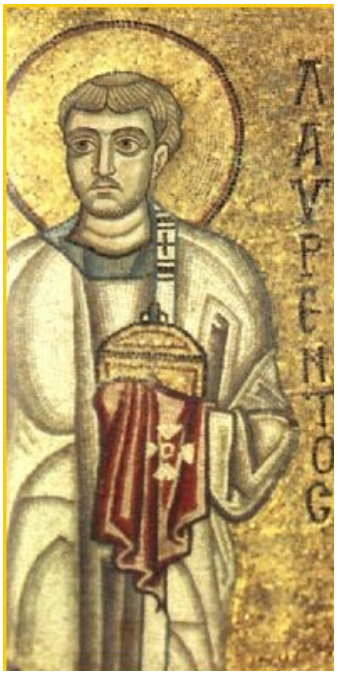


12th Sunday After Pentecost

Holy Martyr and Archdeacon Laurence of Rome & Afterfeast of Transfiguration

10 / 23 August

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 3: Let the heavens rejoice / let the earth be glad / for the Lord has shown strength with His arm! / He has trampled down death by death! / He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell / and has granted the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Feast 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.

Troparion of St Lawrence tone 3: Aflame with the Spirit like a living coal/ thou didst burn up the thorns of error,/ O blessed trophy-bearer Lawrence/ archdeacon of Christ./ Like rational incense thou didst become a whole burnt offering/ to Him Who magnified thee./ Wherefore shelter from all assaults of the enemy those who glorify thee.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 3: On this day thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, / leading us from the gates of death / On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices. / With the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

Kontakion of the Feast 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.

Kontakion of St Lawrence tone 2: With divine fire thou didst kindle thy heart, O Lawrence/ and reduce the fire of the passions to ashes. / O staff of athletes, Godbearing Martyr, thou didst cry with faith while contesting:/ No one will separate me from the love of Christ.

Vespers: Lord I have Cried, Tone 3, on 10: Octoechos 4; Feast: 3 (Thou hast shone forth today); Martyr 3 (Having served the Word blamelessly); G: Feast (When Thou wast transfigured); N: Sunday Dogmatic in the 3rd tone. Aposticha: Octoechos; G/N: Feast (Taking Thy disciples up to a lofty mountain).

Matins Gospel I

<u>Epistle: Corinthians 15: 1-11</u>

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, By which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, And that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

HE WAS SEEN BY CEPHAS, THEN BY THE TWELVE. AFTER THAT...

BY MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED BRETHREN AT ONCE... LAST OF ALL HE WAS SEEN BY ME ALSO

Having finished the discourse on spiritual gifts, he passes on to the most necessary of all: the subject of the resurrection. For in this, too, they were very unsound. And as in men's bodies when the fever lays actual hold on their solid parts - I mean the nerves and the veins and the primary elements - the mischief becomes incurable unless it receives much attention, at that time something very similar was likely to happen. The mischief was proceeding to the very elements of godliness. This is why Paul also uses great earnestness. For his discourse was not of morals ...but about the very sum of all good things. They were at variance touching the resurrection itself. The devil was taking a vehement stand against the resurrection because this was our great hope ...Paul, writing to Timothy, called it gangrene ...saying, 'Of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some' (II Tim. 2:17,18). At one time then they spoke this way, but at another time they said that the body does not rise again but the resurrection is the purification of the soul. But these things that wicked demon persuaded them to say ...to show that all the things done for our sakes are a fable. For if they were persuaded that there is no resurrection of bodies, he would have gradually persuaded them that neither was Christ raised ...Paul puts this before us with much exactness, going over all of it...

Gospel Matthew 19: 16-26

Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' " The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

See in the Epistle above what kind of reading from the Apostle Paul the Holy Church has selected for us today, in order to strengthen us in a definite state of mind. Along with the Sunday Gospel reading, which serves as a support, it strengthens in us the understanding that we live here temporarily. However, we fight against such an understanding; we don't even want to think about it. But it's a fact. Yes, our life is seventy years, and if by reason of strength, eighty years; but beyond this is hardship and disease. And how many tragic cases there are when God cuts off our earthly life in the years of youth, and even in childhood.

What have the Sunday Gospel readings been saying to us during the last few weeks? They have been saying that we must be perfect, that we must be Christians, because at any time the moment may come when Christ will call us and say: "Follow Me!" (Mt. 19:21). But how are we going to follow Him if we are spiritually paralysed, if we are spiritually blind and do not see His abodes on high?

Christ saves us from these dispositions. He gives us His Church. And the Orthodox Church is always reminding us of what the Bible says: how the world of God was created, how the first people lived, how the Fall occurred. Adam did not want to go from strength to strength, from grace to grace in communion with God, but wanted to have this strength within himself. And he went away, went away into the byways of human life, and therefore lost the Tree of Life. But God the Merciful One, God the Father gives us His Son Who was incarnate of the Most Holy Virgin, Who lived the Good News of the Gospel and showed us how to fulfill the commandment: Love for God and neighbour.

In today's Epistle the Apostle Paul shows us the true Risen Christ, Who brings us to Eternal Life. Paul himself, while still Saul, was also wandering in search of truth. He too in the beginning was searching for the earthly

Christ who would free the Jews from the power of Rome. But when he was on the way to persecute the Church of God, he met Christ Himself, already after the Ascension; and here Saul became Paul. And as we heard in today's reading, he became the preacher of the Risen Christ. He became a New Testament man, who (if one can say so) brought about a great revolution in the world and transformed the whole world into the search for Christ and the striving for Life in Christ. With the name of the Apostle Paul is connected all the preaching of Christ in the entire world.

