wall-frescoes in the year 1125. In the year 1131 Sainted Niphont of Novgorod made the Monk Anthony hegumen of the monastery. He died on 3 August 1147 and was buried by Sainted Niphont.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Rajden the Persian (†457); Venerable Cosmas, eunuch and hermit (6th C); Venerable John the Confessor, abbot of Patalaria (9th C); 9000 Martyrs who suffered on the field of Marabda, Georgia (†1625); New Hieromartyr Viacheslav Lukanin, deacon (†1918); New Hieromartyr Nicholas Pomerantsev, priest (†1938).

4 / 17 August - Dormition Fast — The Seven Holy Youths of Ephesus - the "Seven Sleepers"-Maximilian, Jamblicus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodian (Constantine), and Antoninus - There was a great persecution of Christians under the Emperor Decius. The Emperor himself went to Ephesus, and there prepared a riotous festival in honour of dead idols and also a vicious slaughter of Christians. Seven youths, all of them soldiers, held themselves apart from the foul offering of sacrifice, and wholeheartedly begged the one God to save the Christian people. They were the sons of the most eminent administrator in Ephesus, and their names were: Maximilian, Iamblichus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodianus and Antoninus. When they were accused before the Emperor, they hid on a hill called Ochlon outside Ephesus, concealing themselves in a cave. When the Emperor discovered this, he commanded that the cave be walled-in. God then, in His far-seeing providence, let a miraculous and long-lasting sleep fall on the young men. The imperial courtiers Theodore and Rufinus, secret Christians, caused a copper catafalque with leaden plaques to be made, on which were written the names of these young men and their death by martyrdom under the Emperor Decius. More than two hundred years then passed. In the time of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450), there arose a great dispute about the resurrection of the dead, for there were some who doubted the resurrection. Emperor Theodosius was greatly grieved at this dispute among the faithful, and prayed God that He would in some way reveal the truth to the people. At that time of altercation in the Church, some shepherds of a certain Adolius, who owned Ochlon, began building pens for their sheep and took stone after stone from this cave. Then the youths awoke from their sleep, young and in full health as they had fallen asleep. This marvel was noised abroad on all sides, and Theodosius himself came with a great retinue and spoke apart with the young men. After a week, they again entered into sleep, the sleep of death, to await the General Resurrection. The Emperor wanted to place their bodies in golden coffins, but they appeared to him in a dream and told him to leave them in the earth, as they had been.

Also commemorated on this day: Nun-martyr Eudocia of Persia and those with her (†362); Martyr Eleutherius the chamberlain (†c.305); New Monk-martyr Michael (Zhuk), and Martyrs Simeon Vorobiev and Demetrius Vorobiev (†1937); Finding of the relics of Righteous Alexei Bortsurmansky (2000); Finding of the relics of St Arsenius of Elassonos, archbishop of Suzdal (2005); Icon of the Mother of God “Kazan-Penza”

5 / 18 August - Forefeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast — The Holy Martyr Eusignius - he was a soldier under the Emperor Maximian, the Emperor Constantine the Great and Constantine's sons, and was present at the martyrdom of the holy martyr Basiliscus. He saw many angels, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as He received the soul of this holy martyr from the angel's hands. He was a general under Constantine, and saw the Cross that appeared to the Emperor. Spending a full sixty years in military service, he withdrew from it in the time of Constantine's sons and went to Antioch, his home town. There he lived a godly life of fasting, prayer and good works. In the time of Julian the Apostate, two men at variance in the street called him to judge between them. He adjudged right to the righteous, at which the one at fault became enraged, went to the Emperor and denounced Eusignius as a Christian. The Emperor summoned him to trial, at which he fiercely denounced the Emperor for his apostasy from the Faith and rebuked him by citing the shining example of the great Constantine. The proud Julian ordered that he be beheaded. Eusignius suffered in great old age, in the year 362, and went to the Kingdom of heaven.

