6th Sunday After Pentecost

The Holy, Glorious, and All-Praised Leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul

29 June / 12 July

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 5: Let us, the faithful; praise and worship the Word, / Co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, / born for our salvation from the Virgin; / for He willed to be lifted up on the cross in the flesh, / to endure death, / and to raise the dead / by His glorious Resurrection!

Troparion tone 4: Leaders of the Apostles and teachers of the world,/ pray to the Master of all to grant peace to the world/ and great mercy to our souls.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 5: Thou didst descend into hell, O my Saviour, / shattering its gates as Almighty, / resurrecting the dead as Creator, / and destroying the sting of death. / Thou hadst delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man, / and we cry to Thee, O Lord, save us.

Kontakion tone 2: Thou hast taken the firm and divinely inspired Preachers, O Lord,/ the leading Apostles, for the enjoyment of Thy blessings and for repose./ For Thou hast accepted their labours and death as above every burnt offering,/ O Thou Who alone knowest the secrets of our hearts.

Vespers: 1 Pet. 1:3-9; 1 Pet. 1:13-19; 1 Pet. 2:11-24

Matins Gospel VI

EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 12: 6-14

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; Or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

HAVING GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET US USE THEM

He wants to make them vie with each other, and to labour more earnestly by showing that it is they themselves who give the grounds for their receiving more or less. For he says indeed that it is given by God ...But he also says that the beginnings lie with themselves in order to rouse the listless. This he does in the Epistle to the Corinthians as well, to produce these emotions. For when he says, 'covet the gifts earnestly,' (I Cor. 12:31), he shows that they were themselves the cause of the differences in what was given ...For though it is a grace, yet it is not poured forth at random, but framing its measure according to the recipients, it lets as much flow as it may find the vessel of faith that is brought to be capable of holding...

CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEEDS OF SAINTS, PRACTICE HOSPITALITY

Even the Apostleship is called a ministry, and every spiritual work is a ministry ... It is not enough to give, but we must also do it with munificence, for this always answers to the name of simplicity ...It is not enough to show mercy, but it behooves us to do it with largesse and an ungrudging spirit ... even with a cheerful and rejoicing one ...He said, 'He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully' (II Cor. 9:6) ... In this way the widow outweighed many talents by the two mites, for her spirit was large.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXI on Romans XII. B#55, pp. 501, 502.

Second Epistle: Corinthians 11:21 – 12:9

GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 9: 1-8

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

JESUS HEALS THE PARALYTIC

The Gospel reading of last Sunday told us how the Gadarenes went out to meet Jesus and how they asked Him to "depart out of their coasts." And this happened because all of them were infected with one sin, the passion for profit, the love of money. This was an insatiable thirst for wealth, more and more of it. And wealth came to them through large herds of swine which were grazing in their pastures. But according to Jewish Law, they had no right to keep them. In this was their sin, and they lived in sin, to satisfy only this passion, this idol of getting rich. And this passion seemed to unite them all. See how the Gospel says: "And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus and...besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts" (Mt. 8:34).

Yet not all inhabitants of this town were bad people. Undoubtedly, among them were those who wanted to see Jesus, who wanted to listen to His teaching, and maybe were ready to believe in Him. Salvation was so close, so very close. But this idol, this passion for profit enslaved them; and instead of asking the Lord to remain in their town, they asked Him to go away. They were already deprived of their freedom of will; through sin they were enslaved, a spiritual paralysis possessed them. The Gospel continues, "And He entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into His own city. And, behold, they brought to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the paralytic; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mt. 9:1-2).

There is physical paralysis, but there is also spiritual paralysis. Being paralysed physically we want to do something, but either our hand or our foot does not move. But being spiritually paralysed even to think is difficult, and we don't want to do anything—we lose heart. There is a desire to fulfill a commandment of Christ, and yet we cannot; something is interfering, something is holding us back. And instead of Christ abiding in our heart—there is a storm, and Christ goes away.

What motivated the Gadarenes to ask Christ to leave their land? Sin—the passion for profit. And this sin brought them into spiritual paralysis, and they did not have enough spiritual fortitude to detain Christ with them.

So it happens to us. The only reason is sin. And sin is not only love of money. There is a whole variety of rays from this "black diamond." This means laziness, pride, vain talking, lying, condemnation, gluttony, anger, irritability, cruelty, any kind of impurity, despondency and still more and more. And we all suffer from these sins: whoever has any of these, this is sin. And this is what brings us to spiritual weakness, to spiritual paralysis.

Let us look within ourselves and let us honestly recognise that, like the Gadarenes, we all live in spiritual weakness, in spiritual paralysis.

But let us not despond. The Gospel today gives us great comfort. With what words does Christ heal the paralytic? “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” This means that in bodily paralysis, also, the reason is often sin. And in spiritual paralysis, sin is always the reason. All you have to do is find this sin, this passion which stands between us and Christ; take it to the Lord and say: “Lord, heal me!” Then the Lord will tell us as He did the paralytic: “Thy sins be forgiven thee.... Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house” (Mt. 9:5-6).

