9th Sunday After Pentecost
The Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah
20 July / 2 August

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 8: Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! / Thou didst endure the three-day burial / to free us from our sufferings! / O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.

Troparion tone 4: Incarnate Angel and summit of the Prophets,/ second forerunner of the coming of Christ,/ glorious Elijah who sent down grace from on high to the Prophet Elisha./ He heals diseases and cleanses the leprous./ He pours healings on all who honour him.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 8: By rising from the tomb Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam/ Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, / and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O Greatly Merciful One.

Kontakion tone 2: O great prophet Elijah,/ seer of God's mighty works,/ who didst halt the torrential rain by thy word,/ pray for us to the Lover of mankind.

Vespers: (1) III Kings 17:1-23; **(2)** III Kings 18:1, 17-40, 42, 44-46; 19:1-16; **(3)** III Kings 19:19-21; IV Kings 2:1, 6-14

Matins Gospel IX

<u>EPISTLE: Corinthians 3:9-17</u>

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

WE ARE GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS... YOU ARE GOD'S BUILDING

His assertion that they are one, refers to their inability to do anything without 'God who gives the increase' ...Since this had a tendency to make men more indolent - I mean all being esteemed as one - whether they had laboured much or little, observe how he sets this right. He says, 'But each will receive his own reward according to his own labour' ...Do you see how to them he has also assigned no small task, having before laid down that the whole is of God? ...For the field is not called the husbandman's, but the householder's .. Again, the building is not the workman's but the master's ...Upon this then let us build, and as a foundation let us cleave to it as a branch to a vine; and let there be no interval between us and Christ. For the branch by its adherence draws in the sustenance, and the building stands because it is cemented together ...Let us then not merely keep hold of Christ, but let us be cemented to Him (Cf. Ps.73:27)...Let us cleave to Him ...by our works ...He is 'the Head,' we are 'the body'...He is 'a foundation', we are 'a building'; He 'a vine', we 'branches'; He 'the Bridegroom' we 'the bride'; He 'the Shepherd,' we 'the sheep,' He is 'the Way,' we 'they who walk therein.' Again, we are 'a temple,' He 'the in-dweller,' He the 'first begotten,' we 'the brethren': He 'the Heir,' we 'the heirs together with Him' ...He 'the Resurrection,' we 'those who rise again'; He 'the light,' we 'the enlightened.' All these indicate unity, and they allow no void interval, not even the slightest. For he who removes but to a little distance will go on till he has become very far distant.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily VIII on I Corinthians III, 6, 7. B#56, pp. 46-47.

Second Epistle: James 5:10-20

The Gospel According To St. Matthew 14: 22-34

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.

THE STORM ON THE TIBERIAN SEA

Last Sunday's Gospel reading told us of a great miracle: the feeding of an enormous crowd of many thousands with five loaves and two fish. The disciples of Christ themselves, through whose hands this miracle was performed, were dumbfounded. And as the Gospel says, Christ at once compelled them to enter a boat and go before Him to the other shore while He dismissed the crowd. "And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea" (Mt. 14:22-25).

A wonderful image of the Church of Christ is drawn for us here. The boat, as it were, represents the Church: its sides are the rules and canons of the Church; the disciples are all of us Christians; and the stormy sea is the sea of our life. And now too Christ has ascended a mountain, which means He is sitting at the right hand of the Father. He sees our Church boat and directs it. The Gospel says that the disciples went to the other side, not of their own will, but "straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship and go before Him unto the other side" (Mt. 14: 22). This means they were doing it out of obedience to Christ. And when they found themselves in danger, He walked to them on the water.

"And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying. . . It is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus"(Mt. 14:26-29).

Notice this moment: Christ did not call Peter, but only permitted Peter. Here obedience changed to boldness, this came from Peter himself. He felt such a surge of faith, such elation, that everything seemed possible to him. But here something happened. A wave, a high wave for a second hid Christ from Peter. He found himself alone. At once cold reason set to work. It was as if he came to himself and thought, what was he doing? Foolishness. Reason took from him the lightness of faith in which he walked, and he started to drown. A desperate cry rang out: "Lord, save me." And immediately Christ stretched forth His hand to him (Mt. 14: 30-31).

What happened to Peter? Well, what happened to him can happen to each of us: he became frightened, his faith was shaken. And this happened because he stepped over the side of the boat. What a profound lesson is hidden for us here: in Christian living there should be evenness, there should be quiet. And for this to be so, we must never step over the side of the Church boat. We must keep the statutes of the Church, must live the life of the Church. And then, even if we find ourselves amid the stormy sea of life, we will be able to cry out, "Lord, save me." And He, the Merciful One, will stretch out His saving hand to us, too, as He did to Peter, and we will find ourselves in the boat of the Church, and a great calm will come.

The One Thing Needful – Archbishop Andrei.

