8th Sunday After Pentecost

Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils

13 / 26 July

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 7: By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death / to the Thief, Thou didst open Paradise / for the myrrh-bearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy! / and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God / to proclaim that Thou art risen / granting the world great mercy.

Tropar of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils, Tone 8 Spec. Mel. ("Virgin Theotokos rejoice ..."): Most glorious art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast established our fathers upon the earth as beacons, and hast thereby guided us all to the true Faith! O greatly Compassionate One, glory be to Thee!

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 7: The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, / for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. / Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry: / The Saviour has come to those in faith, / enter, you faithful to the Resurrection.

Kondak of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils, Tone 8 Spec. Mel. ("As the firstfruits ..."): The preaching of the apostles and the dogmas of the fathers sealed the one Faith of the Church; and clad in the robe of truth woven of theology from on high, it setteth aright and glorifieth the great mystery of piety.

Vespers Gen. 14:14-20; Deut. 1:8-11; Deut. 10:14-21

Matins Gospel VIII

<u>Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1: 10-18</u>

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." s Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptised none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptised in my own name. Yes, I also baptised the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptised any other. For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

IS CHRIST DIVIDED?

The emphatic force of the word 'schism,' I mean the name itself, was a sufficient accusation. For it was not that they had become many parts, each entire within itself, but rather the One Body ...had perished ...'That each one of you says,' for the corruption did not pervade a part, but the whole of the Church ...By a kind of divine art he does away with their swelling pride on this point, not with the efficacy of baptism, but with the folly of those who were puffed up at having been baptisers: first, by showing that the Gift is not theirs, and secondly by thanking God for it. For Baptism truly is a great thing, but its greatness is not the work of the person baptising, but of Him who is invoked in the Baptism ...Great indeed is Baptism, and without baptism it is impossible to obtain the kingdom...But prove to me that Peter and Paul were eloquent. You cannot: for they were 'unlearned and ignorant men!'

St. John Chrysostom. Homily III on 1 Corinthians I, 1, 3, 6, 8. B#56, pp. 10-14

Second Epistle Heb 13:7-16

The Gospel According To St. Matthew 14: 14-22

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

"Give ye them to eat!" said Christ to His disciples. And He said this to them as if answering their advice: "This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals." But Christ insisted, "Give ye them to eat!" Then the disciples said to Him, "[Teacher], we have here but five loaves, and two fishes" (Mt. 14:15-17).

Let us put ourselves in their position: a tremendous crowd—the men alone were about five thousand, not counting women and children. With the approach of darkness, the places where bread was sold would be closed. So this crowd of many thousands faced a hungry night in the wilderness. With them were little children. While Christ spoke, all physical needs were silent; but now He fell silent and the people were already beginning to feel hungry. What would happen next? People would become weak, children would cry from hunger, and no one would be able to fall asleep. The result would be despondency, disillusionment, and maybe even murmuring. We believed Thee; we came in search of the Kingdom of God and its Truth. That's why we came to Thee here. Thou didst promise that everything else would be added to us. But here Thy promise has not been fulfilled. We don't even have the food necessary for our children; and night is approaching, a dark southern night.

Yes, it's possible to understand the attitude of the disciples. Even their love for their Teacher may have prompted them to warn Him. And He, when they mentioned. the inadequacy of their food supply—five loaves of bread and two fish—He commanded the people to sit down on the grass in groups, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, looked upon heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, gave them to His disciples, and His disciples to the people. And they all ate and were filled and gathered the remaining pieces into twelve full baskets (Mt. 14:18-20). A great, unprecedented miracle. And this miracle is historic!

But the power hidden in these five words of Christ, "Give ye them to eat!" many times exceeds both the physical filling of the crowd of many thousands and the two thousand years which separate us from that time.

"Give ye them to eat!" Did this mean physical food only? No. It meant everything that the God-Man has brought to earth: salvation of the human race, spiritual food, all the sacraments which were established by the

Lord, the entire Church of Christ, Catholic and Apostolic. But the Apostles were mortal and the Church is eternal. The Apostles would need successors: deacons, priests, bishops. In such a way the Church will exist eternally and feed believers. She will give them that which no one and nothing on earth can give. With the words: “Give ye them to eat!” Christ makes His Church Apostolic. And at that moment, when Christ commanded the people to sit down on the grass in groups—this is the great moment of the organisation of the Church. Remember Holy Russia. It consisted of separate groups—parishes—and they all merged into one great whole—the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

In this way the Church of Christ now exists and will exist until the end of the ages. Let us always strive for Her. And if for some reason we cannot always abide in Her physically, then let us always live psychologically within the Church cycle. And we will find food which leads us into Eternal Life. Only in the Church do we find the greatest Sacrament of Christ, the Sacrament of His Body and Blood which contains Life Eternal.

One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei

Second Gospel – John 17:1-13

Saints of the Week

13 / 26 July — Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the Six Ecumenical Councils - The Ecumenical Councils are the greatest battles of Orthodoxy with heretics. Under today's date, the Church jointly commemorates the first Six Ecumenical Councils:

1. The First Ecumenical Council in Nicea, 325 A.D. with 318 holy fathers participating. This Council is commemorated separately on May 29 and on the Seventh Sunday after Easter. This Council refuted the heresy of Arius against the Son of God.

2. The Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople, 381 A.D. with 150 holy fathers attending. This Council is commemorated separately on May 22. This Council refuted the heresy of Macedonius against God, the Holy Spirit.