And the storm will calm down, will go away from the heart, and Christ will fill it with quiet joy. The weakness will disappear and a new energy will appear in us, a new life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei

Second Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

Saints of the Week

29 June / 12 July — The Holy Apostle Peter - the son of Jonah and brother of Andrew the First-Called, of the tribe of Simeon and the town of Bethsaida, he was a fisherman and was at first called Simon, but the Lord was pleased to call him Cephas, or Peter (Jn 1:42). He was the first of the disciples to give clear expression to his faith in the Lord Jesus, saying: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Mt. 16:16). His love for the Lord was very strong, and his faith in Him went from strength to strength. When the Lord was put on trial, Peter denied Him three times, but it needed only one look into the face of the Lord, and Peter's soul was filled with shame and repentance. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Peter became a fearless and powerful preacher of the Gospel. After his first sermon in Jerusalem, about 3,000 souls were converted to the Faith. He preached the Gospel throughout Palestine and Asia Minor, in Italy and in Illyria. He performed many wonders, healing the sick and raising the dead, and even his shadow had the power of healing the sick. He had a major struggle with Simon the Magician, who declared himself to be from God but was actually a servant of the devil. He finally put him to shame and overcame him. Peter was condemned to death on the order of the wicked Emperor Nero, a friend of Simon's. After installing Linus as Bishop of Rome and exhorting and encouraging the flock of Christ there, Peter went to his death with joy. When he saw the cross before him, he asked the executioner to crucify him upside-down, because he felt himself to be unworthy to die in the same way as his Lord. And so this great servant of the greatest Master went to his rest and received a crown of eternal glory.

The Holy Apostle Paul - born in Tarsus and of the tribe of Benjamin, he was formerly called Saul and studied under Gamaliel. He was a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians. He was wondrously converted to the Christian faith by the Lord Himself, who appeared to him on the road to Damascus. He was baptised by the Apostle Ananias, named Paul and enrolled in the work of the Great Apostles. He preached the Gospel everywhere with burning zeal, from the borders of Arabia to the land of Spain, among both the Jews and the heathen, and receiving the title of 'the Apostle to the Gentiles'. His fearful sufferings were matched only by his superhuman endurance. Through all the years of his preaching, he hung from day to day like a thread between life and death. Filling his days and nights with toil and suffering for Christ, organising the Church in many places and reaching a high level of perfection, he was able to say: 'I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2:20). He was beheaded in Rome in the reign of Nero, at the same time as St Peter.

Troparion tone 4: Leaders of the Apostles and teachers of the world,/ pray to the Master of all to grant peace to the world/ and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion tone 2: Thou hast taken the firm and divinely inspired Preachers, O Lord,/ the leading Apostles, for the enjoyment of Thy blessings and for repose./ For Thou hast accepted their labours and death as above every burnt offering,/ O Thou Who alone knowest the secrets of our hearts.

Venerable Paisios of Mt. Athos - 'The future Elder Paisios was born in 1924 and baptized by St. Arsenius of Cappadocia. He spent his youth as a carpenter until WW II, during which he repeatedly distinguished himself in the army by his bravery and self-sacrifice. In 1950 he went to Mt. Athos for eight years, where he was tonsured. Then he was asked to spend some time in his home village of Epirus, in order to defend the faithful against

Protestant proselytism. He returned to Mt. Athos in 1964 and stayed in several monasteries, eventually settling in the Panagouda hermitage of Koutloumousiou Monastery, where he remained for fifteen years. Here his reputation as a holy elder and guide grew, and he tirelessly received those thirsting for spiritual direction, allowing himself only two or three hours of sleep each day. He reposed in 1994, one of the most well-known and beloved contemporary elders. Many of his counsels and other writings have been published.' Elder Paisios was glorified by the Church in 2015; he is commemorated on the anniversary of his repose.

Also commemorated on this day: Finding of the relics of Venerable Nicander of Pskov (1686); Movable feast on the Sunday after June 27th: Monk-martyrs Neophytus (†1558), Jonah (†1561), Neophytus (†1609), Jonah (†1635), and Parthenius (†1696) of Lampsacus.

30 June / 13 July — Synaxis of the Holy, Glorious and All-praised Twelve Apostles - although each of the Twelve Apostles has his own Feast Day during the year, the Church has set aside this day for a general Feast of all of them together, including St Paul. The names, their Feast Day(s) and how these most holy and selfless men in the history of the world died and finished their earthly course:

- Peter—June 29th and January 16th - crucified upside-down.
- Andrew—November 30th - crucified.
- James the Son of Zebedee—April 30th - beheaded.
- John the Theologian—September 26th and May 8th - died in a wondrous way.
- Philip—November 14th - crucified.
- Bartholomew—June 11th and August 25th - crucified, then flayed and beheaded.
- Thomas—October 6th - pierced with five spears.
- Matthew the Evangelist—November 16th - burned by fire.
- James the Son of Alphaeus—October 9th - crucified.
- Thaddeus (or Jude the brother of James)—June 19th - crucified.
- Simon the Zealot—May 10th - crucified.
- Matthias—August 9th stoned, then beheaded with an axe when dead.
- Paul—June 29th – beheaded.
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THE HOLY APOSTLES - As a dry desert, the whole world was; / Across it [the world] the chariot of the Spirit flew / A fiery vision, the Holy Apostles; / The All-holy Spirit, through them, the universe rebuilt. / The rivers of wondrous grace flowed, . The dead desert, to life converted. / Wonderful Apostles, watery clouds, / Simple ones, wise ones, fishermen, heroes! / From the Ganges to the Thames, they carried the torch, / From the Nile to Pontus, holiness they proclaimed, / From variegated Persia to bronze Gaul, / Where the feet walk or the galleys sail / Everywhere, the miracle of the Incarnate God, brought, / Everywhere, the Name of the Resurrected Christ proclaimed, / Without complaint and fear, without any confusion: / Mountains and seas, to them were not obstacles, / The sword did not frighten them, nor persecution prevent them, / Neither all the fires of Hades which, against them, erupted. / Truth guided them and not a false fable: / Our life is Christ, and death a beautiful gain! / Thus, they spoke. To such as these, what could be done? / Crucify their bodies? Scrape their skins? / That, the world did, but what kind of harm did it do them? / To reign eternally! Thus, God judged.

