

11th Sunday After Pentecost

Holy Apostles Silas and Silvanus

and those with them

30 July / 12 August

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

Tropar tone 4: Let us praise the divine Apostles,/ Crescens, Silvan, Silas, Andronicus and Epenetus./ Like rational heavens they shone with the glory of Him/ Who humbled Himself for our sake./ They entreat Christ that all may be saved.

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

Kondak tone 4: You appeared as branches of the vine of Christ, bearing virtues as clusters of wisdom,/ pouring on us the wine of salvation./ Receiving it we are filled with joy/ and celebrate your venerable memory./ Pray that our sins may be forgiven, O Apostles of the Lord.



Matins Gospel XI

Epistle: Corinthians 9: 2-12

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

IF WE HAVE SOWN SPIRITUAL THINGS FOR YOU, IS IT A GREAT THING IF WE REAP YOUR MATERIAL THINGS?

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

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

Gospel Matthew 18: 23-35

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

FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS

In this gospel parable that we heard today, the theme of forgiveness is paramount. We see how one debtor, who had a huge debt was forgiven, but when he himself refused to forgive the debt of another, his old debt was restored. This is a lesson to us on the importance of forgiving our brethren. We owe God a great debt – all that we have and are comes from Him. When we sin by misusing the bounty that God has bestowed upon us, rather than demand that we return everything to Him, He forgives us and gives us the opportunity to repent of our sins. But if we do not imitate His mercy and forgive the relatively small offenses of our neighbor, then we will again fall under the great debt that we owe to God and this time, because we did not forgive our neighbor, no forgiveness will be granted to us.

There is, however, another theme underlying this parable – and that is the nature of true repentance. "When once a man has truly repented, he must think no more of the sins committed, lest he fall again into sin. St Anthony advises: 'Guard yourself, that your mind be not fouled with the memory of former sins, and that the memory of them be not renewed within you.' And in another place, he says, 'Don't establish the sins that you have formerly committed in your soul by pondering on them, lest they be renewed in you. Be assured that they are forgiven from the moment that you turn to God in repentance. Be in no doubt about this.' " (St Nicholai Velimirovic)

In the parable, the servant who was forgiven his debt is like the sinner who repents. The sins (that is the substance of the debt) are gone – they no longer have any impact on the repentant person. If at that point the forgiven servant had indeed forgotten about the debt that had oppressed him, he would not even have recognized the small debt of his brother, let alone prosecuted it. But the memory of his sins stayed with him and found a home again in his heart. Even though he no longer was weighed down with the debt of sin – he continued to dwell upon the memory of the sin and as a result when he was presented with the reality of the debt, he fell almost without resistance into the same trap that had held him previously. When we repent of our sins but continue to dwell upon the memory of them, then we place ourselves in a condition of vulnerability. By allowing the sin to remain in us by entertaining its memory, we leave the door open to its return. How does this actually work out? Consider the person who has sinned through drunkenness. If that person repents of his sin and is forgiven and by God's grace overcomes his weakness then it is not uncommon for that same person to judge others who remain under the influence of drunkenness. Maybe the former alcoholic simply condemns not only those who remain alcoholics, but also anyone who will take a drink. In this way they constantly dwell in the memory of their own weakness and keep it alive in them. It is repelled for the moment by the antagonism towards drink – but it also remains, waiting for the moment of weakness that is bound to arise. Or perhaps we get a different reaction and the former alcoholic, out of compassion for his weaker brethren, begins to embark upon a career of "helping" others (by counseling or support work or some other benevolent outreach.) Here again, although the enslavement to this sin is kept at bay by compassion towards others, still it remains, waiting again for a moment of weakness, to re-enslave its former victim.

In the parable, the passion behind the sin is possibly greed or possessiveness or perhaps simply anxiety about "having enough to get by". By continuing to entertain the memory of his sin, the forgiven servant allowed the passion to attach to a new object – this time hiding itself by pushing the servant to be the strong aggressor rather than the weak one who got himself into trouble through lack of self-control. In the blink of an eye as it were, the sin is back and stronger than ever.