So when the Holy Church has strengthened us in the understanding that we are going toward Eternal Existence through our earthly wandering to Christ, then the Holy Church addresses us and points out: do not be mistaken. A certain lawyer came to Christ and asked:

What shall I do in order to inherit the Kingdom of God? (Today's Gospel). And Christ said, Fulfill the commandments. And when this lawyer said, From my childhood I have fulfilled the commandments, Christ saw his lack of understanding of the truth and said: Then give away everything that you have and follow Me (Mt. 19:16-21). But this man had much and trusted in this "much." Everything around him was real to him, and this reality gave him security in life. And this, what Christ was saying about future life, was not real to him. Therefore, when Christ said to him, Follow me and give away everything; he thought: how do I give it away? What will I have then? And what did he want to have? Power, strength, to be a possessor of earthly things.

The Apostle says today: what is earth? Christ leads us into Eternal Life. He saves us in an earthly way. God gives people abilities and knowledge; these are the various ways in which people pass their earthly life. But laid before them as a foundation are the Beatitudes: blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who weep, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, blessed are the peacemakers, those who are persecuted (Mt. 5:3-11). See, these are all the heavenly ways. This is what the Holy Church sets before us. Speaking to us about life beyond the grave, about resurrection (not as an idea, but as real life), about the Apostle Paul and all our saints, she shows us the truth and shows us that mirage which appears to be real. But if we start to live for this reality in order to acquire earthly goods, we will find ourselves in an abyss, and everything we possess will remain here. There will be nothing that belongs to Christ.

So let us arise, brothers, answering the calls of the Holy Church today: do not abandon prayer, do not abandon fasting which gives us concentration and attention, do not neglect also your good heart which will obtain for you a revelation from God and the joy of spiritual spring which will strengthen you in Eternal Life.

The One Thing Needful – Archbishop Andrei

10 / 23 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast — The Holy Martyrs Laurence the Archdeacon (who was broiled to death under Decius) and Pope Sixtus, and others with them - When Pope Stephen was killed, St Sixtus was installed in his place. Sixtus was an Athenian, first a philosopher and later a Christian. At that time, the Roman bishops were being killed one after the other in such quick succession that to be made Bishop of Rome was tantamount to a death sentence. The Emperor Valerian was determined to stamp out Christianity, and Pope Sixtus was quickly brought to trial with two of his deacons, Felicicius and Agapitus. When they were being taken off to prison, Laurence said to the Pope: 'Where are you going, Father, without your son? Whither, O Bishop, without your archdeacon?' The Pope consoled him with the prophecy that he would undergo yet greater suffering for Christ, and follow him very soon. And indeed, as soon as Sixtus and the two deacons had been beheaded, Laurence was arrested. He had been inspired to set in order both his own affairs and those of the Church. As treasurer, he had taken all the Church's valuables to the house of a widower, Cyriacus. At that time, he healed. Cyriacus of terrible pains in the head by the touch of his hand, and restored the sight of a blind man, Crescention. Thrown into prison, Laurence there healed an elderly prisoner, Lucillus, of blindness and baptised him. Seeing this, the warder, Hippolytus, also received baptism, and later suffered for Christ. As Laurence would not deny Christ, but strongly counselled the Emperor Valerian to abandon his false gods, he was beaten on the face with stones and on his body with scorpions (chains with poisoned teeth). A soldier, Romanus, who was present at the torture, came to belief in Christ and was immediately beheaded. They finally put Laurence on an iron grid and lit a fire underneath. Roasting in the fire, Laurence gave thanks to God, and mocked the Emperor for his paganism. When he had given his pure and heroic soul to God, Hippolytus took his body by night, first to the house of Cyriacus and then to a cave, where he buried it. St Laurence suffered, together with the others, in 258; St Hiron.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyrs Sixtus, bishop of Rome, and Felicissimus and Agapitus, deacons (†258); Martyr Romanus the Soldier (†258); Blessed Laurence, the Fool-for-Christ, of Kaluga (†1515); New Hieromartyr Vyacheslav Zakedsky, priest (†1918); New Hieromartyr Athanasius Kislov, priest (†1937); Second Finding and Translation of the relics of Venerable Sabbas of Storozhev (1998); Synaxis of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Solovki. Movable feast on the Sunday after August 6th: Synaxis of the Saints of Valaam.

11 / 24 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration – Dormition Fast - The Holy Martyr Euplus - a deacon from Catania in Sicily. The Emperor Diocletian sent a commander, Pentagurus, to Sicily to exterminate any Christians that he found there. Pentagurus did not find a single Christian, for they had hidden from the persecutor and did not show themselves. Then someone accused Euplus of taking a book to some secret Christians and reading to them. This book was the holy Gospel. He was therefore soon taken for trial, and, with the book hung round his neck, put in prison. After seven days of imprisonment and hunger, he was put to torture. When they whipped him with iron flails, Euplus mockingly said to the torturing judge: 'You fool; don't you see that these tortures are, to me, like a cobweb? If you can, find other, harsher tortures, as these are like playthings.' Finally, they led Christ's martyr to the scaffold. Then St Euplus opened the holy Gospel and read from it to the people for a long time. Many turned to the Christian faith, and St Euplus was beheaded, in the year 304, and went to the heavenly Kingdom. His wonderworking relics lie in a village near Naples called Vico della Batonia.

The Holy Martyr Susanna the Virgin, and others with her - the daughter of a Roman presbyter Gavinius and the niece of Pope Gaius. Gaius and Gavinius were of royal lineage and kinsmen to the then Emperor Diocletian. Emperor Diocletian had an adopted son Maximian Galerius, whom he [Diocletian] wanted to marry Susanna. But Susanna, completely dedicated to Christ the Lord, did not want to hear at all about marriage and particularly not about marriage with an unbaptized man. Those who asked her to marry the emperor's son, the aristocrats, Claudia and Maxima, Susanna converted to the Christian Faith along with their entire household. Enraged by this, the emperor ordered that the executioners take Claudia and Maxima, with their families to Ostis where they were burned alive and their ashes thrown into the sea. However, Susanna was beheaded in the home of Gavinius. The emperor's wife Serena, secretly a Christian, removed Susanna's martyred body at night and honourably buried it, and Pope Gaius converted that house where Susanna was slain into a church and celebrated services there. Shortly following the suffering of this bride of Christ, her father Gavinius and her uncle Pope Gaius also suffered. They all suffered honourably for the Lord and received the wreath of glory in the years 295 A.D. and 296 A.D.