Second Gospel: Luke 4:22-30

Saints of the Week

20 July / 2 August -The Holy Prophet Elijah - a man who saw God, a wonderworker and a zealot for faith in God, Elijah was of the tribe of Aaron, from the city of Tishba, whence he was known as 'the Tishbite'. When Elijah was born, his father Sabah saw angels of God around the child, swaddling it with fire and feeding it with flames. This was a foreshadowing of Elijah's fiery character and his God-given fiery powers. He spent his whole youth in prayer and meditation, withdrawing often to the desert to ponder and pray in tranquillity. At that time, the Jewish Kingdom was divided into two unequal parts: the Kingdom of Judah consisted only of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with its capital at Jerusalem, while the Kingdom of Israel consisted of the other ten tribes, with its capital at Samaria. The former kingdom was ruled by the descendants of Solomon, and the latter by the descendants of Jeroboam, a servant of Solomon's. The prophet Elijah came into the greatest conflict with the Israelite king, Ahab, and his evil wife Jezebel, for they worshipped idols and turned the people from the service of the one, living God. On top of this, Jezebel, being a Syrian, persuaded her husband to build a temple to the Syrian god, Baal, and appointed many priests to the service of this false god. Elijah performed many miracles by the power of God: he closed the heavens, that no rain should fall for three years and six months; called down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice to his God, while the priests of Baal were unable to do this; brought rain from the heavens at his prayers; miraculously multiplied corn and oil in the widow's house at Zarephath, and restored her dead son to life; prophesied to Ahab that the dogs would lick up his blood, and to Jezebel that the dogs would devour her—which came to pass; and performed many other miracles and foretold many events. He talked with God on Horeb, and heard His voice in the calm after the great wind. At the time of his death, he took Elisha and appointed him his heir as a prophet; he parted the Jordan with his mantle and was finally borne to heaven in a fiery chariot drawn by fiery horses. He appeared, together with Moses, to our Lord Jesus Christ on Tabor. At the end of the world, Elijah will appear again, to break the power of antichrist (Rev. 11).

St. Alexis Medvedkov, archpriest of Ugine (1934), Elias Fondaminskii (1942), Priest Demetrius Klepinine (1944), George Skobtsov (1944), and Nun Maria (Skobtsova) (1945), of Paris - Mother Maria was born in Latvia in 1891. Like many of the pre-Revolutionary Russian intelligenstia, she was an atheist and a political radical in her youth, but gradually came to accept the truths of the Faith. After the Revolution, she became part of the large Russian emigre population of Paris. There she was tonsured as a nun by Metropolitan Evlogy, and devoted herself to a life of service to the poor. With a small community of fellow-believers, she established 'houses of hospitality' for the poor, the homeless, the alcoholic, and visited Russian emigres in mental hospitals. In 1939 Metropolitan Evlogy sent the young priest Fr Dimitry to serve Mother Maria's community; he proved to be a partner, committed even unto death, in the community's work among the poor. When the Nazis took Paris in 1940, Mother Maria, Fr Dimitry, and others of the community chose to remain in the city to care for those who had come to count on them. As Nazi persecution of Jews in France increased, the Orthodox community's work naturally expanded to include protection and care of these most helpless ones. Father Dimitri was asked to provide forged certificates of baptism to preserve the lives of Jews, and always complied. Eventually, this work led to the arrest of Mother Maria, Fr Dimitri, and their associates. A fragment survives of the Gestapo's interrogation of Fr Dimitri:

Hoffman: If we release you, will you give your word never again to aid Jews?
Klepinin: I can say no such thing. I am a Christian and must act as I must. (Hoffman struck Klepinin across the face.)
Hoffman: Jew lover! How dare you talk of helping those swine as being a Christian duty! (Klepinin, recovering his balance, held up the cross from his cassock.)
Klepinin: Do you know this Jew? (For this, Father Dimitri was knocked to the floor.)
"Your priest did himself in," Hoffman said afterward to Sophia Pilenko. "He insists that if he were to be freed, he would act exactly as before."

Mother Maria, Fr Dimitri, and several of their colleages, were sent to the Nazi concentration camps (Mother Maria to Ravensbruck, Fr Dimitri to Buchenwald) where, after great sufferings, they perished. It is believed that Mother Maria's last act was to take the place of a Jew being sent to death, voluntarily dying in his place.

Also commemorated on this day: Righteous Aaron the First Priest (16th C. BC); St. Timothy, patriarch of Alexandria (†385); St. Flavian, patriarch of Antioch (†512); St. Elias, patriarch of Jerusalem (†518); Martyr Salome

the Georgian (13th C); Venerable Abramius of Galich (†1375); Venerable Sabbas of Stromyn (†1392); Finding of the Relics of Venerable Athanasius, abbot of Brest (1649); Righteous Elias Chavchavadze (†1907); New Hieromartyr Constantine Slovtsov, priests (†1918); New Hieromartyr Juvenal Ushakov, deacon (†1919); New Martyrs Lydia and soldiers Alexei and Cyril, near Ufa (†1928); New Hieromartyrs Alexander Archangelsky, George Nikitin, John Steblin-Kamensky, Sergius Gortinsky, and Theodore Yakovlev, priests, Monk-martyrs Tikhon (Krechkov), George (Pozharov) and Cosmas (Vyaznikov), and Martyrs Euthymius Grebenshchikov and Peter Vyaznikov (†1930); 'Abalatsk,' 'Chukhloma,' and 'Orshansk,' Icons of the Mother of God.