St. Oswald, king and martyr (642) - In the year 617 the king of Northumbria was killed by King Redwald of the East Angles. His three sons, including Oswald, fled to Scotland, and there they became Christians They were baptised at Iona. Two brothers soon lost their faith, Oswald's persisted. And when his brothers were killed by the British King Cadwalla, Oswald gathered an army and marched against him. The day before the battle he made his soldiers construct a wooden cross. Oswald, himself knelt down, holding the cross in position until

enough earth had been thrown in the hole to make it stand firm. Then he prayed, summoning his army to join him with the words, "Let us all kneel together and ask the true, living and almighty God in his mercy to protect us from the arrogant savagery of our enemies, for He knows that we fight in a just cause to save our nation." Oswald defeated Cadwalla, recovered his father's throne, and asked the monks of Iona to send missionaries to his kingdom. St Aidan was sent, and King Oswald gave him the island of Lindisfarne as his episcopal see. "The king always listened humbly and readily to Aidan's advice," says venerable Bede, "And while the Bishop, who was not yet fluent in English, preached the Gospel, it was delightful to hear the King himself interpreting the word of God to his nobles and leaders." Oswald invited other Scots to missionise his kingdom. He gave money and lands to establish monasteries and churches. The pagan king of Mercia killed him at the battle of Maserfield, when he had reigned no more than seven years. His last prayer, as his enemies pressed around him, was "O God, be merciful to their souls." His head was placed in St. Cuthbert's coffin, and found there centuries later in 1827.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyrs Antherus (†236) and Fabian (†250), bishops of Rome; Martyr Pontius of Rome (†c.257); Righteous Nonna, mother of St. Gregory the Theologion (†374); Martyrs Cantidius, Cantidian, and Sibelius in Egypt (4th C); St. Euthymius, patriarch of Constantinople (†496); St. Theoctistus, bishop of Chernigov (†1123); Venerable Job of Ushchelsk (†1628); Martyr Christos of Preveza (†1668); New Martyrs Eudocia Shikova, Daria Timolina, Daria Siushinskaya, and Maria the unknown (†1919); New Hieromartyr Simon, bishop of Ufa (†1921); New Hieromartyr Sergius Tikhomirov, priest (†1930); New Hieromartyr John Smirnov, deacon (†1939).

Transfiguration of Our Lord

6 / 19 August - Dormition Fast - The Holy Transfiguration Of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ - the second "Feast of the Saviour" in August - Blessing of Grapes & Other Fruits —*Epistle: The Second Letter of Peter : 1:10-19 & The Gospel According to St. Matthew 17:1-9*

In the Orthodox tradition today is reckoned as one of the Twelve Great Feasts. The Transfiguration is par excellence the feast of Christ's divine glory. Like Theophany, it is a feast of light: 'Today on Tabor in the manifestation of Thy Light, O Word, Thou unaltered Light from the Light of the unbegotten Father, we have seen the Father as Light and the Spirit as Light, guiding with light the whole creation' (exapostilarion). Nor is this the only parallel between the two feasts. Like Theophany, although less explicitly, the Transfiguration is a revelation of the Holy Trinity. On Tabor, as at the baptism in Jordan, the Father speaks from heaven, testifying to the divine Sonship of Christ: and the Spirit is also present on this occasion not in the likeness of a dove, but under the form of dazzling light, surrounding Christ's person and overshadowing the whole mountain. This dazzling light is the light of the Spirit.

The Transfiguration, then, is a feast of divine glory - more specifically, of the glory of the Resurrection. The ascent of Mount Tabor came at a critical point in Our Lord's ministry, just as he was setting out upon His last journey to Jerusalem, which He knew was to end in humiliation and death. To strengthen His disciples for the trials that lay ahead, He chose this particular moment to reveal to them something of His external splendour, 'as far as they were able to hear it' (Troparion of the feast). He encouraged them - and all of us - to look beyond the suffering of the Cross to the glory of the Resurrection. The light of the Transfiguration, however, foreshadows not only Christ's own Resurrection on the third day, but equally the Resurrection glory of the righteous at His Second Coming. The glory which shone from Jesus on Tabor is a glory in which all mankind is called to share. On Mount Tabor we see Christ's human nature - the human substance which He took from us - filled with splendour, 'made godlike' or 'deified'. What has happened to human nature in Christ can happen also to the humanity of Christ's followers. The Transfiguration, then, reveals to us the full potentiality of our human nature: it shows us the glory which our manhood once possessed and the glory which, by God's grace, it will again recover at the Last Day.