Blessed Peter the Heir - by descent, was a Tartar and the nephew of the Tartar King Berkai. He heard the words of salvation from Bishop Cyril of Rostov and those words adhered to his heart. And yet when he witnessed the miraculous healing of Berkai's son, by the help of Bishop Cyril's prayer, he secretly left the Golden Horde and fled to Rostov where he was baptized and where, with all his soul and mind, dedicated himself to asceticism and the study of the honourable Faith. Once at night, Saints Peter and Paul appeared to him in a dream on the shores of the lake and commanded him to build a church in their name on that same place and along with that, Blessed Peter received from the saints the necessary amount of money for that purpose. Indeed, Blessed Peter built a most beautiful church there in which he in old age, following the death of his wife, was tonsured a monk. Blessed Peter died peacefully in ripe old age on June 29, 1290 A.D. and his church became and remains a monastery called the Petrovski Monastery.

Our Holy Father George the Georgian - George was born in Iberia [Georgia] in 1014 A.D. and was a relative of the Georgian kings. George received a good classical education in his childhood but his heart drew him to the spiritual life. He lived a life of asceticism with the famous spiritual father George in the Black Mountain. He fled to Holy Mount Athos and continued his asceticism in the monastery Iveron. George became the abbot of Iveron. With the help of Emperor Constantine Monomachus he restored Iveron and covered the monastery church with

lead. That lead roof remains even today. He translated the Holy Scriptures, the Prologue and books of the Divine Services into the Georgian language. King Bagrat invited him to Georgia to teach the people. George was royally welcomed in his homeland. He travelled everywhere and taught both the clergy and people. In his old age, he desired to die on Mt. Athos where he set out for but death overtook him in Constantinople in the year 1067 A.D. His relics were translated to Iveron. Even though he died on May 24, the monks of Iveron commemorate his memory on June 30 considering him to be as "equal to the apostles."

Also commemorated on this day: Right-believing Queen Dinara of Georgia (10th C); Right-believing Prince Andrew of Bogoliubovo (†1175); St. Gelasius of Rimet, bishop of Transylvania (16th C); Martyr Michael of Athens (†1770); Righteous Stephen of Omsk (†1877); Glorification of St. Sophronius, bishop of Irkutsk (†1918); New Hieromartyr Timothy Petropavlovsk, priest, and Monk-martyr Nicandor (Prusak) (†1918); New Hieromartyr Theogenes (Kozyrev), (†1939); New Martyr Alexander Schmorell of Munich (†1943); New Martyr John Demidov (†1944); Finding of the relics of Venerable Hilarion of Troekurovo (1999); Synaxis of the Saints of the Birobidzhan Diocese; The 'Balikin' and 'Gorbanevsk' Icons of the Mother of God.

1 / 14 July — The Holy Martyrs Cosmas and Damian - unmercenary doctors and wonderworkers, these two saints were brothers. Born in Rome, baptised as children and given a Christian education, they were endowed by God with the gift of healing, generally by the laying-on of their hands, of both men and animals. They sought no reward for their work, only urging the sick to faith in Christ the Lord. Inheriting great wealth, they compassionately divided it among the poor and needy. The Emperor Galerius was on the throne in Rome at that time. Persecutors of the Christian faith brought these two holy brothers, bound in chains, before him. After prolonged interrogation, the Emperor charged them to deny Christ and offer sacrifice to idols. Cosmas and Damian not only refused to obey the Emperor; they urged him to forsake dead idols and come to the knowledge of the one, true God. 'Our God is not created, but is the Creator of all, and your gods come of the imaginings of men and the hands of artists. If there were no artists to make your gods, you would have nothing to worship.' After a miracle performed on the Emperor himself—healing him of a grave infirmity— the Emperor declared his faith in Christ and let the holy brothers go in peace. They continued to glorify Christ our God and to heal the sick, and were themselves glorified on all sides by the people. A doctor, a former teacher of theirs, envying their fame, lured them into the hills on the pretext of collecting herbs and stoned them to death. They suffered with honour for the Christian faith in 284. Their memory endures in the Church on earth, and their souls went to the Kingdom of the Lord, to live eternally in glory and joy.

Our Holy Father Peter the Patrician - a nobleman from Constantinople and a commander during the reign of Emperor Nicephorus. In a war with the Bulgarians, Emperor Nicephorus was slain and Peter, with fifty Greek commanders and princes, was captured and cast into prison. St. John the Theologian miraculously freed Peter from prison. Peter then despised all earthly glory, left his wife and son, and withdrew to Mount Olympia where, as a monk and as a disciple of St. Joannicius the Great, lived a life of mortification for thirty-four years. Following the death of his wife and son, he settled in Constantinople where he spent eight more years in fasting and prayer and fell asleep in the Lord in the year 865 A.D. in the seventy-seventh year of his life.

The Holy Martyr Potitus - a thirteen-year-old child who was born in Sardinia. He endured much suffering for Christ both from his father and from the civil persecutors of Christianity. Potitus was beheaded during the reign of Emperor Antoninus (138-161 A.D.) but, before this, Potitus cured and baptized Agnes, the daughter of the emperor; Holy Julius and Aaron, protomartyrs of Wales (c.304); St. Servanus, Apostle of the Western Fife of East Scotland (6th c.).

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Julius and Aaron of Wales (†304); St. Gallus, bishop of Clermont (†551); Venerable Eparchius of Angouleme (†581); St. Servanus, bishop of Culross, Scotland (6th C); Venerable Basil of Cappadocia (10th C); Translation of the relics of Venerable John of Rila (1469); St. Leontius of Rădăuţi (15th C); Venerable Angelina, despotina of Serbia (†1520); Venerable Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (†1809); New Hieromartyr Arcadius Garyaev, priest (†1918); New Hieromartyr Alexis Drozdov, deacon (†1942); 'Valaam' Icon of the Mother of God.