21 July / 3 August - Our Holy Fathers Simeon and John - these two young men left their homes and kinsfolk: Simeon his old mother and John his wife, and were made monks in the community of St Gerasim, at the hands of Abbot Nikon. They went off into the desert, where they spent many years in the strictest asceticism. They mortified their bodies with this ascesis until they were like two pieces of dry wood. One day, Simeon said to John that, at God's command, he must leave the desert and return to the company of men, there to serve God. John gave him this advice: 'Keep your heart from all that you see in the world. Whatever there may be that touches your hand, let it not take hold of your heart. When food passes your lips, let not your heart be sweetened by it. If your feet have to move, let there be peace within you. Whatever you do outwardly, let your mind remain tranquil. Pray for me, that God may not part us from each other in the world to come.' Holy Simeon accepted his friend's advice, embraced him and then left the desert and went among men, to teach them through folly and turn them to the Christian faith. He made himself appear mad to men, but his heart was a temple of the Holy Spirit, a temple of unceasing prayer. He had abundant gifts from God, having discernment into all men's secrets, both close at hand and afar off, and healed men of evil spirits and other infirmities. Dancing through the streets like a mad- man, he drew near to people and whispered their sins in their ears, calling them to repentance. He appeared to sinners in dreams, reprimanding them for their sins and calling them also to repentance. Thus St Simeon appeared in a dream to a pagan actor, Bali, who publicly mocked the holy things of the Christians. He rebuked him and threatened him, and Bali repented and became a good Christian. A dissolute youth went out of his mind with lust. Seeing him, St Simeon, feigning madness, struck him a blow on the face, and said: 'Do not commit adultery!' At that moment, the unclean spirit left the young man and he was healed;

The Holy Prophet Ezekiel - the son of a priest from the city of Sarir, he was taken into captivity in Babylon with King Jehoiachin and many other Israelites. Living in captivity, Ezekiel prophesied for twenty-seven years. He was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah. As Jeremiah taught and prophesied in Jerusalem, so Ezekiel taught and prophesied in Babylon. Jeremiah's prophecies were known in Babylon, as were Ezekiel's in Jerusalem. Both these holy men were in agreement in their prophecy, and they were both ill-treated and tormented by the faithless Jewish people. Ezekiel had vivid and indescribable visions. By the river Chebar, he saw the heavens open, and a cloud like fire and lightning, and four living creatures like molten copper. One of the living creatures had the face of a man, the second that of a lion, the third that of a calf and the fourth that of an eagle. The human face signified God incarnate as man, the lion's face His divinity, the calf's His sacrifice and the eagle's His Resurrection and Ascension. In another image, he was shown the resurrection of the dead. The prophet saw a valley filled with the dry bones of the dead, and when the Spirit of God came upon them, they came to life and stood on their feet. He also saw the terrible destruction of Jerusalem, when the wrath of God cut down all except those who had earlier been marked with the mark, that of the Greek Tav, our letter 'T', which is also the sign of the Cross. The malice of the Jews did not spare this holy man. Embittered against him for having denounced them, the Jews bound him to the tails of horses and he was torn asunder. He was buried in the self-same place in which Shem, the son of Noah, was buried.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyr Zoticus, bishop of Comana (†204); Martyr Victor of Marseilles (3rd C); Venerable Onuphrius the Silent and Onesimus the Recluse of the Kiev Caves (12th C); Finding of the relics of Venerable Anna of Kashin (1649); New Hieromartyr Peter Golubev, priest (†1938); New Hieromartyrs Simo Mirko of Glamoc (†1941); Finding of the relics of Righteous Roman Medved, confessor, priest (1999).

22 July / 4 August - St Mary Magdalene - one of the myrrh-bearing women, and equal to the apostles, she was born in Magdala by the Lake of Gennesaret, of the tribe of Issachar. She was tormented by seven evil spirits, of which she was freed and healed by the Lord Jesus. She was a faithful follower and servant of the Lord during His earthly life, and also stood beneath the Cross on Golgotha and lamented bitterly with the most holy Mother of God. After the Lord's death, she visited His tomb three times; and when He rose again, she saw Him twice, once alone and the other time with the other myrrh-bearing women. She travelled to Rome, went before Tiberias

Caesar and presented him with a red egg, greeting him with the words: 'Christ is risen ! ' At the same time, she denounced Pilate to Caesar for his unjust condemnation of the Lord Jesus. Caesar listened to her, and moved Pilate from Jerusalem to Gaul, where this unjust judge died under imperial displeasure after a terrible illness. After that, she returned from Rome to Ephesus, to St John the Theologian, whom she helped in his task of preaching the Gospel. With great love for the risen Lord and with great zeal, she proclaimed the holy Gospel as a true apostle of Christ. She died peacefully in Ephesus and was buried, according to tradition, in the same cave in which the seven young men (see August 4th) had been in a charmed sleep for a hundred years. They came to life, and then died. St Magdalene's relics were then taken to Constantinople. Near the Garden of Gethsemane, there is a beautiful Russian church dedicated to St Mary Magdalene.