This is a cardinal aspect of the present feast, to which the liturgical texts frequently revert. At His Transfiguration, it is said, the Lord 'in His own person showed them the nature of man, arrayed in the original beauty of the Image' (Great Vespers, postiche). 'Today Christ on Mount Tabor has changed the darkened nature of Adam, and filling it with brightness He has made it godlike' (Small Vespers, aposticha). 'Thou wast transfigured upon Mount Tabor, showing the exchange mortal men will make with Thy glory at Thy second and fearful coming, O Saviour' (Matins, sessional hymn).

The feast of the Transfiguration, therefore, is not simply the commemoration of a past event in the life of Christ. Possessing also an 'eschatological' dimension, it is turned towards the future - towards the' splendour of the Resurrection' at the Last Day, towards the 'beauty of the Divine Kingdom' which all Christians hope eventually to enjoy.

It is the custom to bring grapes and fruit to the church on this day. They are placed on a table in the centre of the church and blessed by the priest at the end of the Liturgy.

Troparion tone 7: When Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God,/ Thou didst show Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it./ Let Thy everlasting light illumine also us sinners/ through the intercessions of the Mother of God./ Giver of Light, glory to Thee.
Kontakion tone 7: Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God,/ and Thy disciples beheld Thy glory as far as they were capable,/ that when they should see Thee crucified,/ they might know that Thy suffering was voluntary/ and might proclaim to the world/ that Thou art indeed the reflection of the Father.

Priest: O God our Saviour who wast pleased to call Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Vine, and in Him hast granted us the fruit of immortality: do Thou now bless this fruit of the vine lying here, and make us Thy servants, who eat of it, partakers of the True Vine. Keep our lives from harm and ever give us peace, and adorn us with the eternal gifts of grace that none can take away: at the intercessions of our most pure Lady, the Theotokos and ever Virgin Mary, and all of Thy saints who have pleased Thee down the ages. For Thou art a good God who lovest mankind, and unto The Father without beginning, together with Thine Only-begotten Son and Thy most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, do we ascribe glory, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Abbacum of Thessalonica (†1628); Venerable Olympiada of Arzamas (†1828); New Hieromartyr Nikolai Zavarin, priest (†1937).

7 / 20 August – The Venerable Martyr Dometius - born in Persia as a pagan during the reign of Emperor Constantine. He became acquainted with the Faith of Christ as a young man, abandoned paganism and was baptized. So much did Dometius love the True Faith that he left everything worldly and was tonsured a monk in a monastery near the town of Nisibis. He lived for some time among the brethren and then withdrew to a life of silence to be with an a certain elder Archmandrite Urbel, about whom it is said that he did not eat anything cooked for sixty years. The elder Urbel ordained Dometius a deacon and when he wanted to compel him to receive the rank of a priest, Dometius withdrew to an isolated mountain and settled in a cave. He attained such a high degree of perfection through fasting, prayer, all night vigils and godly-thoughts that he cured the sick. When Julian the Apostate came to those regions, he heard of Dometius and sent men, who sealed him alive in the cave along with two of his disciples. Thus, this saint of God died and took up habitation in the Kingdom of God in the year 363 A.D.

The Venerable Or, Hermit of Thebaid - Or attained great perfection through the greatest mortification. When he firmly established himself and attained holiness in solitude, he then gradually established several monasteries and was a superb spiritual leader and teacher of many monks. Rufinus, who visited him describes Or in the following way: "In his dress [habit], he resembled an angel of God; a ninety-year old elder with a long beard, as white as snow; externally was very pleasant. His gaze shone with something super human." Often times, he saw the angels of God. He especially endeavoured never to speak an untruth. He had great temptations from the demons but overpowered them all soberly and courageously. He received Holy Communion daily. On one occasion, one of his disciples reminded him that the Feast of the Resurrection had come and that it should be celebrated. Hearing this, Or came out, raised his hands to heaven and spent three days in prayer without rest. He explained to his disciple: "For the monk, this is the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ: to elevate his mind and to unite it with God." He rested in deep old age about the year 390 A.D.