2 / 15 July — Deposition of the Vesture of the Most Holy Mother of God in the Blachernae Church in Constantinople - in the time of the Emperor Leo the Great (457-474) and the Empress Verina and Patriarch Gennadius, two Constantinopolitan nobles, Galbius and Candidus, were travelling in the Holy Land to venerate the holy places there. In Nazareth, they stayed in the house of a Jewish girl who had the vesture of the Mother of

God kept in a secret place. Many of the sick and wretched had received healing through prayer and the touching of this vesture. Galbius and Candidus took this holy relic to Constantinople and informed the Emperor and the Patriarch of its existence. It was the cause of great rejoicing in the imperial city. The vesture was ceremonially placed in the Blachernae church (a church built by the Emperor Marcian and Empress Pulcheria on the shore of a bay, and named 'Blachernae' after a General Blacheran from Scetis, who was killed there), and this commemorative feast was instituted.

St Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem – a contemporary of the great illuminators of the Orthodox Church: Euthymius, Theodosius, Gerasimus, Simeon the Stylite and others. He participated in two Ecumenical Councils: the Third Council in Ephesus [431 A.D.] and the Fourth Council in Chalcedon [451 A.D.]. With great power and zeal, he fought against the blasphemous heresies: in Ephesus against Nestorius who called the Birth-giver of God the Birth-giver of Christ and in Chalcedon against Eutyches and Dioscorus who taught that there was only one nature in Christ, i.e., only a divine nature without a human nature. Following the victory of Orthodoxy at both councils, Juvenal returned to his throne in Jerusalem. Even though the heresies were condemned, the heretics were not eliminated. Through the intrigue and violence of Theodosius, a friend of Dioscorus, Juvenal was banished from the patriarchal throne and Theodosius, on his own, elevated himself in Juvenal's place. In the beginning, this heretic Theodosius was supported by Empress Eudocia, the widow of Theodosius the Younger who, at that time, took up residence in Jerusalem. Hesitant and indiscreet, Eudocia finally went to see St. Simeon the Stylite in order to ask him wherein lies the truth. The saint of God unmasked all the heretical teachings and instructed the empress to adhere to the teachings of Orthodoxy as confirmed at the councils. The empress heeded, repented and she herself became embittered against the false Patriarch Theodosius. During that time Marcian and Pulcheria reigned in Constantinople. A letter from the emperor was sent to Commander Athanasius ordering him to banish Theodosius and to return and reinstate Juvenal to his throne which the commander quickly did. Juvenal governed the Church in Jerusalem for thirty-eight years as its hierarch and at a ripe old age presented himself to the Lord in the year 458 A.D. to receive from Him the reward for great suffering and misery which he had endured for the truth. During the reign of St. Juvenal, the celebration of Christmas was established on December 25.

St Photius, Metropolitan of Moscow - of Greek descent. He prudently governed the Russian Church for twenty years. Photius died in the year 1430A.D. A week before his death an angel of God appeared to him and informed him of the exact time of his departure from this world.

Also commemorated on this day: Most Holy Mother of God at Blachernae (5th C); Venerable Monegundis of Chartres (†530); Right-believing prince Stephen the Great of Moldova (†1504); Martyr Lampros of Makri (†1835); 'Akhtyrka,' 'Pozai,' 'Turkovichi,' and 'Theodotevo' Icons of the Mother of God.

3 / 16 July — The Holy Martyr Hyacinthus - a young man, a courtier at the court of the Emperor Trajan, he was a secret Christian. Once, when the Emperor and all his court were offering sacrifice to idols, Hyacinthus stood apart from these abominable ceremonies. He was therefore denounced and brought to trial before the Emperor. The Emperor urged him to deny Christ and sacrifice to idols, but Hyacinthus remained firm as diamond and said to the Emperor: 'I am a Christian. I revere Christ and worship Him, and I bring my living self to Him as a sacrifice.' Whipped, spat upon and flayed, this holy martyr was flung into prison. By order of the Emperor, he was given nothing to eat but food that had been sacrificed to idols. Hyacinthus would not eat this, and died in prison after eight days. The warder saw two shining angels in the prison, one covering the martyr's body with his own glorious vesture and the other placing a wreath of glory on his head; and the whole prison was filled with light and radiance. The young Hyacinthus suffered with honour and was crowned with a wreath of glory in the year 108.

St Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople - At first, Anatolius was a presbyter in the Church at Alexandria and following the death of Patriarch Flavian, he was elevated to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople in the year 449 A.D. During his reign, the throne of Constantinople was recognized as equal to the throne of Rome by the Ecumenical Council held at Chalcedon in 451 A.D. He struggled greatly for the purity of the Orthodox Faith, suffered much at the hands of the heretics and finally was slain by them in the year 458 A.D. during the reign of Pope Leo the Great. Anatolius governed the church for nearly nine years and took up his habitation among the holy hierarchs in the Kingdom of God.

Our Holy Father Alexander - born in Asia, educated in Constantinople and after the completion of his schooling he devoted himself to military service and attained the rank of an officer. Reading Holy Scripture, he came across the words of the Savior: "If you seek perfection, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven. Afterward come back and follow me" (St. Matthew 19:21). These words had such an effect on Alexander that he immediately sold and distributed all that he had and withdrew into the wilderness. After many mortifications and labours in purifying himself, he established a monastery of the Sleepless Ones with a special constitution according to this rule: the divine services [offices] were carried on night and day without interruption in his community. The brotherhood was divided into twenty-four relays [cursus]. Each relay knew their hour of the day and night and went to church to continue the reading and singing of the preceding relay. Carrying nothing with him, Alexander traveled much throughout the eastern regions enlightening men with the Faith of Christ. Alexander disputed with heretics, worked miracles by the Grace of God, grew old serving the Lord and finally ended his earthly life in Constantinople in the year 430 A.D. where his relics manifested miraculous power and glory through which God glorifies His holy servants; Our Holy Father Isaiah the Solitary.