Hieromartyr Phocas - On this day we commemorate the translation of the relics of St. Phocas from Pontus to Constantinople about the year 404 A.D. The primary feast of this saint is celebrated on September 22 and on that day a brief hagiography of his life and his sufferings is recorded. Today, one miracle of this saint is commemorated. The Arabs captured a man named Pontinus. The Arabs shackled him, bound his hands to his back and left him to die. Lying on his stomach on the ground, and not being able to move, Pontinus cried out: "O Holy Martyr Phocas have mercy on me and save me!" Saying this he fell asleep and, in a dream, saw Saint Phocas approaching him, touched him by the hand and said:

"The Lord Jesus Christ forgives you!" When the man awoke, he found himself loosed from all bonds and free. He arose and departed for his home and took St. Phocas as the patron saint of his household.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Cyril I, patriarch of Antioch (†298); Nun-martyr Marcella of Chios (3rd C); Blessed Cyprian of Suzdal, fool-for-Christ (†1622); Venerable Cornelius of Pereyaslavl (†1693); New Hieromartyr Michael Nakaryakov, priest (†1918); New Hieromartyr Alexis Ilinsky, priest (†1931).

23 July / 5 August - The Holy Martyrs Trophimus and Theophilus and thirteen others with them - they suffered in Lycia, in the time of the Emperor Diocletian. Because they would in no way deny Christ nor offer sacrifice to idols, they were put to manifold tortures: they were stoned, flayed with iron flails, their knees were broken and, thus tortured and more dead than alive, they were thrown into the flames, in which the power of God kept them unharmed. They were then taken from the fire and beheaded. The Lord glorified them both on earth and in His heavenly Kingdom. They suffered with honour in Lycia at the beginning of the fourth century; The Hieromartyr Apollinarius - he was a disciple of the Apostle Peter and was born in the city of Antioch. St Peter took him with him from Antioch to Rome, and, in Rome, consecrated him Bishop of Ravenna. Arriving in Ravenna, Apollinarius went into the house of a soldier, Irenaeus, whose blind son he healed and by this brought the whole family to the Christian faith. He also healed the wife of the military governor of Ravenna of a grave infirmity, and baptised his whole household. At the governor's request, Apollinarius remained in his house as his guest. Here he formed a house-church, and lived in that house for twelve years, preaching the Gospel and baptising unbelievers. He was grievously tormented in various ways by the pagan elders, but the strong right hand of God upheld him and preserved him. He was finally condemned to exile in Illyria in the Balkans. But the boat in which he was sailing capsized in a storm and, from among all the travellers, only St Apollinarius, together with two soldiers and three of his priests, was saved. Saved so miraculously, the soldiers came to believe in the power of Apollinarius' God and were baptised. Then Apollinarius began preaching the Gospel throughout the Balkans, travelling as far as the Danube. He then went to Thrace, where he spread the Gospel against great opposition. After three years of working in the Balkans, he was driven back to Italy. He went to Ravenna, where the faithful welcomed him with great joy. Hearing of this, the pagan elders wrote to Emperor Vespasian about Apollinarius, calling him a magician and asking if he should be put to death as an opponent of their gods. The Emperor replied that it was not necessary to kill him, but that he should be made to sacrifice to idols or driven from the city, for, he said: 'It is not seemly to take revenge on someone on behalf of the gods, for they can themselves be revenged on their enemies if they are angered.' But, in spite of this imperial decree, the pagans assaulted Apollinarius and stabbed him with daggers. This servant of God died of his wounds and went to the Kingdom of God. His relics are preserved in Ravenna, in the church dedicated to him.

"Joy of All Who Sorrow" (with coins), which was at the glass factory in Petersburg - This image was glorified in 1888 in Petersburg, when lightning hit a chapel during a terrible thunderstorm, but the holy icon of the Queen of Heaven located therein remained unharmed; only small brass coins (groshiki [half-kopecks]), that were lying in front of the icon, stuck to it. On the site of the chapel, a church was built in 1898. The Theotokos is depicted in

a specific manner, standing beneath her Son, who is in Heaven as a king, and surrounded by people and angels. In addition, specific hymns are dedicated to celebrating her role of bringing hope and salvation into the world, thus becoming joy for all who sorrow "To Thee, the champion leader, do we Thy servants dedicate a hymn of victory and thanksgiving, as ones who have been delivered from eternal death by the Grace of Christ our God Who was born of Thee and by Thy maternal mediation before Him. As Thou dost have invincible might, free us from all misfortunes and sorrowful circumstances who cry aloud: Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of Grace, Joy of all who sorrow!" Many Orthodox parishes are named "Joy of all who Sorrow"

The Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God - The Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God is among the most venerable sacred items of the Russian Church. It is reknown throughout all the Slavic world: they venerate it in Russia, in Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria and other places. Christians also of other confessions come for veneration of the wonderworking image of the Most Holy Mother of God, alongside the Orthodox. At the Pochaev Lavra, an ancient rampart of Orthodoxy, the wonderworking icon has resided about 400 years. (The account about the transfer of the icon to the Pochaev monastery is located under 8 September). The miracles, which issued forth from the holy icon, are numerous and are testified to in the monastery books with the inscriptions of the faithful, who with prayer have met with deliverance from unclean spirits, liberation from captivity, and sinners brought to their senses.