3. The Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus, 431 A.D. with 200 holy fathers participating. This Council is commemorated separately on September 9. This Council refuted the heresy of Nestorius against the Mother of God.

4. The Fourth Ecumenical Council in Chalcedon, 451 A.D. with 630 holy fathers participating. This Council is commemorated separately on July 16. This Council refuted the Monophysite heresy.

5. The Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople, 553 A.D. with 160 holy fathers participating. This Council is commemorated separately on July 25. This Council refuted the heresy of Origen.

6. The Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople, 691 A.D. with 170 holy fathers participating. This Council is commemorated separately on January 23. This Council refuted the Monothelite heresy.

7. The Seventh Ecumenical Council which was convened in 878 A.D. with 367 holy fathers participating. This Council is not commemorated at this time but is commemorated separately on October 11. This Council refuted the heresy of Iconoclasm.

At these Councils, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, all these heresies were condemned and the Faith of Orthodoxy was defined and confirmed for all time.

Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel - this great archangel of God is commemorated on March 26th. On this day his appearances and marvels through the whole history of the salvation of mankind are commemorated. It is reckoned that this observance was first instituted on the Holy Mountain in 982, during the patriarchate of Nicolas Chrysoverges (979-91), and was occasioned by the Archangel's appearing in a cell near Karyes, where, with his finger, he wrote the hymn to the Mother of God: 'It is meet ... '. As a result of this occurrence, the cell was named, and is called to this day, 'It is meet ...'. Linked with this, other appearances of the Archangel Gabriel are commemorated, such as his appearing to Moses when he was keeping Jethro's flocks, when he revealed to this great man, chosen by God, how the world was created and all the rest that Moses later wrote down in the Book of Genesis; his appearing to Daniel and the imparting of the mystery of the kingdoms to come and the coming of the Saviour; his appearing to St Anna and the promise of a daughter, the most blessed and pure Virgin Mary; his very brief appearing to the holy Virgin while she was living in the Temple in Jerusalem; his appearing to Zacharias the high priest and the news of the birth of John the Forerunner, and the punishing of the same with dumbness because he did not believe the angel's words; his appearing once again to the holy Virgin in Nazareth, and the annunciation of the conception and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ; his appearing to righteous Joseph, to the shepherds near Bethlehem, to the Lord Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane when he strengthened the Lord, as man, before His Passion; his appearing to the myrrh-bearing women, and his other appearances.

St. Mildred, abbess of Minster in Thanet, England (c.700) - A daughter of Merewald, king of Mercia, and St. Ermenburga, princess of Kent, she was educated at the convent of Chelles, near Paris, to which she had retired to avoid the attentions of an unwelcome suitor. She then returned to become a nun at Minster-in-Thanet. This abbey had been founded by Ermenburga on land provided by Egbert of Kent in compensation for the murder of her brothers Ss. Ethelred and Ethelbricht. She became abbess before 694, when she attended a council in Kent. Goscelin (late 11th century) attributed to her the conventional virtues of tranquillity of temper and generosity to the poor, especially widows and children. She died after a long illness; her tomb became a place of pilgrimage. In 1035 her relics were translated to St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, whence some of them were given to Deventer (Holland). However, a rival set of relics was given by Lanfranc to his hospital of St. Gregory. Canterbury. In modern times a Benedictine nunnery has been revived at Minster by the Benedictines of Eichstatt (Bavaria), founded by St. Walburga. Feast: 13 July; translation. 18 May; also 20 February.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Stephen the Sabbaite (†794); St. Julian, bishop of Cenomanis (1st C); Martyr Serapion (†c.205); Martyr Marcian of Iconium (†258); Venerable Sarah, the Ascetic of Egypt (†370); Synaxis of the Venerable Fathers of Hilandar Monastery, Mt. Athos; All the saints who shone in the land of Lithuania.

14 / 27 July – The Holy Apostle Aquila - one of the Seventy, he was a Jew living in Italy with his wife Priscilla. When the Emperor Claudius decreed the exile of all Jews from Rome and Italy, Aquila moved to Corinth, where the Apostle Paul first made his acquaintance, staying eighteen months in his house and baptising him and his wife. Burning with zeal for the Christian faith, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul to Ephesus and helped him in his apostolic work . From Ephesus, Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he says at the end: 'Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house' (16:19). After the death of Claudius, Jews were permitted to return to Italy, and Aquila and Priscilla went back to Rome. Writing the Epistle to the Romans from Corinth after this, the Apostle sends greetings to his old friends and fellow-workers: 'Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus, who have for my life laid down their own necks, unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house' (16:3-5). We later see Aquila again in Ephesus, where he is working with St Timothy. In chains in Rome, Paul wrote to Timothy in Ephesus: 'Greet Priscilla and Aquila' (II Tim . 4:19) . As a bishop, Aquila baptised many and consecrated them to the Faith, destroyed idols, built churches, made priests and spread among the people the glory of the incarnate Son of God. He was finally murdered by wicked pagans, and went to the Kingdom of Christ.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Justus, soldier at Rome (1st C); St. Heraclius, patriarch of Alexandria (†246); Venerable Ellius of Egypt (4th C); Martyr John of Merv (4th C); Venerable Onesimus, wonderworker of Magnesia (4th C); Venerable Marcellinus of Deventer (†775); Venerable Stephen of Makhrishche (†1406); New Hieromartyr Constantine Bogoyavlensky, priest (†1918); New Hieromartyr Nicholas Poretsky, priest (†1933); Finding of the relics of Venerable Theophilus of Kiev, fool-for-Christ (1993).