St. Germanus, bishop of Isle of Man and enlightener of Peel, (5th c.) - a nephew of Saint Patrick; when Saint Germanus of Auxerre (July 31) visited Britain in 448 AD to refute the Pelagians, he met an Irish colonist whose son became his disciple and chose his master's name for himself. Germanus of Man was born in Brittany and went to Ireland to work with Saint Patrick. He was a missionary monk in Ireland, in Wales under Saints Brioc (May 1) and Illtyd (November 6), and Brittany. Germanus left Brittany to meet Patrick in Britain about 462. There he engaged in a magic contest with Gwrtheyrn. After that he returned to Ireland (c. 466) eventually to become the bishop of the Isle of Man during the lifetime of Patrick. After evangelising in Wales, his name is traced in Spain and Gaul. His martyrdom is recorded in Normandy. His memory is preserved in place names, such as Jarman and Gremain, in areas such as Caernavonshire, Denbighshire, Montgomeryshire, and Radnorshire. His name is also found in the Acts of Kieran and those of other early Irish saints. Leland mentions a pilgrimage to Garmon ("Armon") at Llanarmonyn.

Tropar of St German, Tone 2: Nephew of Patrick and missionary in Ireland,/ thou didst spread the Faith in many lands./ From Wales to Brittany, and thence to the Isle of Man,/ thou didst glorify Christ wherever thou didst tread./ Pray to Christ to save our souls.

Translation of the relics of Hieromartyr Philip, metropolitan of Moscow- The Transfer of the Relics of Sainted Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow and Wonderworker of All Russia: After the martyr's death of Sainted Philip (+ 23 December 1570; the account about him is under 9 January), his body was buried at the Otrocha monastery, in Tver. The monks of the Solovetsk monastery, where formerly he was hegumen, in 1591 requested permission for the transfer of his relics to their monastery. The much-suffered and undecayed body was placed in a grave, prepared by Saint Philip for himself while still alive, beneathe the portico of a temple of the Monks Zosima and Savvatii of Solovetsk, nearby the grave of the starets-elder Jona (Shamin), his beloved guide in monastic deeds.

On 29 April 1649 a grammota by Patriarch Joseph was sent to the hegumen of the Solovetsk monastery, Ilia, concerning the solemn uncovering of the relics of the Sainted Wonderworker Philip. On 31 May the relics were transferred into a new reliquary and placed in the Preobrazhenie-Transfiguration cathedral.

In 1652 Nikon, then still the metropolitan of Novgorod, proposed that there be transferred to Moscow the relics of the three Martyr Sainted-hierarchs: Metropolitan Philip, and Patriarchs Job and Ermogen. With the blessing of Patriarch Joseph, Metropolitan Nikon set off in 1652 to Solovetsk for the relics of Saint Philip and solemnly conveyed them to Moscow. Into the hand of the saint was put a document (grammota) of repentance by tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, in which he besought the forgiveness of sins of his great-grandfather Ivan the Terrible, "transgressing" his own power afront the power of the Church. On 3 July the holy relics were met in Moscow: "a pastor, innocent and cast out, was returned to his own throne". In the Uspensky Sobor-cathedral "in his own centre-place he stood for 10 days" and all day from morning til night there were bells, just like on Pascha Sunday. Afterwards the holy relics were placed in the Uspensky Sobor at the south door of the altar.

At the place where the relics of Saint Philip were met in Moscow by clergy and people, a cross was set up, which gave its name to the Krestov-Cross Tollgate in Moscow (at the Rizhsk rail-station).

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Diomedes, Eulampius, Asclepiodotus, and Golinduc (†108); St. Claudianus, patriarch of Alexandria (†167); Martyrs Mocius and Mark (4th C); Venerable Isaiah the Hermit (†c.489); Venerable George the Godbearer of the Black Mountain (†1068); Venerable Anatolius of the Kiev Caves (12th C); Right-believing Princes Basil (†1249) and Constantine (†1257) of Yaroslavl; St. Basil, bishop of Ryazan (†1295); Venerable Anatolius (another) recluse of the Kiev Caves (13th C); St. Basil Kalika, archbishop of Novgorod (†1352); Venerable John and Longinus of Yarensk (†1544-1545); Blessed John, fool-for-Christ of Moscow (†1589); Venerable Nicodemus of Kozha Lake (†1640); Blessed Michael, Herodion, Basil, and Thomas, Fools-for-Christ, of Solvychegodsk (17th C); Venerable Joachim of Notenon (17th C); Monk-martyr Gerasimus the New of Carpenision (†1812); Blessed Euphrosyne of Kolyupanovo, fool-for-Christ (†1855); New Hieromartyr Anthony, archbishop of Arkhangelsk (†1931); Finding of the relics of the New Hieromartyr Sylvester (Olshevsky), Bishop of Omsk (2005); Sts. Anatolius and Eusebius, bishops of Laodicea (3rd C).