The Holy Martyrs Marinus and Asterius - Marinus was a soldier and Asterius was a Roman senator. At the time of Emperor Gallienus, St. Marinus served as a soldier in Caesarea in Palestine. Marinus was beheaded for the sake of the Faith of Christ. Asterius, the senator, also a Christian, was present at his martyrdom. He removed his dolman and, with it, wrapped the body of the martyr, placed it on his shoulders, took it and honourably buried it. Seeing this, the pagans beheaded him also. They both died honourably for Christ about the year 260 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyr Narcissus, patriarch of Jerusalem (†213); Martyr Afra of Augsburg (†304); Nun-martyr Potamia the Wonderworker (4th C); Venerable Theodosius the New of the Peloponnese, the healer (†862); St. Hierotheus, bishop of Hungary (10th C); Right-believing king Stephen I of Hungary (†1038); Venerable Pimen the Much-Ailing, of the Kiev Caves (†1110); Venerable Mercurius of the Kiev Caves, bishop of Smolensk (†1239); Venerable Pimen, faster of the Kiev Caves (14th C); Venerable Dometius of Philotheou (16th C); Venerable Theodora of Sihla (18th C); First finding of the relics of St. Metrophanes, bishop of Voronezh (1832); Venerable Anthony of Optina (†1865); New Hieromartyr Alexander Khotovitsky, Alexei Vorobyov, Demetrius Milovidov, John Vorontsov, Michael Plyshevsky, Peter Tokarev, priests, Elisha Schtolder, deacon, and Monk-martyr Athanasius (Yegorov) (†1937); New Hieromartyr Basil Amenitsky, priest (†1938); Martyr Sozon of Nicomedia; Holy Ten Thousand Ascetics of the Thebaïd.

8 / 21 August - Dormition Fast - SAINT EMILIAN THE CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF CYZICUS - Emilian served as bishop in Cyzicus during the reign of the nefarious Emperor Leo the Armenian, the iconoclast. Since he did not want to submit to the decrees of the emperor concerning the removal of icons from the churches, Emilian and other Orthodox bishops were banished into exile. He spent five years in exile, enduring much pain and humiliation for the sake of Christ. Emilian died in they year 820 A.D. and took up habitation among the citizens of heaven.

SAINT MYRON, MIRACLE-WORKER AND BISHOP OF CRETE - At first, Myron was married and engaged in farming. Myron, gladly and abundantly distributed the fruits of his land to needy people. At one time, he encountered unknown thieves stealing wheat from his threshing floor. Not telling them who he was, St. Myron helped the thieves fill the sacks, lift them on their backs and to escape. Because of his exceptional virtues, Myron was ordained a presbyter and after that consecrated a bishop. He was a great miracle-worker and performed many good and mighty works in the name of the Lord Jesus. Myron died about the year 350 A.D. in the hundredth year of his life.

THE HOLY NEO-MARTYRS TRIANDAPHYLLUS AND SPASO - Triandaphyllus was born in Zagora and Spaso was born in Radoviste in the Diocese of Strumica. They were both Slavs. Both were young and simple men. But their love for Christ was more precious to them than this world or this life. They gave their lives and did not betray Christ. They suffered at the hands of the Turks for the Faith of Christ: Triandaphyllus in Constantinople in the year 1680 A.D. and Spaso in Thessalonica in the year 1794 A.D.

Translations of the relics of the Venerable Zosimus and Sabbatius, wonderworkers of Solovki - The Transfer of the Relics of the Monks Zosima and Savvatii of Solovetsk occurred on 8 August 1566, on the third day of the altar-feast of the Solovetsk monastery of the Transfiguration (Preobrazhenie, Metamorphosis) of the Lord. The relics of the saints were transferred into a chapel of the Preobrazhensk cathedral, built in their honour.

The Monk Zosima, Hegumen of Solovetsk, – a great luminary of the Russian North, was the founder of monastic common-life on Solovetsk Island. He was born in Novgorod diocese, in the village of Tolvui near Lake Onega. From his early years he was raised in piety, and after the death of his parents Gavriil and Varvara he gave away his possessions and accepted monastic tonsure.

In search of a solitary place the monk set off to the shores of the White Sea and at the mouth of the Suma he met the Monk German (Comm. 30 July), who told him about a desolate sea island, where formerly he had spent six years with the Monk Savvatii (Comm. 27 September).

In about the year 1436 the hermits, felicitously having made the sea voyage, landed at the Solovetsk islands. God blessed the place of their settlement with a vision to the Monk Zosima of a beautiful church in the sky. The monks with their own hands built cells and an enclosure, and they began to cultivate and sow the land. One time in late Autumn the Monk German set off to the mainland for necessary provisions. Because of the Autumn weather he was not able to return. The Monk Zosima remained all Winter alone on the island. He suffered many a temptation in struggle with the devils. Death by starvation threatened him, but miraculously two strangers having appeared left him a supply of bread, flour and oil. In Spring the Monk German returned to Solovetsk together with the fisherman Mark, and he brought supplies of food and rigging-tackle for fish nets.