St Niphon, Patriarch of Constantinople - born in Greece. He was tonsured a monk in his youth and, at first, lived a life of asceticism outside the Holy Mountain [Athos] and, after that, on the Holy Mountain in various monasteries, remaining the longest in Vatopedi and Dionysiou. He was loved by all the holy Agiorites as much for his rare wisdom, as well as for his unusual meekness. He became the Bishop of Thessalonica against his will. Two years later, he journeyed to Constantinople on business and there, was elected to the vacant throne of the patriarchate. He was banished by the Sultan to Jedrene where he lived in exile. The Wallachian [Romanian] Prince Radul besought him from the Sultan and named Niphon as archbishop of the Wallachians. Because of Radul's transgressions, Niphon departed Wallachia and returned to Mount Athos to the community of Dionysiou where he lived a life of asceticism until his ninetieth year, when he took up habitation in the Kingdom of God in the year 1460 A.D. He composed the "Prayer of Absolution" read at the Burial Service: [O Lord Jesus Christ, by His divine grace, as also by the gift and power vouchsafed unto His holy Disciples and Apostles, that they should bind and Loose the sins of men: (For He said to them: Receive you The Holy Spirit: whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins you retain they are retained. And whatsoever you shall bind or loose upon earth shall be bound or loosed also in Heaven. By the same power, also, transmitted to us from them, this my spiritual child, [Name], is absolved through me, unworthy though I be, from all things wherein, as mortal [He-She] have sinned against God, whether in word or deed or thought and with all [His-Her] senses, whether voluntary or involuntary; whether with knowledge or through ignorance. If [He-She] be under the ban or excommunication of a bishop or if a priest; or has sinned by any oath; or has been bound, as a man, by any sins whatsoever, but has repented him thereof, with contrition of heart: [He-She] is now absolved from all those faults and bonds. May all those things which have proceeded from the weakness of [His-her] mortal nature be consigned to oblivion and be remitted to [Him-Her]: Through His loving-kindness; through the prayers of our Most-holy and Blessed and Glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary; of all the holy, glorious and all-laudable Apostles and all of the Saints. Amen.]

St. Blane, bishop of Bute (Dunblane) - Bishop and Confessor in Scotland, born on the island of Bute, date unknown; d. 590. His feast is kept on 10 August. He was a nephew of St. Cathan, and was educated in Ireland under Sts. Comgall and Kenneth; he became a monk, went to Scotland, and eventually was bishop among the Picts. There can be no doubt that devotion to St. Blane was, from early times, popular in Scotland. His monastery became the site of the Cathedral of Dunblane. There was a church of St. Blane in Dumfries and another at Kilblane. The saint died in 590. The ruins of his church at Kingarth, Bute, where his remains were buried, are still standing and form an object of great interest to antiquarians; the bell of his monastery is preserved at Dunblane.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Passarion, teacher of Euthymius the Great (†428); St. Gaugericus (Gery), bishop of Brussels (†590); Monk-martyrs Theodore and Basil of the Kiev Caves (†1098); Venerable Theodore, prince of Ostrog (†1483); New Martyr Anastasius of Asomaton (†1816); New Martyr Demetrius of Lesbos (†1819); Venerable John, recluse of Kharkov (†1867).

12 / 25 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration – Dormition Fast - The Holy Martyrs Anicetas and Photius - the Emperor Diocletian at one time visited the city of Nicomedia with the evil intention of utterly exterminating the Christians there. But, when he began his merciless torture of the Christians, St Anicetas, one of the governors of the city, presented himself before him and courageously confessed before the Emperor his faith in Christ the Lord, God incarnate in the flesh for our salvation. Anicetas also denounced the worship of idols as that of deaf and dumb stones, unworthily worshipped by ignorant men. The furious Emperor commanded that his tongue be cut out, but Anicetas, by the power of God, continued to speak. Then a lion was let loose on him, which fawned about him. At that moment, the Temple of Hercules fell down. Photius, a kinsman of Anicetas', seeing the wonders and his kinsman's endurance, embraced him, confessed that he himself was a Christian and cried out to the Emperor: 'You should be ashamed, you idolater; your gods are nothing!' The Emperor ordered that he be beheaded immediately, but the executioner, lifting up his hand against St Photius, gave himself a blow with his sword and died. After harsh torture, the two of them were thrown into prison, where they remained for three years. They were then taken out and thrown into an enormous burning furnace. Many other Christians, men, women and children, went into the flames voluntarily after them, and the prayers of the Christians were heard rising from the flames, thanking God for their death by martyrdom. They all suffered in about 305. St Anicetas and St Photius are invoked in the prayers at the blessing of oil and water.