4 / 17 July — The Royal Martyrs - In April of 1918, Tsar Nicholas and his family and faithful servants were transferred to Ekaterinburg by the now victorious Bolsheviks. There they spent three hellish months of psychological torture? and yet they all retained their inward calm and state of prayer, so that not a small number of their tormentors were softened by these valiant Christian strugglers. As Pierre Gilliard, the French tutor to the Tsarevich Alexis recalled: "The courage of the prisoners was sustained in a remarkable way by religion. They had kept that wonderful faith which at Tobolsk had been the admiration of their entourage and which had given them such strength, such serenity in suffering. They were already almost entirely detached from this world The Tsaritsa and Grand Duchesses could often be heard singing religious airs, which affected their guards in spite of themselves." Gradually these guards were humanized by contact with their prisoners. They were astonished at their simplicity, attracted by their gentleness, subdued by their serene dignity, and soon found themselves dominated by those whom they thought they held in their power. The drunken Avdiev found himself disarmed by such greatness of soul; he grew conscious of his own infamy. The early ferocity of these men was succeeded by profound pity." When this would happen, the inhuman Bolsheviks would replace the guards who had been so touched with crueller and more animalistic ones. Seldom being allowed to go to church, they nevertheless nourished their souls with home prayers and greatly rejoiced at every opportunity to receive the Divine Sacraments. Three days before their martyrdom, in the very house in which they were imprisoned, there took place the last church service of their suffering lives. As the officiating priest, Fr. John Storozhev, related: "' It appeared to me that the Emperor, and all his daughters too, were very tired. During such a service it is customary to read a prayer for the deceased. For some reason, the Deacon began to sing it, and I joined him? As soon as we started to sing, we heard the Imperial Family behind us drop to their knees' (as is done during funeral services)? Thus they prepared themselves without suspecting it, for their own death?in accepting the funeral viaticum. Contrary to their custom none of the family sang during the service, and upon leaving the house the clergymen expressed the opinion that they 'appeared different' as if something had happened to them." Finally, after midnight on July 4, 1918, the entire family, with their doctor and two faithful servants, was brought to the basement of the house of their confinement under the pretext of moving them once again. There they were brutally and mercilessly murdered, the children as well as the adults, under the cover of darkness? for "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). The Tsar was shot as he stood forward to defend his family. Tsaritsa Alexandra was able to make the sign of the Cross before shoo, too, fell. Amid screams, the children were shot, clubbed and bayoneted, in an act of indescribably brutality. There is evidence that the murders were ritualistic; strange symbols (CANABALISTIC) were found on the walls of the room where the crime took place. Thus ended the life of the gentle, Christ-like Tsar, as a sacrifice for the Orthodox Faith and for the Russian people, both of whom he so fervently loved and believed in. This crime was the beginning of an inhuman bloodbath which left tens of millions dead, the Church in the grip of atheists and Holy Russia entirely unrecognizable. Now it is up to us to pray to the twice-crowned Tsar-Martyr Nicholas and his family to intercede before the throne of God that the sins of the Orthodox might be forgiven. And may our Lord Jesus Christ grant us the strength of faith to follow the example of these true servants of His.

St. Andrew of Crete - born in Damascus of Christian parents. He was a mute from birth until the age of seven. When his parents brought him to church and he received Holy Communion, he began to speak. So great is the power of the Divine and Holy Communion. At age fourteen, Andrew went to Jerusalem and was tonsured in the Lavra of St. Sabas the Sanctified. By virtue of his understanding and asceticism, he surpassed many of the older monks and was an example to them. After a while, the patriarch took him as his personal secretary. When the Monothelite heresy began to rage the heresy which taught that the Lord Jesus did not possess a human will but only a divine will the Sixth Ecumenical Council convened in Constantinople in the year 681 A.D. during the reign of Constantine IV [Bearded One]. Theodore, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, was unable to attend the council but sent

Andrew as his representative who, at that time, was an Archdeacon. At the council, Andrew displayed his wonderful gift of oratory, his zeal for the Faith and rare prudence. Having assisted in strengthening the Orthodox Faith, Andrew returned to his duties in Jerusalem. Later, he was elected and installed as the Archbishop of the Island of Crete. As an archbishop, he was greatly loved by the people. Andrew was very zealous for Orthodoxy and vehemently eradicated all heresies. Through his prayers he worked miracles. By his prayers, he drove the Saracens from the Island of Crete. Andrew wrote many books of instruction, hymns and canons of which the most renown is the Great Canon to the Birth-giver of God read on Thursday of the Fifth Sunday of the Great Lenten Season. His outward appearance was such that "seeing his face and hearing his words flowing like honey, everyone found pleasure and amended their ways." On one occasion, returning from Constantinople, Andrew foretold his death before he arrived in Crete. And so it happened. When the boat in which he traveled sailed near the island of Mitylene, this beacon of the Church ended his earthly life and with his soul, took up habitation in the Kingdom of Christ in the year 721 A.D.

St. Finbar of Wexford - Founded a monastery on the Innis Doimhle (Isle of Crimlen), Wexford, Ireland in the sixth century, and served as its first abbot. His name means white head (Fionnbharr) .
Tropar of St Finbar tone 3: O holy Finbar, thou didst labour faithfully/ and gain many disciples who followed thee to Christ./ As thou didst guide souls in thine Irish monastery,/ pray to Christ our God/ to grant us His great mercy.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Martha, Mother of Venerable Symeon of the Wonderous Mountain; Martyrs Theodotus and Theodota of Caesarea (†108); Hieromartyrs Innocent and Sabbatius, and 33 others with them, in Sirmium (†304); Hieromartyr Theodore, bishop of Cyrene and with him Martyrs Cyprilla, Aroa, and Lucia (†308); Hieromartyr Donatus of Libya (†c.360); Translation of the relics of St. Martin the Merciful, bishop of Tours (490); St. Ulrich, bishop of Augsburg (†973); Right-believing Prince Andrew of Bogoliubovo (†1174); Venerable Andrew Rublev, the iconographer (†1430); Finding of the relics of Venerable Euthymius of Suzdal (1507); Righteous Andrew the Russian, confessor at Cairo (†c.1850); New Monk-martyr Nilus of Poltava (†1918); New Hieromartyrs Sava (Trlajic), bishop of Gornji Karlovac, and George Bogich, priest (†1941); New Hieromartyr Demetrius Kazansky, priest (†1942); Venerable Tikhon, Basil, and Nikon of Solovki; 'Galatea' Icon of the Mother of God.