The celebration in honour of the Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God on 23 July was established in memory of the deliverance Uspenie-Dormition Lavra monastery from a Turkish siege on 20-23 July 1675.

In the Summer of 1675 during the time of the Zbarazhsk War with the Turks, during the reign of the Polish king Jan Sobesski (1674-1696), regiments composed of Tatars under the command of khan Nurredin via Vishnevets fell upon the Pochaev monastery, surrounding it on three sides. The weak monastery walls, just like some of the stone buildings of the monastery, did not offer much defense against a siege. The hegumen Iosif Dobromirsky urged the brethren and laypeople to turn themselves to Heavenly intercessors: to the Most Holy Mother of God and the Monk Job of Pochaev (Comm. 28 October). The monks and the laypeople prayed fervently, prostrating themselves before the wonderworking image of the Mother of God and the reliquary with the relics of the Monk Job. On the morning of 23 July with the rising of the sun, as the Tatars were holding a final meeting about an assault on the monastery, the hegumen ordered the singing of an akathist to the Mother of God. With the first words, "O Queen of the Heavenly Hosts", suddenly there appeared over the church the Most Holy Mother of God Herself, in "an unfurled gleaming-white omophor", with heavenly angels holding unsheathed swords. The Monk Job was beside the Mother of God, bowing to Her and beseeching the defense of the monastery. The Tatars took the heavenly army for an apparition, and in confusion they began to shoot arrows at the Most Holy Mother of God and the Monk Job, but the arrows fell backwards and wounded those who shot them. Terror seized the enemy. In a flight of panic and without looking, they trampled upon and killed each other. The defenders of the monastery attempted pursuit and took many prisoner. Some of the prisoners afterwards accepted the Christian faith and remained at the monastery thereafter.

In the year 1721 Pochaev was occupied by Uniates. But even in this difficult time for the Lavra, the monastery chronicle notes 539 miracles from the glorified Orthodox sacred image. During the time of the Uniate rule in the 2nd half of the XVIII Century, for example, the Uniate nobleman count Nicholas Pototski became a benefactor of the Pochaev Lavra through the following miraculous circumstance. Having accused his coachman for overturning the carriage with frenzied horses, the count took out a pistol to shoot him. The coachman, turning towards Pochaev Hill, reached his hands upwards and cried out: "Mother of God, manifest in the Pochaev Icon, save me!" Pototski several times tried to shoot the pistol, which had never let him down, but the weapon misfired. The coachman remained alive. Pototski then immediately set off to the wonderworking icon and decided to devote himself and all his property to the building-up of the monastery. From his wealth was built the Uspenie-Dormition cathedral and buildings for the brethren.

The return of Pochaev into the bosom of Orthodoxy in 1832 was marked by the miraculous healing of the blind maiden Anna Akimchukova, who had come on pilgrimage to the holy things together with her 70 year old grandmother, from Kremenets-Podol'sk 200 versts away. In memory of this event, the Volynia archbishop and Lavra archimandrite Innokentii (1832-1840) established weekly on Saturdays the reading of the cathedral akathist before the wonderworking icon. During the time of the rule of the Lavra by archimandrite Agathangel,

archbishop of Volynia (1866-1876), there was constructed a separate chapel in the galleries of the Holy Trinity church in memory of the victory over the Tatars, which was dedicated on 23 July 1875.

Also commemorated on this day: Hieromartyr Apollinarius, bishop of Ravenna (†c.75); Venerable Anna of Leucadia (†919); New Hieromartyr Michael Troitsky, priest, and Martyr Andrew Argunov (†1938); Venerable John the New Chozebite (†1960); Glorification of the righteous Soldier Theodore Ushakov (2001)