St. Muredach (Murtagh), first bishop of Killala & founder of Innismurray, of Ireland - Muredach was an "old man", perhaps a presbyter or priest, in Saint Patrick's household. At the conclusion of his mission to the West Patrick left his companion to be bishop in W. Sligo and Mayo. One tradition says that at the end of his life he went to live as a hermit on the island of Innishmurray. We pray for companionship, for those who are lonely, and we give thanks for those who go to unfamiliar places in the service of Christ's mission. We pray also for the faithful members of the church in Co. Mayo and the north west of Co. Sligo especially as they welcome visitors at holiday time. Powerful God, whose power holds us and leads us in the service of Christ and whose ear hearkens to our needs: like Muredach of Patrick's household, may we find Christ in the hearts of all that love us and in the mouth of friend and stranger. We ask this in Jesus' Name.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyr Alexander, bishop of Comana (3rd C); Martyrs Pamphilus and Capito (3rd C); Venerable Pallamon of Egypt (†c.323); Venerable Castor, bishop of Apt in Gaul (5th C); Venerable Seigine of Iona (†652); Monk-martyrs Gerontius, Serapion, Germanus, Bessarion, Michael, Otar, and Symeon, of Gareji (†1851); New Monk-martyr Barlaam, archimandrite, and with him other brothers of Belogor Monastery: Hieromonks Sergius (Vershinin), Elias (Popov), Viacheslav (Kozoshikhin), Ioasaph (Sabintsev), John (Novoselov), Anthony (Arapov); hierodeacons Micah (Podkorytov), Bessarion (Okulov), Matthew (Bannikov), Euthymius (Korotkov); Monks Barnabas (Nadezhdin), Dimitry (Sozinov), Savva (Kolmogorov), Hermogenes (Boyaryshnev), Arcadius (Noskov), Euthymius (Shirshilov), Marcellus (Shivrina); and novices John (Rotnov), James (Starcev), Peter (Rochev), James (Danilov), Alexander (Arapov), Theodore (Belkin), another Peter, Sergius (Samatov), and Alexey (Korotkov) (†1918); New Hieromartyr Basil Infantiev, priest (†1918); New Hieromartyrs Leonidas Biryukovich, John Nikolsky, and Nicholas Dobroumov, priests (†1937).

13 / 26 August - Apodosis of the Transfiguration- Dormition Fast - St Tikhon of Zadonsk- born in 1724 in the village of Korotsk, in the Novgorod region, into a simple, peasant family, he received the monastic habit at the age of thirty-four and very soon, because of his ascesis and spiritual wisdom, was given higher and higher service until he was consecrated Bishop of Voronezh. He served as bishop for a little under seven years and then, because of ill-health, retired to the monastery of Zadonsk and entered into rest there in 1783. His wonderworking relics are kept there to this day. A great ascetic of the Russian Church, he was a rare shepherd, a man of prayer and the writer of beautiful spiritual works. In his wisdom, his holiness and asceticism, he could be counted an equal of the great Fathers of the Orthodox Church of former times. Because of the many witnessed miracles that were performed over his relics, he was first proclaimed a saint by the people, and then officially by the Church in 1861.

Tropar, Tone 8: From thy youth thou didst love Christ, O blessed one, / and thou wast a model to all in word, life, love, spirit, faith, purity, and humility. / Wherefore, thou hast now taken up thy dwelling in the heavenly mansions / where, as thou standest before the throne of the Most Holy Trinity, / 0 Saint Tikhon, pray that our souls be saved.

Another Tropar, Tone 4: Instructor of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety, / preacher of repentance, zealot for Chrysostom, / most good shepherd, new luminary and wonderworker of Russia, / thou didst keep thy flock well, / and by thy writing hast thou instructed us; / wherefore being adorned by the Chief Pastor with the crown of incorruption, / do thou pray to Him that our souls be saved.

Kondak, Tone 8: O Successor of the apostles, / adornment of hierarchs, teacher of the Orthodox Church; / pray to the Lord of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy.

Read what St. Tikhon has to say on perpetual repentance and correction of life: Death walks invisibly behind us, and the end will overtake us when we least expect it. Abide in perpetual repentance, then, and be prepared for departure at all times and in every place. The wise servant always watches and waits till his master calls him. You, too, should watch and wait till Christ your Lord calls you, for He calls everyone through death. Then always be in your life what you wish to be at death. Always live piously and work out your salvation with fear and trembling (cf. Philip. 2:12). Always and everywhere proceed with caution and guard yourself, lest you be deprived of eternal salvation, which Christ our Lord obtained for us with His Blood and death, and so shall we have a blessed end.

The Holy Martyr Hippolytus - Hippolytus was a military supervisor and prison governor in Rome, born and brought up a pagan. When St Laurence the archdeacon was thrown into prison, Hippolytus was ordered by the Emperor to keep a strict eye on this prisoner. Hippolytus saw with his own eyes how Laurence restored the sight

of the blind Lucillus and how he healed many other of the sick, and he became a Christian. When St Laurence baptised him, Hippolytus had a heavenly vision and said: 'I see innocent souls in great joy'. He then took Laurence into his own home, and all those in it were baptised, including his old nurse, Concordia; nineteen souls in all. When Laurence was slain for Christ, Hippolytus took the martyr's body by night, wrapped it in a winding-sheet and buried it. This somehow came to the ears of the Emperor Valerian, and, on the third day after Laurence's death, Hippolytus was arrested and taken before the Emperor. Refusing to deny the true Faith, he was struck on the mouth with stones. The Emperor then ordered that he be stripped and flayed. Naked before the Emperor, Hippolytus said to him: 'You have not stripped me, but have begun to clothe me!' They then threw him to the ground and flayed him mercilessly, but Hippolytus only cried out: 'I am a Christian!' The Emperor, hearing that Hippolytus and his whole household were Christians, ordered that they all be brought. Old Concordia said: 'We prefer to die in honour in the Christian faith with our master than to live in dishonour with you.' She was killed first, and then the other eighteen, all before Hippolytus' eyes. Finally, Hippolytus was bound behind a wild horse and dragged hither and thither, until the martyr gave his soul to God.

Blessed Maxim, Fool-for-Christ – He lived at Moscow. About his parentage, time and place of birth, nothing is known. Saint Maxim chose one of the most difficult and thorny paths to salvation, voluntarily for the sake of Christ having taken upon himself the guise of a fool. Summer and winter Maxim walked about almost naked, bearing with prayer both the heat and cold. He had a saying: "Fierce though be the winter, yet sweet be paradise". Rus' very much loved its holy fools, it esteemed their deep humility, it heeded their wisdom, expressed profitably and aphoristically in the proverbial sayings of the people's language. And everyone heeded the holy fools: everyone from the great princes on down to the least beggar.