5 / 18 July — Our Holy Father Athanasius the Athonite - born in Trebizond of God-fearing parents, he was early left destitute, but, by the providence of God, a high-ranking army officer took him, removed him to Constantinople and had him educated there. He was beloved by all his contemporaries for his meekness and humility. In their childish games, they appointed one of themselves to be Emperor, another Commander and so forth. Athanasius was always chosen Abbot, as if in prophecy. Finishing his schooling, Athanasius (called Abraham until his tonsuring) retired to Mount Kyminas in Bithynia, where he lived in asceticism as a disciple of the famous Michael Maleinos. Desiring yet stricter asceticism, he moved to the Holy Mountain, to live in silence. Many, desirous of the ascetic life, began to gather round him and he was constrained to build the famous Lavra. The Byzantine Emperors gave him generous help in this, especially Nicephorus Phocas, who himself had the intention of retiring and becoming a monk. Later, John Tzimiskes also gave him great help. Manifold temptations were visited upon Athanasius, from demons and from men, but he, as a valiant soldier of Christ, resisted and overcame them all by his immense humility and unceasing prayer to the living God. Filled with the grace of God, he was found worthy to behold the most holy Mother of God, who miraculously brought forth water from a rock and promised him that she would evermore be the abbess of his monastery. Athanasius surpassed his brethren in work and in prayer, and loved them all with the love of a spiritual father and shepherd. Death came to him suddenly. He, together with six of his monks, had climbed up onto a newly-constructed part of the church to inspect a wall that was in building when the wall fell in and buried them all. So died this great light of monasticism in 1003. He appeared a number of times to his brethren after his death, to console or rebuke them.

St. Fragan and St. Gwen (Blanche) - 5th century. During the troubled times following the Roman departure from Britain, Saints Fragan and Gwen became refugees in Brittany, when many churches are dedicated to each of them. They are the parents of Saints Winwaloe, Jacut, Guethenoc, and Gunthiern.

Tropar of Ss Fragan and Gwen tone 4: O noble exiles Fragan and Gwen/ who fled to Brittany in troubled times:/ you established churches to God's praise and glory;/ your children brought joy and gladness to the Breton people./ We praise you, glorious Saints.

St. Morwenna, patron of Morewenstow, England (6th c.) – her name means ‘maiden’ in Cornish.

Martyrdom of St. Elizabeth Romanov and Nun Barbara - Grand Duchess Elizabeth was a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria of England and the older sister of the Empress Alexandra (July 4). After marrying Grand Duke Sergei she converted to the Orthodox faith, though this was not required by her position. After her husband was assasinated in 1905, she took monastic vows and withdrew from the world, founding the Convent of Saints Mary and Martha. There she served as superior, devoting her time to prayer, fasting, and caring for the sick and the poor.

During the Russian Revolution, she was seized by the God-hating Bolsheviks and taken to the Urals, where she and several with her were martyred by being thrown alive down an abandoned mine-shaft. When the fall did not kill them, soldiers threw grenades down the shaft to complete their work. Saint Elizabeth was singing the Cherubic Hymn when she died. The Nun Barbara, her cell-attendant, voluntarily followed St Elizabeth into exile and received martyrdom with her. Their relics were recovered and taken at great risk to China, then to Jerusalem, where they were deposited in the Convent of St Mary Magdalene. When their reliquaries were opened in 1981, their bodies were found to be partly incorrupt, and gave off a sweet fragrance.

After the assassination of her husband in Moscow, Grand Duchess Elizabeth had a cross erected at the site of his death, bearing the inscription "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." After the revolution, the cross remained standing through the devotion of the people of Moscow to St Elizabeth, until it was personally torn down by Lenin.

Uncovering the relics of Venerable Sergius of Radonezh - The relics of the Monk Sergei (+ 1392, Comm. 25 September) were uncovered on 5 July 1422 during a time when the Monk Nikon (+ 1426, Comm. 17 November) was hegumen. In the year 1408, when Moscow and its surroundings suffered invasion by the Tatar horde of Edigei, the Trinity monastery was devastated and burnt, and the monks headed by the hegumen Nikon hid themselves in the forests, saving the icons, sacred vessels, books and other holy things connected with the memory of the Monk Sergei. In a vision by night on the eve of the Tatar incursion the Monk Sergei informed his disciple and successor about the coming tribulations and foretold in consolation, that the vexation would not be prolonged but rather that the monastery, arising from the ashes, would flourish and grow even more. Metropolitan Philaret wrote about this in the "Life of the Monk Sergei": "In semblance to this, that it suited Christ to suffer, and through the cross and death to enter into the glory of the Resurrection, so also doth it become everyone, that wouldst be blest by Christ in the length of days in glory, to be tested by one's own cross and death". Going through its own fiery cleansing, the monastery of the Life-Originating Trinity was resurrected in the length of days, and the Monk Sergei himself rose up, so that forevermore his holy relics should dwell within it.