It is not in vain that we pray daily to the Mother of God to "quench the flame of my passions and deliver me from my many cruel memories and deeds and free me from all their evil effects." In this prayer, we recognize not only the danger of the enflamed passions, but even of the effect of the memory of the deeds committed under their influence. When we repent of our sins, it is necessary to turn away not only from the sin, but from everything connected with it – including the memory of the sin. If we are watchful and vigilant in our spiritual lives then we will begin to see not only the temptation to sin and so flee that, but also the precursors to the temptation – the situations, conditions and events that will set the stage for us to be tempted. And it is those very precursors that we must also flee so that we are not even in a position to be tempted. Repentance is indeed a radical act and brings about a radical change in our lives.

The master, seeing that his servant was still under the influence of the debt, reinstated that debt – not to punish but to cure, for the presence of the debt acted to curtail the action of the passion that had again enslaved the servant. In the same way, there are times when God allows us to suffer again the effects of our sins as a reminder or as a preventative measure to keep us from falling any deeper into sin, and perhaps to give us the chance to be healed of our weaknesses. Should you find yourself in this situation, then do not despair, but renew your repentance – use the difficulty in which you find yourself as an opportunity to turn away not only from the sin, but from everything connected with the sin. Sometimes we are stopped in this radical repentance by our anxiety about how we will meet our needs – because sometimes those conditions which contribute to our sins are also tied to the activities of daily life: work, school, friendships, even sometimes family. But remember that your hope, your dependence is not on what the world provides, but rather it is on God Who gives every good thing to those who love Him. If you place God above all else and trust in His providence, then He will provide for you all that you need.

Repentance is a radical act – it means turning your back first on the sin for which you repent and then turning away from everything that is connected with that sin – the memory of the sin, the situations surrounding the sin, the thoughts and images that lead into sin. And remember always that you are not alone in your struggle. God has provided for us a community of likeminded believers and within that community we support one another, we help one another, we show love and compassion for one another. That community begins in the Orthodox home – first with a husband and wife supporting each other, then the support and love that exists between parents and children. Second, that community continues with the local parish – brothers and sisters in Christ working together to realize our salvation. But the community does not stop at the borders of the parish, it continues on to the diocese and beyond to the whole Church. Even the saints are part of this community, not only praying for us, but giving us such help as God provides. The angelic host too – especially your guardian angel – is standing with you as you struggle to work out your salvation. Finally God Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, pours out His help and grace upon us continually. You are not alone. Therefore, brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to engage in this radical act, this radical repentance. Remember that when you repent, God forgives and breaks the hold of sin on you. Have no doubt about this, but make a clean break, erasing even the memory of sin and setting your mind and heart firmly on the path of salvation, looking only to the Kingdom of God which is our only true home. Repent – really repent, radically repent – for the Kingdom of God is at hand!

Archpriest David Moser
<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/propoved/info>

Saints of the Week

July 30 / August 12 — The Holy Apostles Silas, Silvanus, Crescens, Epaphroditus and Andronicus - these are all among the Seventy. St Silas was sent from Jerusalem to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, to settle a quarrel among the faithful concerning circumcision: namely, whether or not it was necessary to circumcise pagans who had embraced Christianity (Acts 15:22). After that, Silas travelled with Paul around Asia and Macedonia, and was installed as Bishop of Corinth, where he died peacefully. Silvanus helped the two greatest apostles (I Pet. 5:12; II Cor. 1:19). As bishop in Salonica, he laboured much and suffered much, until he exchanged the earthly life for the heavenly. Crescens was a fellow-worker with the Apostle Paul (II Tim. 4:10), and then bishop in Galatia and a missionary in Gaul, where he died a martyr for Christ under Trajan. St Epaphroditus is mentioned by the Apostle Paul (Rom. 16:5), and became Bishop of Carthage. Andronicus (Rom. 16:7), Bishop of Pannonia, is also commemorated separately on May 17th; The Hieromartyr Valentine; The Hieromartyr Polychronius, Bishop of Babylon; St John the Soldier; Our Holy Mother Angelina; Birthday of the New Martyr Crown Prince Alexis.