15 / 28 July - Holy, Equal-to-the-Apostles, St Vladimir, Great Prince of Russia - Centuries before it was officially called 'Russia,' the vast territory inhabited by the various tribes of Eastern Slavs was sown with seeds of Christianity. But little fruit sprouted in the land's open steppes which dominated its southern reaches and provided a highroad for nomadic intruders. For over a thousand years a succession of Huns, Avars, Magyars and Pechenegs swept in from the east to establish a hegemony over an area whose waterways provided a potentially valuable trade link between the Baltic and the Black Seas. The eastern Slavs, who spread out along the great rivers as far as Lake Ladoga to the north, were a heterogeneous group which lacked the unity necessary to repel these invading hordes. They welcomed the assistance of the Varangians, Scandinavian adventurers from the north, whom they readily assimilated.

According to the earliest written history of the area, the 11th century *Chronicle*, in the year 862 one of these Norsemen by the name of Rurik established himself in Novgorod as a leader with the aim of organizing a defence against the Pechenegs. The strategically superior location of Kiev to the south induced Rurik's successor Ole~ to move the capital in 882 and enabled him to consolidate most of the Eastern Slav tribes under his rule. In 912 Oleg was succeeded by Rurik's son Igor who had married a simple young countrywomen whom he had met by chance while on a hunting expedition in the area of Pskov. The unlikely match turned out to be providential; the girl's beauty was rivalled by her lofty wisdom which belied her humble origin and earned her the title 'most wise.' Olga proved to be a capable ruler when, after the death of Igor in 945, she became regent for their son Sviatoslav. As a ruler she naturally had contact with the neighbouring Greeks; the proximity of Constantinople, capital of the Christian East, may well have inspired her to examine its religion which had already gained enough adherents in Kiev to have a church.

Olga's wisdom proved itself in her decision to embrace the Christian faith, and in 957 she journeyed to Constantinople to be baptized and to be instructed in its precepts. Having received divine illumination, Olga returned to the land of Rus bringing, as it were, the dawn's rays. To her sorrow, her son Sviatoslav was not interested in changing his pagan beliefs, although he was tolerant of the Christian faith and did not interfere in his mother's active missionary work. Fortunately, his frequent absence from Kiev on various campaigns gave Olga greater influence not only in administrative matters but also in the upbringing of her three grandsons, even though Sviatoslav forbade her to raise them in the Christian faith. But her life of prayer and charity commended her new religion and bore fruit in the generations that followed her blessed repose in the year 969.

Sviatoslav was not interested in staying in Kiev and soon divided his realm among his three sons--Yaropolk, Oleg and Vladimir--while he himself went to Bulgaria. When he died in battle in 972, his sons began to quarrel over primacy of rule. Eventually, the cunning of the youngest son, Vladimir, gained for him the Kievan throne which he secured by having his eldest brother Yaropolk put to death. Oleg had died earlier in battle, leaving Vladimir sole ruler over a loose federation of city states whose geographical territory was widespread and ill-defined.

Vladimir began his rule in the full tradition of his pagan predecessors, indulging in a warring and passionate life. Once, after a successful campaign, Vladimir wished to render special thanks to the pagan gods by offering a human sacrifice. The lot fell upon a young Varangian boy by the name of John who was a Christian together with his father Theodore. Theodore refused to give up his son, explaining to those who had come to fetch the boy that the pagan gods were lifeless idols and that the people should turn to the one true God of the Christians. The crowd became enraged and killed them both there in their own home. Truly it has been said that the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christianity, for as accustomed as Vladimir was to bloodshed, he was strangely affected by the martyrdom of this father and son. He began to think seriously about religion.

Feeling less and less satisfied with the paganism of his forebears, Vladimir thirsted for a knowledge of truth. This news spread abroad and attracted to Kiev advocates of various faiths in hopes of winning the Grand Prince to their respective persuasions. There came Bulgar Moslems, papal envoys from Germany, Jews from Taurid and finally an Orthodox Greek--each praising their religion as the best. Vladimir was predisposed to favour the wise arguments of the Greek, a righteous philosopher who gave a thorough explanation of the Orthodox faith beginning with God's creation of the World, the fall of man and his banishment from paradise, the promise of the Messiah, His humble birth, His miracles and teaching of an everlasting Kingdom beyond this world, His sufferings and death on the Cross for man's salvation, and His glorious Resurrection. He then unrolled before the Prince a scroll on which was depicted the last and dread Judgment. Vladimir was struck with the fear of God and said: "How good it will be for those on the right, but woe to them who are wicked and are cast to the left!" The

Greek urged Vladimir to accept the truth of holy Orthodoxy and be baptized, but Vladimir recognized the importance of the decision he was to make and was not to be rushed.

He summoned together his retinue and the Kievan elders to take counsel, explaining what he had heard from the various ambassadors. "Every man," they replied, "will commend his own religion. But send out your own envoys to examine how the different religions are practiced and the manner of worship," This suggestion seemed most judicious and ten men were promptly dispatched on this mission. On their return they related to the Grand Prince what they had witnessed: the Moslem religion was grim and full of fear; the Germans lacked beauty; but the Greek worship no tongue can describe, 'for during the service in their temple we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. No man, having tasted what is sweet, has any desire for what is bitter. So too, having experienced the Greek faith, we want no other." The elders supported the recommendation of the envoys: "If the Greek religion were not the best, your wise grandmother would not have adopted it."