Before the beginning of construction of the new temple in the Name of the Life-Originating Trinity upon the spot of the former wooden one (which was consecrated on 25 September 1412), the Monk Sergei appeared to a certain pious layman and bid him inform the hegumen and the brethren: "Why do ye leave me such a while in the grave, covered over by ground and in the water, constraining my body?" And herewith during the construction of the cathedral, when they dug the ditches for the foundations, the undecayed relics of the Monk Sergei were uncovered and brought up, and all were astonished, that not only the body, but also the clothing upon him was undecayed, although round about the grave there actually stood water. Amidst a large throng of the devout and the clergy, in the presence of the son of Dimitrii Donskoi – the prince of Zvenigorod Yurii Dimitrievich (+ 1425), the holy relics were brought up from the ground and placed temporarily in the wooden Trinity church (at this spot is located now the church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit). With the consecration in 1426 of the stone Trinity cathedral the relics were transferred into it, where at present they remain.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyr Stephen, bishop of Rhegium, and with him Suerus, bishop, and the women Agnes, Felicitas, and Perpetua (1st C); Martyrs Anna and Cyrilla (†304); Martyr Athanasius of Jerusalem, deacon (†451); Venerable Lampadus, wonderworker of Irenopolis (10th C); Venerable Theodosius and Athanasius of Cherepovets (†1382); Monk-martyr Cyprian of Mt. Athos (†1679); New Hieromartyr Gennadius Zdorovtsev, priest (†1918); Venerable Agapitus (Taube), confessor (†1936); ‘Economissa’ Icon of the Mother of God. Movable feast on the Saturday after June 29th: Synaxis of the Saints of Chernigov.

† Daily Scripture Readings †

Monday – Epistle: I Cor. 5:9-6:11 (§134); Gospel: Matt. 13:54-58 (§56)

Tuesday – Epistle: I Cor. 6:20-7:12 (§136); Gospel: Matt. 14:1-13 (§57)

Wednesday –Epistle: I Cor. 7:12-24 (§137); Gospel: Matt. 14:35-15:11 (§60)

Thursday – Epistle: for Thursday: I Cor. 7:24-35 (§138); for Friday: I Cor. 7:35-8:7 (§139); for Saturday: Rom. 12:1-3 (§108) ; Gospel: for Thursday: Matt. 15:12-21 (§61); for Friday: Matt. 15:29-31 (§63); for Saturday: Matt. 10:37-11:1 (§39)

Friday - Vespers: Wisd. 3:1-9; III Kings 8:22-23, 27-30; Isa. 61:10-62:5
Matins Gospel: Matt. 10:16-22 (§36); Epistle: Rom. 8:28-39 (§99)
Gospel: John 15:17-16:2 (§52)

Saturday –Vespers: Prov. 10:7, 6; 3:13-16; 8:6, 34-35, 4, 12, 14, 17, 5-9; 1:23; 15:4; Prov. 10:31-32; 11:1-12; Wisd: 3:1-9; Matins Gospel: Matt. 11:27-30 (§43)
Epistle: Gal. 5:22-6:2 (§213)
Gospel: Luke 6:17-23 (§24)

HYMN OF PRAISE

SAINT PETER SAINT PAUL

Unlearned and learned but equal in spirit And in the love of God, as strong as angels, Peter a simple man, Paul educated Both illumined, by the grace of the Spirit, Two flaming candles, unquenchable candles, Towering and beautiful, two brilliant stars. Traversed the earth and spread the light Nothing did they take, to men they gave all, Completely poor, the world they enriched, Prisoners and servants, conquered the entire world, With the teaching of Christ, enriched the world, With a new weapon, conquered the entire world: By humility and peace and meekness blessed, Prayer and fasting and mercy powerful. When to them, that stormy day, arrived the stormy night Nero, their life cut short. But when the ruler of the world, a command issued And to suffering, gave over Peter and Paul The world was theirs and not his [Nero's] anymore, By death, the apostles gained the Kingdom.

REFLECTION

Simon Peter and Simon the Magician. The enemies of Christianity frequently like to cite examples of great miracle-workers among the pagans in order to deceive the gullible, to humiliate the Christian Faith and to elevate paganism, sorcery, soothsaying, Satanism and every other charlatanism. There is no doubt that Satan through his servants also attempted to perform miracles but all of the miracles of his servants do not emanate out of love for man, compassion and from faith in God but rather from pride, selfishness, vanity and hatred for mankind. A Christian should learn from the history of the apostles to differentiate divine miracles from satanic deceits and fantasies. Let the Christian only remember the Apostle Peter and Simon the Magician. Let the Christian compare the miracles of Peter with the so-called miracles of Simon. The apostle converted the stony hearts of men into noble hearts, cured the sick, and raised the dead and all of this by prayer and faith in the Living God. However, Simon the Magician amazed men with the devil's illusions. The Apostle Peter was a friend of God and Simon the Magician was a friend and protege of the perverted Emperor Nero who ended his life by suicide. The miracles of the pagan fakirs belong to the category of illusions and deceits of Simon the Magician. Just as from a distance hot sand resembles water so also the "miracles" of the fakir resemble the life-creating miracles of Christianity.

HYMN OF PRAISE

THE HOLY APOSTLES

As a dry desert, the whole world was;
Across it [the world] the chariot of the Spirit flew
A fiery vision, the Holy Apostles;
The All-holy Spirit, through them, the universe rebuilt.
The rivers of wondrous grace flowed,
The dead desert, to life converted.
Wonderful Apostles, watery clouds,
Simple ones, wise ones, fishermen, heroes!
From the Ganges to the Thames, they carried the torch,
From the Nile to Pontus, holiness they proclaimed,
From variegated Persia to bronze Gaul,
Where the feet walk or the galleys sail
Everywhere, the miracle of the Incarnate God, brought,
Everywhere, the Name of the Resurrected Christ proclaimed,
Without complaint and fear, without any confusion:
Mountains and seas, to them were not obstacles,
The sword did not frighten them, nor persecution prevent them,
Neither all the fires of Hades which, against them, erupted.
Truth guided them and not a false fable:
Our life is Christ, and death a beautiful gain!
Thus, they spoke. To such as these, what could be done?
Crucify their bodies? Scrape their skins?
That, the world did, but what kind of harm did it do them?
To reign eternally! Thus, God judge