July 31 / August 13 — Forefeast of the Procession of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord — Righteous Eudocimus - born in Cappadocia of devout parents, Basil and Eudocia. In the time of the Emperor Theophilus (829-842), Eudocimus was a young army officer. Even as a soldier, he endeavoured with his whole heart to live according to the precepts of the Gospel. He kept his purity unstained and avoided converse with any woman except his mother. He was liberal to the poor, assiduous in the reading of holy books and yet more assiduous in prayer to God. He fled vain chatter and idle talk. 'Among all the chaos and vanity of the world, he was like a lily among thistles, and like gold in the furnace.' For his rare virtues, the Emperor made him military governor of Cappadocia. In this high state, Eudocimus strove to be righteous before God and man. By God's providence, he died early, at the age of thirty-three, and his relics were found to have healing power. An insane man touched his tomb and was healed, and a paralytic child stood upright and was made whole. After eighteen months, his mother opened his coffin, and found his body as though still alive, with no mark of corruption—and a wonderful fragrance arose from the saint's body. His relics were later translated to Constantinople and buried in the new church of the holy Mother of God, built by Eudocimus's parents.

Righteous Joseph of Arimathea - a rich man, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin and a secret follower of Christ (Matt. 27:57; Jn 19:38), took Christ's body down from the Cross together with Nicodemus, and laid it in his own new tomb. For this, he was fettered by the Jews and cast into prison. The risen Lord appeared to him and brought him to belief in His Resurrection. The Jews then released him from prison and drove him from his fatherland. He travelled around the world, preaching the Gospel of Christ, and took this Good News to England, where he entered into rest in the Lord. The Holy Martyr Julitta; St John the Exarch; St. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre (448).

St. Neot, hermit in Cornwall (c.877) - the son of King Ethelwulf of Kent and Wessex. Like Zaccheus, who had to climb up in a tree in order to see our Saviour, St Neot was very short. When he was old enough to become a soldier, he was not allowed to join the army because he was too short, so he decided to become a soldier for Christ instead, and he became a monk. At first, Saint Neot lived in the Glastonbury monastery. Here, he was made a presbyter, but because he was so short, he had to stand on a little stool when he served the Divine Liturgy. The saint was a great struggler, fasting, praying and reading the Scripture

all the time. Because of his great struggles and faith, God gave him many gifts of Grace. He healed people of both bodily and spiritual illnesses, and he had great wisdom. Soon, he became famous, and people from all over Britain came to see him. St Neot did not like for all these crowds of people to come to him. He no longer had time for his prayers, and besides, he was afraid that he might fall into pride. With the blessing of his elder, the saint took one other monk, Father Barrey, and went to a wild valley in the deep forests of Cornwall. Even here, however, the saint became famous, and people walked through the dense forests to see the saint, ask for his prayers and his help. Even the great King Alfred came to the saint and asked for a blessing. The saint did not bless the king, but began to chastise him for his proud harshness and sinful way of life. Then the saint prophesied that King Alfred would be beaten in war, "but if you repent of your sins and help the poor, God will help you and you will finally have victory over your enemies." This happened just as the saint foretold. King Alfred had to flee from his enemies, the Danes, but the saint (who had reposed the year before) appeared to him one night and comforted him. "Because you have wept for your sins, God will help you. You will be given victory on the Seventh Week after Pascha." Not only did King Alfred receive his victory, but his enemy, King Guthrum of Denmark was later baptised at Cirncester, as were many of his soldiers. The rest of King Alfred's reign passed in peace, justice and mercy. When the saint reposed in Christ, a wonderful fragrance came from his body.