Vladimir needed no further persuading. Memories of his grandmother' s righteous life and the witness of Kiev' s Christian inhabitants settled his mind in favour of what he had heard. But it still remained for his heart to be converted. Pride hindered Vladimir from asking the Greeks outright for instruction and baptism. Applying a typically pagan solution, he went to war with the Greeks and captured their city of Kherson. As terms of peace, he demanded the hand of the Byzantine emperors' sister Anna in marriage. They agreed on condition that Vladimir accept the Christian faith. This accorded neatly with Vladimir's ultimate objective. But God was more interested in possessing his heart than his calculating mind.

A few days before Princess Anna arrived in Kherson with her retinue of clergy and servants, Vladimir was struck with an eye disease which extinguished his sight. Fearing this to be a punishment from the pagan gods whom he was about to renounce, Vladimir wavered in his decision. Anna, upon hearing of this crisis, encouraged the Grand Prince to be baptized at once, and thereby to be healed not only of his physical blindness, but also of his spiritual blindness. Humbled by his helpless state, Vladimir sent immediately for the bishop of Kherson and, after a thorough preparation, the ceremony of baptism took place. No sooner had the bishop laid his hand on Vladimir's head and invoked the name of the All-holy Trinity than Vladimir's vision was restored, and he cried out: "Now have I come to know the true God!" This miracle confirmed the faith of the Grand Prince who became radically transformed.

Returning to Kiev with his new Christian spouse and several priests, he set about cleansing the city from idolatry with orders to destroy the pagan statues and urging all to prepare for holy baptism. On August 1, 988, a countless multitude of young and old assembled in the waters of the Dneiper River. Vladimir stood on the bank and prayed for his people: "Creator of heaven and earth! bless these Thy new children, grant them to know Thee, the true God; strengthen them in the right faith! Be unto me a helper against evil temptation that I might worthily praise Thy holy name !" Vladimir's former passions were transformed into a zeal for good. From Constantinople he engaged skilled artisans to construct a magnificent church on the spot where, until so recently, the statue of Perun had stood. Another church,' dedicated to the Theotokos, was built where the two Varangians, Theodore and John, had been martyred. The Prince shared the apostolic work of the Greek bishops and priests who went about the towns and villages spreading the true Faith which thousands willingly embraced, although many remained stuck in the mire of paganism. Vladimir grieved for them, but knew that enlightenment was not to be achieved with a sword, Instead, he established schools where even children of the poorest families could learn to read the Scripture and be trained as priests.

Translation of the relics of St. Swithun, bishop and wonderworker of Winchester (862) - St. Swithun had been Prior of the monastery attached to the cathedral, before he was made Bishop of Winchester in AD 852. He was, say the chroniclers, a diligent builder of churches in places where there were none before and a repairer of those that had been destroyed or ruined. He also built a bridge on the east side of the city and, during the work he made a practice of sitting there to watch the workmen, that his presence might stimulate their industry. One of his most edifying miracles is said to have been performed at this bridge where he restored an old woman's basket of eggs, which the workmen had maliciously broken. It is more certain that Swithun was one of the most learned men of his time and the tutor, successively, of King Aethelwulf of Wessex and of his son, the illustrious Alfred. He died on 2nd July AD 862 and was buried, according to his own desire, in the churchyard of the Old Minster (Cathedral) at Winchester, where "passers by might tread on his grave and where the rain from the eaves might fall on it." His reputation as a weather saint is said to have arisen from the translation of his body from this lowly grave to its golden shrine within the Cathedral, having been delayed by incessant rain. Hence the

weather on the festival of his translation (15th July) indicated, according to the old rhyme, what it would be for the next forty days: "St. Swithun's day, if thou dost rain, For forty days it will remain; St. Swithun's day, if thou be fair, For forty days 'twill rain na mair."

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Cyricus and Julitta (†c.305); Martyr Abudimus of Tenedos (4th C); Venerable Zosima of Vladimir (†1710); Venerable Nikander Borisoglebsky (†1911); New Hieromartyr Peter Troitsky, deacon (†1938); Venerable Job Ugolsky (†1985); Synaxis of All Saints of Kiev.

16 / 29 July – **Fast Day - The Hieromartyr Athenogenes, Bishop of Sebaste -** He lived in a monastery near the town with ten of his disciples. In the time of Diocletian, a fierce persecutor of Christians called Philomarchus came to Sebaste. He arrested and killed many of the Christians in the town. When he saw Athenogenes and his disciples, he told the elder to sacrifice to idols, that they should not perish as had the other Christians. Athenogenes replied: 'O Torturer, those whom you describe as having perished have not perished, but are in heaven and make merry with the angels!' There was a touching moment when a deer, which had been hand-fed by the compassionate Athenogenes, ran up to him, and, seeing him in such straits, shed tears. Wild animals of the hills had more pity on the martyrs than did the pagans! After harsh torture, during which an angel of God comforted them, they were all beheaded, first the priests and fellow-workers of Athenogenes and then Athenogenes himself, and went to their heavenly home in the year 311.

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs Paul, Alevtina (Valentina) and Chionia (†308); Martyrs Antiochos the Physician and Faustus (4th C); Virgin Martyr Julia (†440); Holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (451); Martyr Helier of Jersey (6th C); New Martyr John of Turnovo (†1822); Blessed Matrona Belyakova of Anemnyasevo, confessor (†1936); New Hieromartyrs James, archbishop of Barnaul, Peter Gavrilov and John Mozhirin, priests, and Monk-martyr Theodore (Nikitin) and Martyr John Protopopov (†1937); New Monk-martyr Ardalion (Ponamarev) (†1938); The 'Chirsk' Icon of the Mother of God.