When several hermits had gathered on the island, the Monk Zosima constructed for them a small wooden church in honour of the Transfiguration (Preobrazhenie) of the Lord, together with a refectory. At the request of the Monk Zosima, an hegumen was sent from Novgorod to the newly formed monastery with antimins for the church. Thus occurred the start of the reknown Solovetsk monastery. In the severe conditions of the remote island the monks knew how to arrange their economy. But the hegumens, sent from Novgorod to Solovetsk, could not withstand life in the unwontedly harsh conditions, and so the brethren chose as hegumen the Monk Zosima.

The Monk Zosima concerned himself with the building up of the inner life of the monastery, and he introduced a strict life-in-common. In 1465 he transferred to Solovetsk from the River Vyg the relics of the Monk Savvatii. The monastery suffered vexation from the Novgorod boyars (nobles), who confiscated catches of fish from the monks. The monk was obliged to set off for Novgorod and seek the protection of the archbishop. On the advice of the archbishop, he made the rounds of homes of the boyars and requested them not to allow the ruin of the monastery. The influential and rich boyarina Martha Boretskaya impiously gave orders to throw out the Monk Zosima, but then repented her action and invited him to a meal, during the time of which he suddenly beheld, that six of the illustrious boyars sat without their heads. The Monk Zosima told about this vision to his disciple Daniel and predicted for the boyars an immanent death. The prediction was fulfilled in the year 1478, when during the taking of Novgorod by Ivan III (1462-1505) the boyars were executed.

Shortly before death the monk prepared himself a grave, in which he was buried beyond the altar of the Transfiguration church († 17 April 1478). Later on, over his relics was built a chapel. His relics together with the relics of the Monk Savvatii were transferred on 8 August 1566 into a chapel consecrated in their memory at the Transfiguration cathedral.

Many a miracle was witnessed to, when the Monk Zosima with the Monk Savvatii appeared to fishermen perishing in the depths of the sea. The Monk Zosima is likewise a patron of bee-keeping and preserver of bee-hives, and to him is even bestown the title "Bee-keeper" ("Pchel'nik"). To the Monk Zosima often hasten those in sickness. The many hospital churches dedicated to him testify to the great curative power of his prayer before God.

The Monk Savvatii of Solovetsk came to the Kirillo-Beloezersk monastery in the year 1396, where he took monastic vows. He there pursued asceticism for a long time, unquestioningly fulfilling all obediences. His humility, gentle love towards the brethren and his strict life distinguished the monk Savvatii among his fellow ascetics. He soon became burdened by the attention and esteem of the brethren and laity coming to him, and having learned that on Lake Ladoga is the rocky island of Valaam, he decided to settle there. Quite sadly, the brethren of the Kirillo-Beloezersk monastery were parted from their starets (elder). At Valaam the worldly fame likewise began to disquiet the humble starets. Amidst this the monk learned, that in the North was the uninhabited island of Solovetsk, and he began to ask of the hegumen blessing to settle there in solitude. But the hegumen and the brethren did not want to be separated from their holy starets-elder. At the command of God the Monk Savvatii by night left the Valaam monastery and set off to the shores of the White Sea. When he learned from the local people that the island was situated at a two-day voyage, that on it were many lakes and that on the island no one lived, he all the more was embued with the desire to settle there. The astonished local people asked the ascetic, whitened with grey hair, how he would live there and what he would eat. "My Master is such, – answered the monk, – Who unto frailty giveth the fresh strength of youth, and nourisheth to fullness the hungry".

For a certain while the Monk Savvatii remained at the chapel, set nearby the mouth of the Vyg River, in the environs of Soroka. There he encountered the Monk German – pursuing asceticism as an hermit, and together they decided to settle upon the island. In a frail boat, praying to God, the elders set off upon the harsh sea and after three days they reached Solovetsk Island. The ascetics settled by the Sekirna hill, where they raised up a cross and made their cells. In the severe conditions of the North the startsi-elders over the course of several years by their exploits hallowed the unpopulated island. And here likewise the enemy of mankind – the devil, tempted the holy elders. A certain fisherman with his wife, moved with a sense of envy, came somehow to the island and settled not far from the ascetics. But the Lord did not permit the laypeople to maintain themselves alongside the elders. Two youths in bright garb appeared to the wife of the fisherman and struck at her with

rods. The fisherman took fright, quickly gathered his things and hastened to return to his former place of residence.