August 1 / 14 — Procession of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord — (First of the three "Feasts of the Saviour" in August) Beginning of the Dormition Fast – Wine & Oil Allowed - Lesser Blessing of Water (Epistle: 1st Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 14: 6-19; Gospel: St. Matthew 20: 17-28) Prayer: O Lord our God, who art mighty in counsel, and wonderful in deeds, the Creator of all things, who keepest thy covenant and thy mercy unto those who love thee and keep thy commandments, and receivest the contrite tears of all who are in distress: (For this cause thou didst come in the similitude of a servant, scorning not our image, but giving true health to the body, and saying, thou art healed, sin no more; and with clay thou didst make the man's eyes whole, and having commanded him to wash, didst make him, by thy word, to rejoice in the light, putting to confusion the floods of passion of enemies, and drying up the bitter sea of the life of the same, and subduing the waves of sensual desires heavy to be endured): Do Thou, the same King who lovest mankind, who hast granted unto us to clothe ourselves in the garment of snowy whiteness, by water and the Spirit, send down upon us thy blessing, through partaking of this water, and through sprinkling therewith, washing away the defilement of passions. Yea, we beseech thee, visit thou our weakness, O Good One, and heal our infirmities, both spiritual and bodily; by thy mercy; Through the prayers ...

Holy Seven Maccabees, their Mother Solomonica and Eleazar the Priest - they all suffered for the purity of the Israelite faith under King Antiochus, called by some 'Epiphanes'—God manifest—and by others, 'Epimanes'—mad. For the great sins of Jerusalem, and especially for the wresting-away of the high-priestly power and the wickedness that ensued, the Lord let loose great calamity on the Holy City. Antiochus desired after that to bring the Jews to idolatry in place of their faith in the one, living God, and did all he could to this end. He was helped in his intention by several disaffected high priests and elders of Jerusalem. The king once came himself to Jerusalem and commanded that all Jews eat pork, which was against the Law of Moses and was therefore a recognisable sign of apostasy from the Jewish faith. The elder Eleazar, a priest and one of the seventy translators of the Old Testament into Greek, refused to eat pork. He was therefore tortured and burned. Returning to Antioch, the king took the seven young men, the Maccabees, and their mother Solomonica (II Macc. 6:18-7:41). The seven Maccabean brothers were called: Avim, Antonius, Eleazar, Gurius, Eusebon, Achim and Marcellus. Before their mother's eyes, the wicked king tortured her sons one after the other, flaying the skin from their faces and then throwing them into the flames. They all endured torture and death with courage, remaining steadfast in their faith. Finally their mother, when she saw her three-year-old son in the fire, threw herself into the flames and perished, giving her soul into God's hands. They all suffered with honour for their faith in the one, living God in about 167BC; The Nine Holy Martyrs: Leontius, Attus, Alexander, Cindeus, Mnesitheus, Cyriacus, Menaeus, Catunus and Euclous; St. Nicholas, enlightener of Japan;

St. Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester (984) - born there of good parentage in the early years of the tenth century; d. 1 Aug., 984. After a youth spent at the court of King Athelstan, Ethelwold placed himself under Elphege the Bald, Bishop of Winchester, who gave him the tonsure and ordained him priest along with Dunstan. At Glastonbury, where he was dean under Saint Dunstan, he was a mirror of perfection. In 955 he became Abbot of Abingdon; and 29 November, 963, was consecrated Bishop of Winchester by Dunstan, with whom and Oswald of Worcester he worked zealously in combating the general corruption occasioned by the Danish inroads. At Winchester, both in the old and in his new minster, he replaced the evil-living seculars with monks and refounded the ancient nunnery. His labours extended to Chertsey, Milton (Dorsetshire), Ely, Peterborough, and Thorney; expelling the unworthy, rebuilding and restoring; to the rebellious "terrible as a lion", to the meek "gentler than a dove". The epithets "father of monks" and "benevolent bishop" summarize Ethelwold's character as reformer and friend of Christ's poor. Though he suffered much from ill-health, his life as scholar, teacher, prelate, and royal counsellor was ever austere. He was buried in Winchester cathedral, his body being translated later by Elphege, his successor. Abingdon monastery in the twelfth century had relics of Ethelwold.