17 / 30 July - The Holy Martyr Marina (Margaret) - born in Pisidian Antioch of pagan parents, Marina only heard of the Lord Jesus at the age of twelve, of His incarnation of the most pure Virgin, His many miracles, His death by crucifixion and His glorious Resurrection. Her little heart was inflamed with love for the Lord, and she vowed never to marry and, further, desired in her soul to suffer for Christ and be baptised with the blood of martyrdom. Her father hated her for her faith, and would not regard her as his daughter. The imperial governor, Olymbrius, hearing of Marina and learning that she was a Christian, at first desired her for his wife. When Marina refused, he ordered her to sacrifice to idols. To this, Marina replied: 'I shall not worship nor offer sacrifice to dead idols, lacking the breath of life, which have no awareness of themselves and are not even aware of our honouring or dishonouring them. I will not give them that honour that belongs to my Creator alone. ' Then Olymbrius put her to harsh torture, and threw her into prison all wounded and bleeding. Marina prayed to God in the prison, and, after she had prayed, there appeared to her first the devil in the form of a terrible serpent, which twined itself about her head. When she made the sign of the Cross, the serpent split asunder and disappeared. Then she was bathed in heavenly light; the walls and roof of the prison disappeared and a Cross was revealed, resplendent and lofty. On the top of the Cross was perched a white dove, from which there came a voice: 'Rejoice, Marina, thou dove of Christ, daughter of the Sion that is on high, for the day of thy joy is drawing near!', and Marina was healed by the power of God of all her wounds. The demented judge tortured her the next day by fire and water, but Marina endured it all as if not in her own body. She was finally sentenced to death by beheading. At the moment of her death, the Lord Jesus appeared to her, accompanied by angels. She was beheaded in the time of the Emperor Diocletian, but remains alive in soul and in power in heaven and on earth. One of her hands is preserved in the monastery of Vatopedi on the Holy Mountain. Even in Albania, in the Langa mountains overlooking Lake Ochrid, there is a monastery of St Marina with some of her wonderworking relics. Numerous miracles have been wrought in this monastery and still are, witnessed not only by Christians but also by Moslems. The Turks have such a veneration for this holy place that they have never laid hands on either the place or the monastery's possessions. At one time, a Turk was caretaker of the monastery.

Child Martyr Prince Kenelm of Wales (c.821) - Son of King Coenwulf of Mercia in England. By tradition he was murdered in the forest of Clent and buried in Winchcombe.

Also commemorated on this day: Translation of the relics of Venerable Lazarus of Mt. Galesion (1054); Venerable Irenarchus, abbot of Solovki (†1628); Venerable Leonid of Ust- Neduma (†1654); Venerable Sophronius (†1692) and Serapion (†1718) of Molchensk Monastery; 'Sviatogorsk' Icon of the Mother of God.

18 / 31 July – **Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Emilian -** in the time of Julian the Apostate, in the town of Dorostolon in Thrace, there lived the young Emilian, a servant of the governor. When the Emperor Julian began to persecute the Christians with fire and the sword throughout the Roman Empire, the imperial delegate arrived in Dorostolon to kill the Christians. But he did not find a single one there. Delighted by this, he gave a great feast for the citizens of Dorostolon and ordered the offering of sacrifices to the idols, and merrymaking day and night throughout the town. That night, holy Emilian went round the temples, squares and streets of the town and, with a hammer, smashed all the idols. On the following day, the whole town was in uproar; everyone was searching for the destroyer of their gods. A villager, who was seen passing near the temples that morning, was arrested and Emilian, seeing that an innocent man would suffer, said within himself: 'If I conceal my action, what sort of use has it been? Shall I not stand before God as the slayer of an innocent man?' He therefore presented himself before the imperial legate and confessed the whole. The legate, in a rage, questioned Emilian, asking him on whose instructions he had done such a thing. Christ's martyr replied: 'God and my soul commanded me to destroy those dead pillars that you call gods.' Then the judge ordered that he be flogged, and, after flogging and other tortures, be burned. Thus St Emilian finished his earthly course and moved to the heavenly life, on July 18th, 362.

The Venerable Pambo - Pambo was an Egyptian and an ascetic on Mount Nitria. He was a contemporary of St. Anthony the Great, and himself was great in monastic asceticism. He was known particularly for two characteristics: through extensive training, he sealed his lips so that he did not speak one unnecessary word and that he never ate anyone's bread except that bread which he earned with his own hands by weaving reeds. He was similar to an angel of God and, in later years his face shown like the face of Moses once did, so much so that the monks were unable to look him in the face. He did not render an immediate answer even to a simple question before praying and contemplating about it in his heart. The Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria once visited the monks in Nitria. The monks begged Pambo saying: "Tell the pope a constructive word, which would be beneficial to him." The quiet Pambo replied: "If he does not benefit by my silence he will not even benefit by my word." At one time, St. Pambo with his monks traveled throughout Egypt. When they came upon a group of men who remained seated as the monks passed by, St. Pambo addressed them and said: "Arise and greet the monks so that you may receive a blessing from them for they continually converse with God and their lips are holy." This glorious saint was able to discern clearly the fate of both the living and the dead. He rested in the Lord in the year 386 A.D.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Philastrius, bishop of Brescia (†397); St. Frederick, bishop of Utrecht (†838); St. Stephen, archbishop of Constantinople (†928); St. John II, the Confessor, bishop of Chalcedon (9th C); Venerable John the Long-suffering of the Kiev Caves (†1160); Venerable Pambo, recluse of the Kiev Caves (†1241); Venerable Leontius, abbot of Novgorod (†1429); Hieromartyr Cosmas of St. David-Gareji (†1630); Synaxis of the Saints of Kaluga.