24 July / 6 August - The Holy Martyr Christina - Born in the city of Tyre, she was the daughter of the imperial governor, Urban, an idolater. It is not known why her parents gave her the name Christina, but it carried within itself the mystery of her future following of Christ. She knew nothing of Him until the age of eleven, but, when she reached that age, her father (wanting, because of her beauty, to hide her from the world until she was fully grown) made her live on the top floor of a high tower. He gave her every comfort — slaves and gold and silver idols to which to offer daily sacrifice. But the soul of the young Christina was weighed down and suffocated in this idolatrous atmosphere. Looking out of the window by day at the sun, and by night at the wonderful constellations of shining stars, she came, through her natural understanding, to a firm belief in the one, living God. God, in His great mercy, seeing her yearning for the truth, sent His angel to her, who signed her with the sign of the Cross, named her the bride of Christ and instructed her fully in the things of God. Then Christina smashed all the idols in her rooms, incurring her father's terrible wrath. He brought her to trial and had her tortured and thrown into prison, intending that she be beheaded on the following day. But that night, Urban, in full health, gave up the ghost and went to the grave before his daughter. After that, two of the governors, Dion and Julian, continued the interrogation of this holy maiden. Christina's courage in suffering and the marvels which were performed by the power of God brought many of the pagan inhabitants of Tyre to Christianity. During Christina's torture, Dion suddenly fell dead among the people. His successor, Julian, cut off Christina's breasts and cut out her tongue. The martyr took her tongue in her hand and threw it into Julian's face, and he was instantly blinded. Finally, her sufferings for Christ were ended under a sharp sword, but her life went on in the immortal kingdom of the angels. St Christina suffered with honour in the third century.

St. Declan, bishop of Ardmore, Ireland (5th c.) -Born at Desi (Decies), Waterford, Ireland, 5th century. Declan, an Irish monk, was baptised by and a disciple of Saint Colman. He appears to have been an Irish evangelist before the arrival of Saint Patrick. He may have made two pilgrimages to Rome and later became the first bishop of Ardmore, a see confirmed by Patrick during the synod of Cashel in 448. Many miracles are attributed to Declan. Five miles or less to the east of Youghal Harbour, on the southern Irish coast, a short, rocky and rather elevated promontory juts, with a south-easterly trend, into the ocean [± 51° 57' N / 7° 43' W]. Maps and admiralty charts call it Ram Head, but the real name is Ceann-a-Rama and popularly it is often styled Ardmore Head. The material of this inhospitable coast is a hard metamorphic schist which bids defiance to time and weather. Landwards the shore curves in clay cliffs to the north-east, leaving, between it and the iron headland beyond, a shallow exposed bay wherein many a proud ship has met her doom. Nestling at the north side of the headland and sheltered by the latter from Atlantic storms stands one of the most remarkable groups of ancient ecclesiastical remains in Ireland—all that has survived of St. Declan's holy city of Ardmore. This embraces a beautiful and perfect round tower, a singularly interesting ruined church commonly called the cathedral, the ruins of a second church beside a holy well, a primitive oratory, a couple of ogham inscribed pillar stones, &c..

Holy martyrs and passion-bearers Boris & Gleb - Pious sons of Prince Vladimir, enlightener of Russia, they were named Romanus and David in Baptism. When Prince Vladimir died, his kingdom was divided among his sons (prior to baptism, he had children by several wives). But Prince Svyatopolk, not content with his share, resolved to have his brothers murdered in order to take their territories. Both brothers knew of the plan, but resolved not to take up arms against their brother, to avoid civil war and to fulfil the commandment "Resist not evil." Their bodies remained incorrupt and fragrant in death. They are buried in Vyshgorod. Note: Since every Orthodox Christian should be baptized with the name of a known Orthodox Saint, how do we get new Saints' names over the years? We see the process at work with St Vladimir and his sons Boris and Gleb. At baptism they received new Christian names, but when they were glorified, their (originally) pagan names were sanctified. Since then, countless Russians and others have been named Vladimir, Boris or Gleb at baptism.

Also commemorated on this day: Righteous Athenagoras of Athens, apologist (†c.190); Venerable Hilarion of Tvali, Georgia (†1041); Venerable Polycarp, archimandrite of the Kiev Caves (†1182); Venerable Pachomius of

Kamenny (15th C); Martyr Theophilus of Zakynthos (†1635); Righteous Bogolep of Chernoyarsk (†1654); New Martyr Athanasius of Chios (†1670); New Hieromartyr Alpheus Korbansky, deacon (†1937); New Martyrs of Prebilovci, Serbia (†1941); Righteous Nicholas Pongelsky (†1942), and John Kalinin (†1951), priests and confessors; Finding of the relics of Venerable Dalmatus Isetsky (1994).

25 July / 7 August - The Dormition of the Righteous Anna, the Mother of the Most Holy Mother of God - Today is the commemoration of the falling asleep of St. Anna but her principal feast is celebrated on September 9, on which date is written her service and her hagiography. Anna was from the tribe of Levi and the daughter of Matthan, the priest. After a long and God-pleasing life she died in extreme old age.