Blessed Maxim lived at a difficult time for the Russian people. Tatar incursions, droughts, epidemics were endemic and people perished. The saint said to the unfortunate: "Not everything is by the weave of the wool, some be opposite... They have won the fight, admit it, and bow the lower; weep not for the beaten, weep rather the unbeaten; let us show tolerance and in this we shalt at least be human; gradually even raw firewood ignites; for toleration may God grant salvation". But the saint did not only speak words of consolation. His angry denunciations frightened the mighty of his world. Blessed Maxim was wont to say to the rich and illustrious: "An idolatrous house, and a conscience corrupted; everyone is baptised, let everyone pray; God doth detect every wrong. He deceiveth not thee, nor deceivest thou He".

Blessed Maxim died on 11 November 1434 and as buried at the church of the holy Princes Boris and Gleb. Miraculous healings began occurring from the relics of the saint of God. In a circular missive of 1547, metropolitan Makarii enjoined "the singing and celebration at Moscow to the new Wonderworker Maxim, Fool-for-Christ". That same year on 13 August the relics of Blessed Maxim were uncovered undecayed. The church of Saints Boris and Gleb, at which the saint was buried, burned in the year 1568. On its place was built a new church, which they consecrated in the name of Saint Maxim, Fool-for-Christ. And into this church was put the venerable relics of Saint Maxim.

Also commemorated on this day: Blessed Empress Eudocia (†460); Venerable Seridus of Gaza, abbot (†c.543); Venerable Radegunde, queen of the Franks (†587); Venerable Empress Irene (Xenia in monasticism) (†1134); New Hieromartyrs John Shyshev, Ioasph Panov and Constantine Popov, priests (†1918); New Hieromartyrs Seraphim, bishop of Dmitrov; Nicholas Orlov and Jacob Arkhippov, priests, and Alexis Vvedensky, deacon (†1937); New Martyr Basil Aleksandrin (†1942); The ‘Minsk,’ ‘Seven Arrows’ and ‘Of the Passion’ Icons of the Mother of God.

14 / 27 August - Forefeast of the Dormition – Dormition Fast - The Holy Prophet Micah II - of the tribe of Judah and from the village of Morasth, from which he took the name 'the Morasthite', he was a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah, Amos and Hosea, and the Judean kings Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He denounced the vices of his people and denounced also the prophets who prophesied 'of wine and strong drink'. He foretold the fall of Samaria, which would come about because the city's elders take a bribe and the priests teach for hire, and prophets divine for money. 'Therefore shall Sion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps'. But, of all his prophecies, the most important are those of the Messiah, and especially of the place of His birth. He named Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah, 'whose goings-forth have been from of old, from everlasting' (5:2). It is not known certainly whether this prophet was killed by the Jews or died peacefully (see Jeremiah 26:18-19), but it is known that he was buried in his village, and that his relics were found, together

with the relics of the Prophet Habakkuk, in the time of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, by some mysterious revelation received by the Bishop of Eleutheropolis.

Translation of the relics of the Venerable Theodosius of the Kiev Caves - The Monk Theodosii (Feodosii) of Pechersk, was the initiator of a life-in-common ustav (rule) and a father of monasticism in the Russian land. He was born at Vasilevo, not far from Kiev. From his youthful years he felt an irresistible attraction for the ascetic life, and led an ascetic lifestyle while still in his parental home. He disdained childish games and attractions, and constantly went to church. He himself asked his parents to let him go to study reading of the holy books, and through his evident abilities and rare zeal, he quickly learned the reading of the books, such that everyone was amazed at the intellect of the lad. At 14 years of age he lost his father and remained under the supervision of his mother – a woman strict and domineering, but very much loving her son. She many a time chastised her son for his yearning after asceticism, but he remained firmly committed to his path. At 24 years of age he secretly left his parental home and took monastic vows, with the blessing of the Monk Antonii (Anthony), at the Kievo-Pechersk monastery with the name Theodosii. After four years his mother found him and with tears besought him to return home, but the saint himself persuaded her to remain in Kiev and accept monasticism in the monastery of Saint Nicholas at the Askol'd cemetery.

The Monk Theodosii toiled at the monastery more than others and not seldom he took upon himself part of the work of the other brethren: he carried water, chopped wood, ground up the rye-grain and carried the flour to each monk. On cold nights he uncovered his body and let it be food for gnats and mosquitoes, the blood flowed on him, but the saint patiently occupied himself with handicrafts and sang psalms. In church he appeared before others and, standing at a place, he did not leave it until the finish of Divine-services; the readings he listened to with particular attention.

In 1054 the Monk Theodosii was ordained to the dignity of priest-monk, and in 1057 he was chosen hegumen. The fame of his deeds attracted a number of monks to the monastery, at which he built a new church and cells, and he introduced the Studite common-life monastic-rule (ustav), a copy of which was made by his commissioning at Constantinople. In the dignity of hegumen the Monk Theodosii continued to fulfill very difficult duties at the monastery. The monk usually partook of only dry bread and cooked greens without oil. The nights passed for him without sleep in prayer, such that the brethren often took notice of this, although the chosen one of God also tried to conceal his efforts from others. No one was to see when the Monk Theodosii dozed lightly, and usually he rested sitting. During the period of Great Lent the saint withdrew into a cave situated not far from the monastery, where he asceticised with no one seeing. His attire was a coarse hair-shirt worn straight over his body, such that in this old man looking like a beggar it was impossible to recognise the reknown hegumen, deeply respected by all that knew him.