August 2 / 15 — Dormition Fast —The Finding and Translation of the Relics of St Stephen - when the wicked Jews stoned St Stephen to death, they left his body for the dogs to eat. But God's providence disposed otherwise. The martyr's body lay in an open place outside the town a night and two days, then, on the second night, Gamaliel, Paul's teacher and a secret follower of Christ, came and took his body to Caphargamala, and there buried it in a cave on his own land. Gamaliel buried his friend Nicodemus, who died lamenting over Stephen's grave, in the same cave. He also buried his godson Abibus there and, in accordance with his wishes, was buried there himself. Centuries passed, and no-one living knew the whereabouts of Stephen's grave. But in 415, in the time of Patriarch John of Jerusalem, Gamaliel appeared three times in a dream to a priest, Lucian, in Caphargamala, and told him in minute detail about the burial of all the above-mentioned, indicating precisely the forgotten place of their burial. Moved by this dream, Lucian informed the Patriarch and, with his blessing, went with a group of men and

dug up the four graves, Gamaliel having already told him in the dream which grave was which. A strong and fragrant odour from the relics of these saints filled the cave. St Stephen's relics were solemnly translated to Sion and there buried with ceremony, and the relics of the others were taken to a hill above the cave and laid to rest in a church there. Many healings of the sick were performed in those days over the relics of St Stephen. Later, they were taken to Constantinople. Thus the Lord crowned with great glory him who first shed his blood for His name; The Hieromartyr Stephen, Pope of Rome;

Blessed Basil the Fool for Christ of Moscow - Basil's father was named Jacob and his mother Anna. At age sixteen, he dedicated himself to a life of asceticism as a "Fool for Christ" and in this difficult mortification persevered for seventy-two years. Altogether, he lived to be eighty-eight years old. He traveled barefooted, bareheaded and in rags. He did not have any permanent dwelling place. He admonished sinners, reprimanded the noblemen, prophesied the truth and had visions of distant places. Having suffered greatly from hunger, frost and from the insults of men, Blessed Basil presented his holy soul to God. Tsar Ivan, with the Metropolitan, attended his funeral. He is buried in Moscow in the Church of the Most-holy Birth-giver of God, later named after him; Fr. Alexis (Medvedkov), priest of France, whose relics are incorrupt (1934).

August 3 / 16 — Dormition Fast — Holy Salome the Myrrh-Bearer - the mother of the holy Apostles James and John, the wife of Zebedee and daughter of Joseph, the betrothed of the most holy Mother of God, she served the Lord during His earthly life, and was made worthy to be among the first bearers of the tidings of His Resurrection; Our Holy Fathers Isaac, Dalmatus and Faustus - - Isaac is commemorated separately on May 30th. St Dalmatus was first an officer under the Emperor Theodosius the Great, who held him in great honour, but, when his spirit awakened within him, he scorned all that is of this world, abandoning his rank, and took his only son Faustus off to the outskirts of Constantinople, to St Isaac's community, where they were both tonsured as monks. Dalmatus consecrated himself utterly to please God in his life, which was a joy to the elder, Isaac. When Isaac came to the hour of death, he installed Dalmatus as abbot in his place, and the community later came to be called after Dalmatus. He sometimes fasted for forty days at a time, conquering by his fasting the invisible power of the demons. He took part in the Third Ecumenical Council in 431, and battled against the Nestorian heresy. Being pleasing to God, he entered peacefully into rest in the 5th century. His son Faustus supported his father in everything and, after a godly life, died peacefully in that community; Our Holy Father Cosmas the Eunuch; Our Holy Father Antony the Roman.