Once, when the Monk German had gone for cell-necessities off along the Onega River, the Monk Savvatii – remaining alone and sensing his impending end, with prayer turned to God, that He would grant him to commune the Holy Mysteries. The monk sailed for two days to the mainland and at ten versts from the Vyg River encountered the hegumen Nathanael, who had come to the distant settlement to commune a sick Christian. Hegumen Nathanael rejoiced at meeting the monk, fulfilled his wish and heard the account about his exploits on the island. In parting, they agreed to meet at the church along the Vyg River.

Entering the temple, the holy elder prayerfully gave thanks to God for Communion. He then enclosed himself in a cell located nearby the church, and began to prepare himself for hermitage in the eternal habitation. During this time the Novgorod merchant John came to shore and, having venerated the holy icons in church, he went to the holy elder. Having received blessing and guidance, he offered the monk a portion of his wealth and was saddened, when he heard a refusal. To comfort the merchant, the Monk Savvatii offered him to stay over until morning and promised him prosperity on further journeying. But the merchant John hastened to disembark. Suddenly there began an earthquake and on the sea a storm picked up. Having taken fright, the merchant stayed, and in the morning when entering the cell for a blessing, he saw that the elder was already dead. Together with the just-arrived hegumen Nathanael, they buried the Monk Savvatii at the chapel and compiled a manuscript of his life. This occurred on 27 September 1435. After 30 years the relics of the Monk Savvatii were transferred by the Monk Zosima (+ 1478, Comm. 17 April) and the brethren of Solovetsk Island, placing them in the Transfiguration church. In 1566 the relics of the Monks Savvatii and Zosima were transferred into a church, named in their honour (combined Commemoration 8 August).

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Eleutherius and Leonides of Constantinople (4th C); Martyr Gormizdas of Persia (†418); Venerable Gregory of Sinai (†1346); Venerable Zosimas of Tumana (14th C); New Martyr Anastasius the Bulgarian (†1794); Venerable Euthymius, the 'man of many labors' of the David-Gareja monastery (†1804); Righteous Philaret of Ichalka (†1913); New Monk-martyr Joseph (Baranov) (†1918); New Hieromartyrs Nikolai Prozorov and Sergius Tikhomirov, priests (†1930); New Hieromartyrs Nicholas Shumkov and Sergius Bondarenko, priests (†1937); New Hieromartyr Nicodemus, archbishop of Kostroma (†1938); Finding of the relics of Venerable Barlaam of Chikoisk (2002); 'Tolga' Icon of the Mother of God.

9 / 22 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast – Wine & Oil Allowed — The Holy Apostle Matthias - *Epistle: The Acts of St. Apostles 1:12-17 & The Gospel According to St. Luke 9:1-6*
Tropar of St. Matthias, Tone 3: Thy divine Spirit choose thee to fill the twelve-numbered rank of the apostles, O glorious one. And with them thou didst proclaim the kenosis of the Word, and wast made wondrous, O Apostle Matthias. Therefore, intercede for them that honour thee, that they be granted forgiveness of sins and great mercy.

Kondak of St. Matthias, Tone 4: Like the rays of the sun hast thy word gone forth unto all the world, and it enlighteneth with grace the Church of the nations, O wondrous Apostle Matthias.

Born in Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah, he was a pupil of St Simeon the Host of God in Jerusalem. When the Lord began preaching the Kingdom of God, Matthias was among those who loved the Lord with all their hearts, heard His words and saw His works with delight. Matthias was at first included among the seventy, lesser apostles of Christ, but, after the Lord's Resurrection, because the place of Judas the betrayer fell vacant, the apostles chose this Matthias by lot in Judas's place as one of the twelve Great Apostles (Acts 1: 23) . Receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Matthias began to preach the Gospel, first in Judea then in Ethiopia, where he suffered greatly for the sake of Christ. It is held that he preached also in Macedonia, where they tried to bind him, but he became invisible to his tormentors and thus escaped danger. When he was imprisoned, the Lord appeared to him, gave him courage and set him free. He finally returned to work in Judea. There he was arrested and taken for trial before Ananias the High Priest, before whom he fearlessly witnessed to Christ. Ananias (the same who had earlier killed the Apostle James) condemned Matthias to death. They took Matthias out and stoned him to death, then cut off his head with an axe (the Roman way of executing those condemned to death. The

hypocritical Jews used this method on the dead man, to prove to the Romans that he had opposed Rome). So died this great apostle of Christ, and went to the eternal joy of his Lord.