St Olympias the Deaconess - Olympias was born in Constantinople of very distinguished parents. Her father, Anysius Secundus, was a senator and her mother was the daughter of the famous nobleman Eulavius who is mentioned in the hagiography of St. Nicholas the Wonder-worker. When Olympias reached maturity, she was betrothed to a nobleman who died before the marriage took place. The emperor and the other relatives pressured Olympias to marry another, but in vain. However, she refused them this and devoted herself to a god-pleasing life, giving from her inherited estate great offerings to the churches and alms to the needy. She served as a deaconess in the Church, at first during the time of Patriarch Nectarius and, after his death, during the time of St. John Chrysostom. When Chrysostom was exiled, he counselled Olympias to remain in the church and to serve as before regardless who the patriarch after him would be. Immediately after the banishment of this great saint, someone started a fire in the Great Church [The Church of the Divine Wisdom Hagia Sophia] and the fire consumed many prominent buildings in the capital. The enemies of Chrysostom accused this holy woman of initiating this malicious fire. Olympias was banished from Constantinople to Nicomedia where she died in the year 410 A.D., requesting in her testament that her body be placed in a box and cast into the sea and wherever the water tosses it up, there she is to be buried. The coffin was cast ashore in the city of Vrochthoi, where there existed a church dedicated to the Apostle Thomas. From her relics, great healing miracles appeared throughout the centuries. The exiled Chrysostom wrote beautiful letters to the exiled Olympias which, even today, serve as a great comfort to all those who suffer for the sake of God's justice. Among other things, Chrysostom writes to Olympias: "Now I am very elated not only because you were relieved from infirmity, but more so, that you are nobly enduring all difficulties referring to them as trivialities which is characteristic of a soul full of power and abounding in the rich fruits of courage. For you not only courageously are enduring misfortune rather you do not even notice it when it comes and without exertion, without labour and disturbance not even talking about it to others but rejoicing and triumphing over it. That serves as the greatest wisdom" (Letter VI). ;

Our Holy Mother Eupraxia the Virgin - Eupraxia was the daughter of Antigonus, a nobleman of Constantinople and a relative of Emperor Theodosius the Great. Her mother, a young widow, with Eupraxia settled in Egypt and visited the monasteries there distributing alms and praying to God. By her fervent desire, the seven-year-old Eupraxia was tonsured a nun. The older she got the more she imposed upon herself the heavy burden of mortification. At one time, she fasted for forty days. She reposed in 413 A.D, in her thirtieth year. She possessed the great grace of God and healed the most difficult illnesses.

Commemoration of the Fifth Ecumenical Council - This Council was convened in Constantinople during the reign of Emperor Justinian the Great in the year 553 A.D. All the heresies of the Monophysites were condemned at this Council as well as the heretical writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Origen (his teaching against the resurrection of the dead).

Also commemorated on this day: Martyrs of Lyons: Sanctus the Deacon, Maturus, Attalus, Blandina, Biblis, Vettius, Epagathus, Ponticus, Alexander, and those with them (†c.177); Martyr Cucuphas of Barcelona (†304); Venerable Macarius of Zheltovod (†1444); Venerable Christopher of Solvychegodsk (†c.1572); New Hieromartyr Nicholas Udintsev, priest (†1918); New Hieromartyr Alexander Sakharov, priest (†1927); New Hieromartyrs Rodoljub Samardzic and Vukosav Milanovic, priests, of Kulen-Vakuf, Serbia (†1941); Righteous Iraida Tikhova, confessor (†1967).

26 July / 8 August - The Hieromartyr Hermolaus - he was a priest in Nicomedia in the time of the Emperor Maximian, and was with the twenty thousand martyrs condemned by the Emperor to be burned in their church (see December 28th). Hermolaus somehow escaped death on that occasion, together with two other priests, Hermippus and Hermocrates. Hermolaus baptised St Panteleimon, with whom he was brought to trial, tortured

and finally beheaded. Hermippus and Hermocrates suffered with them, and they were all crowned with wreaths of victory and glory in the Kingdom of Christ. They suffered with honour in about 304; Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Paraskeva - Paraskeva was born in Rome of Christian parents and from her youth was instructed in the Faith of Christ. With great fervence, St. Paraskeva endeavoured to fulfill all the commandments of God in her life. Believing strongly and living according to her faith, Paraskeva directed others on the path [of salvation] with the help of the True Faith and pious living. When her parents died Paraskeva distributed all of her property to the poor and was tonsured a nun. As a nun she preached the Faith of Christ with an even greater zeal, not hiding from anyone, even though at that time the Roman authorities bloodily persecuted the Faith of Christ. First the pernicious Jews accused St. Paraskeva of preaching the prohibited Faith. She was brought to trial before Emperor Antoninus. All the flatteries of the emperor did not help in the least to cause her to waver in the Faith. They then subjected her to fiery torments and placed a red-hot helmet on her head. The Lord miraculously saved her and Paraskeva was delivered and left Rome. She again traveled from city to city to convert the pagan people there to the True Faith. In two more cities she was brought before princes and judges and was tortured for her Lord, at the same time working great miracles and by the power of God quickly recuperated from her pains and wounds. The pagans, as always, ascribed her miracles to magic and her power of recovery to the mercy of their gods. St. Paraskeva once said to the prince who tortured her: "It is not your gods, O prince, who healed me but my Christ the True God." Finally Prince Tarasius beheaded her. Thus this saint gloriously ended her fruitful life. Her relics were later translated to Constantinople. She suffered honourably for Christ in the second century;