One time the Monk Theodosii was returning from Great Prince Izyaslav. The coachman, not recognising whom he was, said gruffly: :Thou, monk, art always on holiday, but I constantly am at work. Get up on my place, and let me ride in the carriage". The holy elder meekly complied and drove the servant. Seeing how boyar nobles along the way bowed to the monk driving the horses, the servant took fright, but the holy ascetic calmed him, and upon their arrival gave him a meal at the monastery. Trusting on the help of God, the monk did not keep a large supply of food at the monastery, and therefore the brethren were in want of their daily bread. Through his prayers, however, unknown benefactors appeared at the monastery and furnished the necessities for the brethren. The great princes, and especially Izyaslav, loved to listen to the spiritual discourse of the Monk Theodosii. The saint was not afraid to denounce the mighty ones of this world. The unjustly condemned always found in him a defender, and judges would review matters at the request of the hegumen revered by all. The monk was particularly concerned about the destitute: he built for them at the monastery a special courtyard where anyone in need could receive food and drink. Having sensed beforehand his own end, the Monk Theodosii peacefully expired to the Lord in the year 1074. He was buried in a cave dug out by him, into which he secluded himself during lenten periods. The relics of the ascetic were found uncorrupt in the year 1091. The Monk Theodosii was enumerated to the ranks of the saints in 1108. From the written works of the Monk Theodosii there have survived to our time: 6 discourses, 2 missives to GreatPrince Izyaslav, and a prayer for all Christians. The Vita (Life) of the Monk Theodosii was compiled by the Monk Nestor the Chronicler, a student of the great abba, a mere 30 years after his repose, and it was always one of the favourite readings of the Russian nation. An account about the Monk Theodosii also is located under 28 September.

Hieromartyr Nazarius, metropolitan of Kutaisi, Georgia, and others killed with him - Metropolitan Nazarius of Kutaisi-Gaenati was born in 1872 in the village of Didi Jikhaishi in Imereti. His forefathers belonged to a long lineage of clergy, and the future metropolitan was nurtured in the Church from the earliest years of his youth.

Nazarius (known in the world as Joseph) received his education at Kutaisi Theological School. In 1892 he graduated with honors from Tbilisi Seminary and began to serve in the Church, first as a deacon and later (from February 9, 1893) as a priest. In 1904, after a series of personal tragedies (first his wife died, then his two daughters), Nazarius was tonsured a monk. On November 4, 1918, he was enthroned as Metropolitan of Kutaisi.

The years 1922 to 1923 marked a difficult period in the history of the Georgian Church. The Bolsheviks razed twelve hundred churches, destroyed much of the Church's wealth, burnt many rare manuscripts, and persecuted spiritual leaders—particularly Georgian nationalists.

On February 10, 1921, following the Red Army's invasion of Georgia, the treasures of the Sioni and Svetitskhoveli Cathedrals were carried away to Kutaisi for safekeeping. Patriarch Leonid gave his blessing for four boxes of holy objects to be buried under the porch at Metropolitan Nazarius's residence, which was located on the grounds of the Bagrati Cathedral.

After the Bolsheviks secured their occupation of Georgia, they discovered where the treasures had been buried and arrested Metropolitan Nazarius. They accused him of agitating against the government and concealing the possessions of the Church. During the court proceedings the metropolitan was asked for whom he had hidden the treasure, and he answered, "For the Church and the Georgian people!"

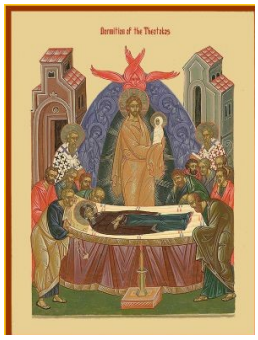
The court sentenced Nazarius to the most severe punishment—execution by a firing squad—but the sentence was subsequently rescinded. In the end, the Bolsheviks imprisoned the hierarch and confiscated his personal belongings.

In April of 1924 Metropolitan Nazarius received amnesty and was released after two years in prison. He returned to his diocese, which was undergoing many trials. He was not permitted to return to his own residence, but was obliged to live with his brother, while his former home was transformed into a storage facility.

On August 14, 1924, a delegation from the village of Simoneti came to the metropolitan to request that he consecrate their local church. At the appointed time, the metropolitan arrived in Simoneti with his retinue and consecrated the church. That night, a group of Chekists (Soviet security agents) broke into the house where Metropolitan Nazarius and his entourage were staying, bound and beat them, and then dragged them to the village council. Without an investigation, the Troika (a Soviet extraordinary council of three judges) sentenced to death Metropolitan Nazarius and four other clergymen—Priest Herman Jajanidze, Priest Hierotheos Nikoladze, Priest Simon Mchedlidze, and Archdeacon Besarion Kukhianidze. They were shot to death in the Sapichkhia Forest.

In 1994, with the blessing of Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II, the full Ecclesiastical Council of the Georgian Church resolved with one accord to canonize Metropolitan Nazarius and the clergymen who were martyred with him. At the same time, the council canonized all the Orthodox Christians who, for their Faith and the independence of their homeland, became victims of the totalitarian regime. They were proclaimed the "New Martyrs of the Georgian Church."

Also commemorated on this day: Martyr Ursicius at Illyricum (†c.305); Hieromartyr Marcellus, bishop of Apameia (†c.389); Venerable Arcadius of Novotorzhok (†1077); Martyr Symeon of Trebizond (†1653); New hieromartyr Basil, archbishop of Chernigov, Monk-martyr Matthew (Pomerantsev), and Martyr Alexei Zverev (†1918); New Hieromartyrs Peter Kosmodamiansky and Vladimir Tsedrinsky, priests (†1918); New Hieromartyrs Vladimir Smirnov and Nicholas Tolgsky, priests, Monk-martyr Eleutherius (Pechennikov), Nun-martyrs Eva (Pavlova), Eudokia (Perevoznikova), and Martyr Theodore Zakharov (†1937); Venerable Alexander (Urodov), confessor (†1961); 'The Converser' and 'Narva' Icon of the Mother of God.