The Holy Martyr Antony - Anthony was a citizen of Alexandria. Brought before the pagan prince, he freely confessed his faith and was tortured, flogged and scrapped but he would not deny Christ. Finally, he was thrown into a fire and, from the midst of the fire, he spoke to the people: "My beloved brethren, do not be a slave to the body but rather concern yourself more about the soul which is given to you by God and is kindred to God and to the heavenly hosts." And so, instructing his people and burning in the fire, Anthony gave up his holy soul to God.; The Holy Martyrs Julian and Marcian, and others with them.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Psoes of Egypt (4th C); Blessed Samuel, priest of Edessa (6th C); Martyrs Julian, Marcian, John, James, Alexius, Demetrius, Photius, Peter, Leontius, and Mary of Constantinople (†730); Venerable Macarius of Oredezh (†1532); St. Philaret, archbishop of Chernigov (†1866); New Nun-martyr Margaret (Gunaronulo) (†1918); Synaxis of the saints of Solovki.

† Daily Scripture Readings †

Monday – Epistle: II Cor. 5:10-15 (§179); Gospel: Mark 1:9-15 (§2)

Tuesday – Epistle: for Tuesday: II Cor. 5:15-21 (§180); for Wednesday: II Cor. 6:11-16 (§182)
Gospel: for Tuesday: Mark 1:16-22 (§3); for Wednesday: Mark 1:23-28 (§4)

Wednesday –Vespers: Ex. 24:12-18; Ex. 33:11-23; 34:4-6, 8; I Kings 19:3-9, 11-13, 15-16
Matins Gospel: Luke 9:28-36 (§45); Epistle: II Pet. 1:10-19 (§65)
Gospel: Matt. 17:1-9 (§70)

Thursday – Epistle: II Cor. 7:1-10 (§183); Gospel: Mark 1:29-35 (§5)

Friday - Epistle: II Cor. 7:10-16 (§184); Gospel: Mark 2:18-22 (§9)

Saturday –Epistle: I Cor. 15:1-11 (§158); Gospel: Matt. 19:16-26 (§79)

HYMN OF PRAISE

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

There, where Israel defeated Sisar
There also condescended, the Heavenly King
Prayer, to go and to nightly vigils,
The glory of His Transfiguration, to manifest,
And the faith of His followers, to confirm
In the eternal victory of Him the Victor.
There, divine light from Himself, He released
Dispels the thick darkness, and illuminated Tabor;
The Light, for a long time, which in Himself contained
From which, to the world, a little at a time dispensed
Abundant rays, now released,
Jubilant rays, sweet rays.
The glow of humanity, to reveal to heaven,
To earth and to men, the Divine Truth.
Let the firmament, its Representative see,
Let the earth recognize God, the Savior.

REFLECTION

Why did our Lord not manifest His divine glory on Tabor before all the disciples instead of before three of them? First, because He Himself gave the Law through the mouth of Moses: **"At the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established" (Deuteronomy 19:15).** Therefore, three witnesses are sufficient. These three witnesses represent three main virtues: Peter Faith, for he was the first to confess his faith in Christ as the Son of God; James Hope, for, with faith in the promise of Christ, he was the first who laid down his life for the Lord, being the first to be slain by the Jews; John Love, for he reclined on the bosom of the Lord and remained beneath the Cross of the Lord until the end. God is not called the God of many but rather the God of the chosen. "**I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6)**. God often valued a faithful man more than an entire nation. Thus, on many occasions, He wanted to destroy the entire Jewish nation, but because of the prayers of righteous Moses, spared that nation to live. God listened more to the faithful Prophet Elijah than to the entire unbelieving kingdom of Ahab. Because of the prayers of one man, God towns and people. Thus, the sinful town of Ustiug was to be destroyed by fire and hail had it not been saved by the prayers of the one and only righteous man in it, St. Procopius, the "fool for Christ" (July 8).