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

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

St. Oswald, king and martyr (642) - In the year 617 the king of Northumbria was killed by King Redwald of the East Angles. His three sons, including Oswald, fled to Scotland, and there they became Christians. They were baptised at Iona. Two brothers soon lost their faith, Oswald's persisted. And when his brothers were killed by the British King Cadwalla, Oswald gathered an army and marched against him. The day before the battle he made his soldiers construct a wooden cross. Oswald, himself knelt down, holding the cross in position until enough earth had been thrown in the hole to make it stand firm. Then he prayed, summoning his army to join him with the words, "Let us all kneel together and ask the true, living and almighty God in his mercy to protect us from the arrogant savagery of our enemies, for He knows that we fight in a just cause to save

our nation." Oswald defeated Cadwalla, recovered his father's throne, and asked the monks of Iona to send missionaries to his kingdom. St Aidan was sent, and King Oswald gave him the island of Lindisfarne as his episcopal see. "The king always listened humbly and readily to Aidan's advice," says venerable Bede, "And while the Bishop, who was not yet fluent in English, preached the Gospel, it was delightful to hear the King himself interpreting the word of God to his nobles and leaders." Oswald invited other Scots to missionise his kingdom. He gave money and lands to establish monasteries and churches. The pagan king of Mercia killed him at the battle of Maserfield, when he had reigned no more than seven years. His last prayer, as his enemies pressed around him, was "O God, be merciful to their souls." His head was placed in St. Cuthbert's coffin, and found there centuries later in 1827.

REFLECTION

One needs to distinguish a sinner from a penitent. If you have taken upon yourself the role to rebuke the sinner, guard yourself well, that you do not rebuke the penitent also. How dear the repentant sinner is to God, call to mind the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Therefore, let it be very dear for you, he who has become dear to God. At one time it happened that a monk succumbed to sin for which he was banished from the monastery. This monk went to St. Anthony, confessed his sin, repented and remained with Anthony for a period of time. Then Anthony sent him back again to the monastery but they did not receive him and, again, they banished him. Again, the penitent came to Anthony. Again, Anthony sent him back to the monastery with a message to the fathers of the monastery: "One boat experienced shipwreck and lost its cargo; with great difficulty did that boat arrive in the harbor and you wish to drown even that which was saved from drowning!" Hearing this wise message, the fathers received with joy the penitent brother into the monastery.

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the miraculous victory of Gideon over the Midianites (Judges 7): 1. How Gideon gathered thirty-two thousand soldiers and set out against the Midianites; 2. How God commanded him to reduce the number, so that the Israelites would not brag about themselves and say that they defeated [the Midianites] and not God; 3. How Gideon selected only three hundred soldiers and defeated the Midianites who were numerous "as grasshoppers" (Judges 7:12).

HOMILY

About the coming of the Dreadful Day of the Lord

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

Dreadful is the day of the Lord, O how inexpressibly dreadful! Dreadful because of its inexorable justice and also because of its unexpectancy. The Lord Himself commanded: "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour" (St. Matthew 25:13), and the apostle who, with his own ears, heard these words only repeats them. He who is afraid of thieves watches every night, so that the thief would not surprise him. He, who is afraid of the Day of the Lord, watches every day and every hour in order that that day and that hour would not unexpectedly catch him in sin. We are so accustomed to the correct rotation of the course of time, and on the correct passage of day and night, that we do not suspect the approaching noise of that day which will overshadow all days and hold back the wheel of time and smash its tiny spokes. So also will it be when the sun places its fiery face over millions of wax candles and blots out their glow and melts their wax. Dreadful, dreadful, dreadful is the Day of the Lord! When that day places its fiery face over the candles of today's day, these will be snuffed out and darkened, "the heavens shall pass away with great noise," the heavens, by which the present average days are counted, "and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" the material elements, the earth, water, air and fire will disintegrate. They will cease to be. Everything will be new. Our earthly homeland and all works on it will be burned up. They will cease to be. Everything will be new. All our works will burn up; when God does not have pity on His works, would He then pity our works? God will not seek works but workers. All workers will appear before Him for judgment and their works He will burn up. And all will be new. Who will be judged, will be judged; who will be rewarded, will be rewarded, for all eternity. Brethren, dreadful, truly dreadful is the Day of the Lord! Dreadful because of its unexpectancy and dreadful because of the inexorable justice of God.

O Just Lord, make us sober and vigilant! Command Your holy angels to keep us in sobriety and vigilance, so that sin does not inebriate us and cause us to sleep.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.