July / 1 August --Our Holy Mother Macrina - The eldest sister of St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nyssa, she was as a girl betrothed to a young nobleman and, when her betrothed died, Macrina vowed never to enter into marriage, saying: 'It is not right for a girl, having once been betrothed, to turn to another; according to natural law there must be one marriage, as there are one birth and one death.' She justified this by her belief in the resurrection of the dead, regarding her betrothed not as dead, but as alive in God. 'It is a sin and a shame', she said, 'if the spouse does not keep faith when the partner goes to distant climes.' Then, with her mother Emilia, she became a nun in a monastery of virgins, where she lived in asceticism with the other nuns. They lived by the work of their hands, devoting the greater part of their time to pondering on God, to prayer and to a ceaseless lifting-up of their minds to Him. After a time, her mother died, and then her brother Basil. In the ninth month after Basil's death, Gregory came to visit his sister and found her on her deathbed. At the time of her death, Macrina made this prayer to God: 'Thou, O Lord, givest rest to our bodies in the sleep of death for a little time, then Thou wilt waken them again with the Last Trump. Forgive me, and grant that, when my soul is parted from my body, it may be presented before Thee stainless and without sin, and that it may be as incense before Thee.' She then made the sign of the Cross on her brow, eyes, face and heart, and breathed her last. She entered into rest in the Lord in 379.

New Martyr Bishop Victor of Glazov - Victor (Ostovidov) was the son of a church chanter. He entered a monastery early in life and spent many years there. Nonetheless, he acquired also a good theological education and in 1912 published a detailed study on "The New Theologians," criticizing a new theological trend that had found expression particularly in the book of Metropolitan (later "Patriarch") Sergius, The Doctrine of Salvation (Kazan, 1898).After the Revolution of 1917 he was a vicar bishop of the Vyatka diocese, with the title of Glazov and Votkinsk, with his headquarters in Vyatka. In 1922 he was arrested and was in prison until 1925. When the "Declaration" of 1927 come out his was the first voice of protest, and his flock joined him in separating from Metr. Sergius, which led to his arrest and incarceration in the concentration camp of Solovki, where he was from 1928 to 1930, working as a bookkeeper at the rope factory a mile from the main Kremlin of the former monastery of Solovki. The little house where he lived and worked was located in a clearing of the forest; deep within this forest he celebrated secret church services with other members of the Catacomb Church. In Solovki, despite the tragic state of Soviet Russia, Bishop Victor preserved an optimistic view of the future and even tried to infect with this the more realistic Bishop Maxim of Serpukhov. But within a few years this optimism apparently vanished, for a witness who saw him in the spring of 1931 at the concentration camp of Mai Guba in the Far North heard him say: "Ahead there is nothing but suffering." In the summer of the same year he was released from this camp and exiled for three years to the bank of the Onega River in the Archangelsk region, where, according to some reports, he was in contact with the catacomb hierarchs, Metropolitan Joseph and Bishop Damaskin. Late in 1933 he was sent to an even more remote exile in Siberia, and after this nothing more was ever heard of him. But if little is known of the life and sufferings of this new confessor, his courageous and uncompromising spirit is set forth in the documents which he has left behind, which accuse Sergianism as a profound error that denies the very nature of the Church of Christ.

Uncovering of the Relics of the Monk Seraphim, Wonderworker of Sarov - At the beginning of the last century (i.e. the 1800's) a new bright taper blazed upon the candle-tiara of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Lord deigned to send to us on earth a great man of prayer, an ascetic and wonderworker.

In 1903 occurred the glorification of the Monk Seraphim of Sarov, 70 years after his repose (the Vita (Life) of the saint is located under 2 January, the day of his repose). On 19 July, the birthday of the saint, his relics were opened with great solemnity and placed in a prepared reliquary. The long awaited event was accompanied by numerous miraculous healings of the sick, who in large number had gathered at Sarov. Very widely esteemed while yet alive, the Monk Seraphim became one of the most beloved saints of the Russian Orthodox nation, indeed like the Monk Sergei of Radonezh.

The spiritual path of the Monk Seraphim was marked by great modesty, inherent to the Russian saint. From childhood having been chosen by God, the Sarovsk ascetic without hesitation or misgiving ascended from strength to strength in his striving for spiritual perfection. Eight years of novitiate tasks and eight years of temple service in the dignity of deacon and priestmonk, wilderness-dwelling and pillar-dwelling, hermitage and solitude followed upon each other and crown his eldership. His deeds, by far exceeding natural human abilities (for example, the prayer upon the stone for a thousand days and nights), harmoniously and readily enter into the life of the saint.

The mystery of a living and prayerful communality defines the spiritual legacy of the Monk Seraphim, but he left to the Church still another precious thing – a short but fine directive, written in part by himself, and in parts by those listening to him. Shortly before the glorification of the saint there was found and printed in 1903 his "Conversation of the Monk Seraphim of Sarov, Concerning the Goal of Christian Life", compiled at the end of November 1831, roughly a year before his repose. This conversation was a very precious contribution of the ascetic into the treasury of teachings of Russian holy-fathers. Besides his teaching about the essence of Christian life, in it are contained new explanations of many important places of Holy Scripture.