15 / 28 August – The Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary - The Lord Who, on Mt. Sinai, commanded by His Fifth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12), showed by His own example how one should respect one's parent. Hanging on the Cross in agony, He remembered His mother and indicating to the Apostle John, said to her: "Woman behold your son" (St. John 19:26). After that, He said to John: "Behold your mother" (St. John 19:27). And so providing for His mother, He breathed His last. John had a home on Zion in Jerusalem in which the Theotokos settled and remained there to live out the end of her days on earth. By her prayers, gentle counsels, meekness and patience, she greatly assisted the apostles of her Son. Primarily, she spent her entire time in Jerusalem often visiting those places which reminded her of the great events and of the great works of her Son. She especially visited Golgotha, Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives.

Of her distant journeys, her visit to St. Ignatius the Theophorus [God-bearer] in Antioch is mentioned, as well as her visit to Lazarus (whom our Lord resurrected on the fourth day), the Bishop of Cyprus, her visit to the Holy Mountain [Athos] which she blessed and her stay in Ephesus with St. John the Evangelist [The Theologian] during the time of the great persecution of Christians in Jerusalem. In her old age, she often prayed to the Lord and her God on the Mount of Olives, the site of His Ascension, that He take her from this world as soon as possible. On one occasion, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and revealed to her that within three days she will find repose. The angel gave her a palm-branch to be carried at the time of her funeral procession. She returned to her home with great joy, desiring in her heart once more to see in this life, all of the apostles of Christ. The Lord fulfilled her wish and all of the apostles, borne by angels in the clouds, gathered at the same time at the home of John on Zion. With great rejoicing, she saw the holy apostles, encouraged them, counselled them and comforted them.

Following that, she peacefully gave up her soul to God without any pain or physical illness. The apostles took the coffin with her body from which an aromatic fragrance emitted and, in the company of many Christians, bore it to the Garden of Gethsemane to the sepulchre of [her parents], Saints Joachim and Anna. By God's Providence, they were concealed from the evil Jews by a cloud. Anthony, a Jewish priest, grabbed the coffin with his hands with the intention of overturning it but, at that moment, an angel of God severed both his hands. He then cried out to the apostles for help and was healed since declaring his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Thomas was absent, again according to God's Providence, in order that a new and all-glorious mystery of the Holy Theotokos would again be revealed. On the third day, Thomas arrived and desired to venerate [kiss] the body of the Holy All-pure one. But when the apostles opened the sepulchre, they found only the winding sheet and the body was not in the tomb. That evening, the Theotokos appeared to the apostles surrounded by a myriad of angels and said to them: "Rejoice, I will be with you always". It is not exactly known how old the Theotokos was at the time of her Falling Asleep but the overwhelming opinion is that she was over sixty years of age.

Troparion tone 1: In giving birth thou didst keep thy virginity,/ and in thy dormition thou didst not forsake the world, O Mother of God./ Thou didst pass on to life, since thou art the Mother of Life,/ and by thine intercessions thou redeemest our souls from death.

Kontakion tone 2: The grave and death could not hold the Mother of God,/ who is sleepless in her intercessions and an unchanging hope in her mediations./ For as the Mother of Life she was transferred to life/ by Him Who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Macarius the Roman and Chariton (15th C); 'Atskursk,' 'Bakhchisarai,' 'Vladimir-Rostov,' 'Blachernae,' 'Gaenatskaya,' 'Crimean,' 'Mozdok,' 'Giver of Reason,' 'Pskov Caves,' 'Surdyeg,' 'Tupichev,' 'Chukhlom,'and 'Tsilkani' Icons of the Mother of God.

16 / 29 August - Afterfeast of the Dormition – Translation of The Icon of the Lord Jesus Christ Not-Made-With-Hands - in the time that our Lord was preaching the Gospel and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people, there was in the city of Edessa, on the banks of the Euphrates, a certain Prince Avgar, who was riddled with leprosy. He heard of Christ, the Healer of every pain and sickness, and sent a portrait-painter, Ananias, to Palestine with a letter to Christ, in which he begged the Lord to come to Edessa and heal him of his leprosy. In the event of the Lord's not being able to come, the prince commanded Ananias to paint His likeness

and bring it, believing that the portrait would heal him. The Lord replied that he could not come, as the time of His Passion was at hand, and He took a napkin and wiped His face, leaving a perfect reproduction of His most pure face on the napkin. The Lord gave this napkin to Ananias, with a message to say that the prince would be healed by it, but not entirely, and He would therefore send him later an envoy who would rid him of the remainder of the disease. Receiving the napkin, Avgar kissed it and the leprosy fell from his body, with just a little remaining on his face. Later, the Apostle Thaddaeus, preaching the Gospel, came to Avgar, healed him secretly and baptised him. Then the prince smashed the idols that stood at the city's gateway and placed the napkin with the face of Christ above the entrance, stuck onto wood, surrounded with a gold frame and ornamented with pearls. The prince also wrote above the icon on the gateway: 'O Christ our God, no-one who hopes in Thee will be put to shame'. Later, one of Avgar's great- grandsons restored idolatry, and the Bishop of Edessa came by night and walled-in the icon above the gateway. Centuries passed. In the time of the Emperor Justinian, the Persian King, Chozroes, attacked Edessa, and the city was in great affliction. The Bishop of Edessa, Eulabius, had a vision of the most holy Mother of God, who revealed to him the secret of the icon, walled-in and forgotten. The icon was found, and by its power the Persian army was defeated.