Our Holy Father Moses the Hungarian - He was at the court of the young Russian Prince Boris. When the godless Svyatopolk murdered Boris, Moses escaped and fled to Kiev. A little later he was taken to Poland as a slave by the Polish King Boleslav and there was sold for a thousand gold coins to a young and depraved widow, the wife of one of Boleslav's commanders who was slain. This wicked woman tempted Moses to commit adultery but Moses would not be tempted for he vowed to live chastely before the Lord. She then suggested marriage to him but he rejected that also. Moses secretly received the monastic tonsure from an Athonite monk and he appeared before the lady in the monastic habit. She bound him, ordered that he be flogged and to have his private organ severed. This unsuccessful seduction by this shameful woman lasted for five years - five years of pain and torture! However, King Boleslav was slain unexpectedly in an uprising during which this woman was also killed. Then Moses was free to go to Kiev where, at the monastery of St. Anthony, he devoted his life to prayer and silence. Completely conquering the shameful vice in himself, Moses assisted many to also be saved from it. His holy relics helped many (St. John, the much suffering July 8). After ten years of silence in the Monastery of the Caves, St. Moses found rest on July 26, 1043 A.D. and took up habitation in the eternal virginal Kingdom of Christ.

The Monastic Martyress Paraskeva – She was the only daughter of Christian parents and from the time of her early years she dedicated herself to God. Living in her parental home, she spent much of her time at prayer and the study of the Holy Scriptures. After the death of her parents Saint Paraskeva distributed all of her inheritance to the poor, took on monasticism, and emulating the holy Apostles she began to preach to the pagans about Christ, converting many to Christianity.

A denunciation about her activity was made to the emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161), and Saint Paraskeva was brought to trial. She fearlessly confessed herself a Christian. Neither enticements of honours and material blessings, nor threats of torture and death shook the firmness of the saint nor turned her from Christ. She was given over to beastly tortures. On her head they put a red-hot helmet and threw her in a cauldron with boiling tar. But by the power of God the holy martyress remained unharmed. When the emperor peered into the cauldron, Saint Paraskeva threw him in the face a droplet of the red-hot tar, and he was burned. The emperor began to ask her for healing, and the holy martyress healed him. After this the emperor sent Saint Paraskeva free.

Travelling from one place to another preaching the Gospel, Saint Paraskeva arrived in a city, where the governor was named Asclepius. Here again they tried the saint and sentenced her to death. They took her to an immense serpent living in a cave, so that it would devour her. But Saint Paraskeva made the sign of the Cross over the snake and it died. Asclepius and the citizens in seeing this miracle and believed in Christ and set free the saint. She continued her preaching. In a city, where the governor was a certain Tarasius, Saint Paraskeva received a martyr's death. After fierce tortures they beheaded her.

Also commemorated this day: Martyr Oriozela of Byzantium (†c.250); Venerable Gerontius of Mt. Athos (13th C); St. Sava III, archbishop of Serbia (†1360); Righteous Iakov Netsvetov, missionary priest to the Yup'ik (†1864); New Hieromartyr Sergius Strelnikov, priest (†1937); Venerable Theodosius of the Caucasus (†1948).

† Daily Scripture Readings †

Monday – Epistle: I Cor. 15:12-19 (§159); Gospel: Matt. 21:18-22 (§84)

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

Wednesday –Epistle: for Wednesday: I Cor. 16:4-12 (§165); for Thursday: II Cor. 1:1-7 (§167)
Gospel: for Wednesday: Matt. 21:28-32 (§86); for Thursday: Matt. 21:43-46 (§88)

Thursday – Vespers: Isa. 43:9-14; Wisd. 3:1-9; Wisd. 4:7-15; Matins Gospel: Luke 21:12-19 (§106)
Epistle: Rom. 8:28-39 (§99); Gospel: John 15:17-16:2 (§52)

Friday - Epistle: II Cor. 1:12-20 (§169); Gospel: Matt. 22:23-33 (§91)

Saturday –Epistle: Rom. 15:30-33 (§119); Gospel: Matt. 17:24-18:4 (§73)

REFLECTION

Writing about the life of his sister St. Macrina, St. Gregory of Nyssa hesitates to enumerate her miracles, "that I not be," says he, "responsible for the sin of unbelief among helpless men." He calls helpless, those who do not believe. Truly, there is nothing more helpless than a man without faith. The man without faith believes in the power of dead things and dead elements of nature and does not believe in the power of God or in the strength of the men of God. That is spiritual dullness and that dullness is equated with spiritual death. Thus, the living souls believe and the dead souls do not believe. Living souls believe in the powerful miracles of the Prophet Elijah. These miracles give them courage and joy, for they know that they are a manifestation of the might of God. When God manifests His might through lifeless things and elements of nature, why then would He not manifest it through living and holy men? That which especially gives joy to the faithful is that the Prophet Elijah appeared alive on Mount Tabor at the time of the Transfiguration of the Lord. During his life on earth, this great prophet gave proof of the existence of the One and Living God and, after his death, and even after several hundred years, by his appearance on Mt. Tabor, he gave to mankind visible proof of life after death.