"Fasting, prayer, vigil and every good deed, – taught the Monk Seraphim, – being howso no less fine in themselves, yet however in fact the goal of our Christian life does not consist only but in them, though they serve as means for its attainment. The true goal of our Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God". Once

however situated in the Spirit of God, the monk glimpsed all the Russian land, and it was filled and as it were covered over by the incense-cloud of the prayers of the faithful, rising up in supplication to the Lord.

In the recorded life and deeds of Saint Seraphim are quoted many eye-witness accounts of the graced gift of perspicacity (i.e. insight), which he utilised for stimulating within people repentance of sins and moral rectification.

"The Lord hath revealed to me, – said he, – that there shalt be a time, when the hierarchs of the Russian land and other spiritual persons will deviate from the preservation of Orthodoxy in all its purity, and for this the wrath of God wilt strike them. For three days I stood, I besought the Lord to have mercy on them and besought it better to deprive me, the wretch Seraphim, of the Kingdom of Heaven, than to punish them. But the Lord inclined not to the plea of the wretch Seraphim and said, that there would be not mercy for them, since they will teach human teachings and commandments, while their hearts stand far from Me".

Manifesting the graced gifts and power of God to people, the Monk Seraphim instructed those coming to him, on how to transverse the narrow path of salvation. He commanded obedience of his spiritual children and to the end of his life he was faithful to it. Having spent all his life in ascetic deeds beyond the power of ordinary people, his advice was to go by "the royal (middle) way" of the holy-fathers and not take upon oneself excessive difficult works: "to take on excessive measure of exploit is not necessary; but strive, so that the other aspect – our flesh – be true and capable for the doing of good deeds".

The monk considered prayer to be the prime exploit and means for the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. "Every good deed, done on account of Christ, bestows the grace of the Holy Spirit, but... prayer most of all beareth the Holy Spirit, and it is most convenient of all for each to improve".

The Monk Seraphim advised during the time of Divine-services to stand in temple now with eyes closed, and then to turn one's gaze upon an image or burning candle and ponder this thought, – that it would suggest the fine comparison of human life with a waxen candle.

If someone complained to the holy elder about the impossibility to fulfill the rule of prayer, he then advised them to pray unceasingly: both during the time of work, and when going wherever, and even in bed. And if anyone can make the time, said the monk, let them take on soul-edifying prayers and readings of prayer-canons, akathists, psalms, the Gospel and Epistles. The saint also advised to study the order of Divine-services and to commit them to memory.

The Monk Seraphim regarded a lengthy rule of prayer as non-obligatory and he gave his Diveevsk community of women monastics a light rule. The Mother of God forbade Father seraphim to obligate novices with the reading of long akathists, so as not to impose an excessive burden on the incapable. But with this the saint strictly mentioned, that prayer ought not to be a formality: "Those monks, who do not unite external prayer with the inner, are not monks, but black torch-heads!" There thus became known the Seraphim Rule for those laypeople, who under the circumstances of life were not able to read the customary morning and evening prayers – in the morning, before lunch and at evening to read the "Our Father", thrice the "Hail Mary, Virgin Mother of God", the Creed "I Believe" once; attending to necessary tasks, from morning til dinner to do the Jesus Prayer "Lord, Jesus Christ Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner" or but simply "Lord, have mercy", and from dinner til evening the prayer "Most Holy Mother of God, save me a sinner" or "Lord, Jesus Christ, through the Mother of God have mercy on me a sinner".

"In prayers be attentive to thyself, – advised the ascetic, – that is, prepare the mind and unite it with the soul. On the first day, twice or more make this prayer with the whole mind, attending separately to each particular word. Later on, when the Lord heats thy heart with His warm grace and unites that in thee in one spirit: then

flows within thee unceasingly that prayer and always will it be with thee, delighting and nourishing thee..." The monk said that in fulfilling this rule with humility, it is possible to attain Christian perfection even in worldly life.

"One must needs provide the soul with the Word of God. Most of all one ought to exercise in the reading of the New Testament and the Psalter. From this occurs enlightenment of the intellect, which is transformed by a Divine transformation", – advised the holy ascetic of Sarov, himself constantly reading through all the New Testament during the course of the week.

Communing the Holy Mysteries each Sunday and each feastday without fail, – to the question of how often one should approach for Communion, the Monk Seraphim answered: "the more often, the better". He said to the priest of the Diveevsk community, Vasilii Sadovsky: "The Grace, given us by Communion, is so great, that though a man be unworthy and sinful, if such a man in humility conscious of his all-sinfulness approacheth nigh [for Communion] to the Lord, Who hath redeemed us all, though he be covered head to foot by the bounds of sin, yet shalt he be cleansed by the grace of Christ, for all the more and more it illumineth him, and altogether it doth enlighten and save him".

"I believe, that through the great blessing of God grace doth make its mark also upon those communing..." The saint however did not give everyone the identical advice regarding frequent Communion. For many he advised to make the preparatory fast during all four lenten periods and during all the twelve feastdays. But it is necessary to remember his warning about the possibility of communing unto condemnation: "Sometimes thus it doth happen: here on earth they indeed do commune, but with the Lord they remain non-communicants!"