Also commemorated on his day: Martyr Diomedes the Physician (†298); Martyr Alcibiades (2nd C); Venerable Chaeremon of Egypt (4th C); Venerable Joachim of Osogovo (†c.1105); St. Eustathius II, archbishop of Serbia (†1309); Venerable Nilus of Erikoussa (†c.1335); Monk-martyr Nicodemus of Meteora (†1551); Venerable Gerasimus the New of Cephalonia (†1579); St. Timothy, archbishop of Euripos (†1590); Venerable Raphael of Banat (†c.1590); Venerable Romanus of Serbia (16th C); Martyr Stamatius of Thessalonica (†1680); Martyr Apostolus of Constantinople (†1686); Martyred princes Constantine Brâncoveanu of Wallachia, and his sons Constantine, Stephen, Radu, Matthew, and his counsellor Ioannicius (†1714); New Hieromartyr Alexander Sokolov, priest, Nun-martyr Anna (Yezhov), and Martyr Jacob Gortinsky (†1937); 33 Martyrs of Palestine; 'Feodorovskaya' and 'Triumph of the Most Holy Theotokos' (Port Arthur) Icons of the Mother of God.

† Daily Scripture Readings †

Monday – Epistle: II Cor. 8:7-15 (§186); Gospel: Mark 3:6-12 (§11)

Tuesday – Epistle: for Tuesday: II Cor. 8:16-9:5 (§187); for Wednesday: II Cor. 9:12-10:7 (§189)
Gospel: for Tuesday: Mark 3:13-19 (§12); for Wednesday: Mark 3:19-27 (§13)

Wednesday –Vespers: Prov. 10:7, 6; 3:13-16; 8:6, 32, 34, 4, 12, 14, 17, 5-9; 1:23; 15:4; Prov. 10:31-11:12; Wisd. 4:7-15; Matins Gospel: John 10:9-16 (§36); Epistle: Heb. 7:26-8:2 (§318)
Gospel: Matt. 5:14-19 (§11)

Thursday – Epistle: for Thursday: II Cor. 10:7-18 (§190); for Friday: II Cor. 11:5-21 (§192)
Gospel: for Thursday: Mark 3:28-35 (§14); for Friday: Mark 4:1-9 (§15)

Friday - Vespers: Gen. 28:10-17; Ezek. 43:27, 44:1-4; Prov. 9:1-11; Matins Gospel: Luke 1:39-49, 56 (§4)
Epistle: Phil. 2:5-11 (§240); Gospel: Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28 (§54)

Saturday –Epistle: for the Icon: II Cor. 3:4-11 (§173); for Saturday: I Cor 2:6-9 (§126)
Gospel: for the Icon: Luke 9:51-56, 10:22-24 (§48 mid); for Saturday: Matt. 22:15-22 (§90

Sermon on the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. St. John of Kronstadt

Let us be happy, beloved brothers and sisters that we belong to the Holy Orthodox Church, worthily and rightly glorifying the Most Holy Sovereign Theotokos on this eminent day out of all the days of the year with special solemnity. There exists on earth many societies and entire governments that do not consider the need nor the obligation to call upon and glorify the Queen of heaven and earth, the Mother of Our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, and other saints and angels; to submissively serve Her lovingly, as the true Mother of God. Sadly in Russia nowadays we have heretics (among us) who actively dishonor the Mother of God, the saints, their icons, their relics and their festivals. O, if only they also unanimously with us glorified the worthy Queen of heaven and earth!

Today the Holy Church solemnly glorifies the honorable Dormition or translation of the Mother of God from earth to heaven. A wonderful translation - she died without serious illness, peacefully. Her soul is taken up in the divine hands of Her Son and carried up into the heavenly abode, accompanied by the sweet singing of angels. And then, her most pure body is transferred by the apostles to Gethsemane where it is honorably buried, and on the third day it is resurrected and taken up to heaven. You see this on the icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos. On it is represented the life-bearing body of the Theotokos laying on a bier, surrounded by the apostles and hierarchs, and in the center of the icon the Lord holding in His hands the most pure soul of the Theotokos. The translation of the Mother of God is a paradigm of the translation in general of the souls of Christians to the other world.

We say that our dead have “fallen asleep” or “passed away.” What does this mean? This means that for the true Christian there is no death. Death was conquered by Christ on the cross. But there is a translation, i.e, a rearrangement of his condition, i.e. his soul is in another place, in another age, in another world beyond the grave, eternal, without end, that is what is meant by “falling asleep”. It is as if it were a temporary dream after which, by the voice of the Lord and the fearful yet wonderful trumpet of the Archangel, all the dead shall live and come forth each to his place: either to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:29). This is what the Christian means by translation. We should be ready for this translation, for the day of the general resurrection and judgment, for this indescribable world event, recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

This preparation for the meeting of the heavenly King before the dread judgment seat, after death, is essentially the person’s preparation throughout the whole of his life. This preparation means a change in all his thoughts, and the moral change of all his being, so that the whole man would be pure and white as snow, washing clean everything that defiles the body and spirit, so that he is adorned with every virtue: repentance, meekness, humility, gentleness, simplicity, chastity, mercifulness, abstention, spiritual contemplation, and burning love for God and neighbor.

Our preparation for meeting the heavenly King, and for the inheritance of eternal life in heaven, should consist of these things. The heavenly King desires souls adorned with immutable virtue, souls prepared so that the Very Lord Himself could abide in them. Do not marvel that the Very Lord wants to live in us. In fact the human soul is more spacious than the heavens and the earth, for it exists in the image of God. And if one removes sins from the soul, the Lord of all will settle in it and will fill it with Himself. “We will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (John 14:23), says the Lord about the souls who love Him.

And so, ye participants in the Christian feasts, and especially the present feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, ye who are brightly adorned with every virtue and translated to the heavenly kingdom, to Her Son and God, proclaim to each and every one about preparing their souls to be the dwelling place of the Lord, about continual repentance, and about the incorruptible adornment of Christian virtue. Let your death also be unashamed and peaceful, serving as the pledge of a good answer at the dread judgment seat of Christ. Amen.