"There is no worse a sin and nothing is more terrible and harmful of spirit than despondency", – said Saint Seraphim. He himself shone with a spiritual joy, and with this quiet peaceful joy he in abundance filled the hearts of those about him, greeting them with the words: "My joy! Christ is Risen!" Every burden of life became light while being close to the ascetic, and a multitude of the grieving people and seekers of God crowded about his cell and together with them hermits, wanting to share in the graces radiating from the God-pleasing saint. In the eyes of all was affirmed the truth, expressed by the saint himself in a great angelic calling-out: "Acquire peace, and around thee a thousand wilt be saved". This command about the acquisition of peace leads up to the teaching about the acquisition of the Holy Spirit, but of itself it appears as a most important step on the way of spiritual growth. The Monk Seraphim, in experience having passed through all the ancient Orthodox science of ascetic deed, foresaw how the spiritual activity of coming generations would be, and he taught to seek out peace of soul and to condemn no one: "Whoso goeth about in a worldly manner, that one as though a liar draweth up spiritual gifts". "For preserving peace of soul... everyone ought to flee the judging of others... In order to be delivered from judgement, one ought to attend to oneself, and not from whomever to adopt extraneous ideas and become deadened towards everything".

The Monk Seraphim rightly can be called a disciple of the Mother of God. The Most Holy Mother of God thrice healed him from grievous illness, and repeatedly She appeared to him, guiding and encouraging him. While still at the beginning of his way he heard, how the Mother of God in directing him as he lay upon his sick bed, said to the Apostle John the Theologian: "This one is of our kind".

Upon emerging from seclusion the monk devoted much effort to the building up of the women's monastic community at Diveevo and he himself said, that he gave no particular directives on his own, but rather he gave everything through the will of the Queen of Heaven.

The Monk Seraphim stands at the head of a remarkable upwards-flight of Russian Orthodox spirituality. With great strength resounds his recollection: "The Lord seeketh out the heart, overflowing with love towards God and neighbour; here is the throne, upon which He doth love to preside and appear in the fullness of His supra-

heavenly Glory. "Son, give Me thine heart, – sayeth He, – and all else I Myself wilt provide thee", – wherefore it is in the human heart that the Kingdom of Heaven can be realized".

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Dius, abbot of Antioch (†430); Blessed prince Roman Olegovich of Ryazan (†1270); Venerable Paisius of the Kiev Caves (14th C); Blessed Stephen Lazarevic, king of Serbia (†1427) and his mother St. Milica (†1405); Synaxis of the saints of Kursk; The 'Umileniye' ('of Tender Feeling') of Diveyevo Icon of the Mother of God.

† Daily Scripture Readings †

Monday – Epistle: for Monday: I Cor. 11:31-12:6 (§150); for Tuesday: I Cor. 12:12-26 (§152)
Gospel: for Monday: Matt. 18:1-11 (§74); for Tuesday: Matt. 18:18-22, 19:1-2, 13-15 (§76)

Tuesday – Vespers: III Kings 8:22-23, 27-30; Isa. 61:10-11, 62:1-5; Isa. 60:1-16
Matins Gospel: John 10:9-16 (§36); Epistle: Gal. 1:11-19 (§200)
Gospel: John 10:1-9 (§35 mid)

Wednesday –Epistle: I Cor. 13:4-14:5 (§154); Gospel: Matt. 20:1-16 (§80)

Thursday – Epistle: I Cor. 14:6-19 (§155); Gospel: Matt. 20:17-28 (§81)

Friday - Epistle: for Friday: I Cor. 14:26-40 (§157); for Saturday: Rom. 14:6-9 (§113)
Gospel: for Friday: Matt. 21:12-14, 17-20 (§83 mid); for Saturday: Matt. 15:32-39 (§64)

Saturday –Vespers: Wisd. 3:1-9; Wisd. 5:15-6:3; Wisd. 4:7-15; Matins Gospel: Matt. 11:27-30 (§43)
Epistle: Gal. 5:22-6:2 (§213); Gospel: Luke 6:17-23 (§24)

HOMILY

-About the need to repeat and repeat-

"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth" (2 Peter 1:12).

The plower sows in the field. Does not the plower repeat the same task every second? How would he, therefore, plow the field if not plowing from morning to dusk deepening furrow after furrow?

The traveler walks the road. Does not the traveler repeat the same task every second with the same effort? How else would he have traveled the road and reached his destination?

The carpenter prepares the boards in his workshop. Does not the carpenter repeat the same task with every board, with the same labor? How else would he be able to prepare the ordered amount of prepared boards?

Brethren, is not all of our beneficial works comprised of strands and strands of repetition? Therefore, let not the preacher of the truth become slothful and let him not say: "I told them so and I will not repeat it!" Let not the hearer of the truth become proud and let him not say: "I heard it once and I do not need to hear it again!"

O preacher of the truth, do not be afraid to repeat and to repeat: that through repetition you teach and by repetition you remind. Without repetition even the field is not plowed, nor the path traveled, nor the framework [rafters] of the house prepared. And you [preacher of the truth] are to plow, to lead and to prepare.

O hearer of the truth, do not become proud and do not say that you heard the truth once. Truth is food for the soul. You have eaten bread today, yesterday and the day before yesterday and for months and years past. And again you will eat it, so that your body would be healthy. Nourish also the soul. Nourish it with the truth, the same truth, yesterday, today and tomorrow and until death so that your soul may be healthy, strong and radiant.

O Lord Jesus, nourish us every day and every hour with Your truth which is Yourself O Jesus, sweet nourishment!

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.