



11th Sunday After Pentecost

Martyr Dometius /

Afterfeast of the Transfiguration

7 / 20 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!

Troparion of the Feast tone 7: When Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God,/ Thou didst show Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it./ Let Thy everlasting light illumine also us sinners/ through the intercessions of the Mother of God./ Giver of Light, glory to Thee.

Troparion of St Dometius tone 4: After disciplining thyself with prayer and fasting on the mountain/ thou didst destroy the hosts of spiritual enemies with the weapon of the Cross./ Thou didst bravely arm thyself again for martyrdom/ and wast crowned both for thy life and for thy death,/ O blessed Hieromartyr Dometius.

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.

Kontakion of the Feast tone 7: Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God,/ and Thy disciples beheld Thy glory as far as they were capable,/ that when they should see Thee crucified,/ they might know that Thy suffering was voluntary/ and might proclaim to the world/ that Thou art indeed the reflection of the Father.

Kontakion of St Dometius tone 6: Thou didst rise above earthly things which drag down the mind,/ thou wast a great guide of monks, O Dometius./ Thou didst not fear the furious emperor/ who would not honour God./ Therefore O Hieromartyr thou didst die chanting the hymn:/ 'God is with me and no one is against me.'

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.

for the Martyr: Eph. 6:10-17

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 Nikolai 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>

for the Martyr: John 15:17-16:2

Saints of the Week

7 / 20 August – The Venerable Martyr Dometius - born in Persia as a pagan during the reign of Emperor Constantine. He became acquainted with the Faith of Christ as a young man, abandoned paganism and was baptized. So much did Dometius love the True Faith that he left everything worldly and was tonsured a monk in a monastery near the town of Nisibis. He lived for some time among the brethren and then withdrew to a life of silence to be with an a certain elder Archmandrite Urbel, about whom it is said that he did not eat anything cooked for sixty years. The elder Urbel ordained Dometius a deacon and when he wanted to compel him to receive the rank of a priest, Dometius withdrew to an isolated mountain and settled in a cave. He attained such a high degree of perfection through fasting, prayer, all night vigils and godly-thoughts that he cured the sick. When Julian the Apostate came to those regions, he heard of Dometius and sent men, who sealed him alive in the cave along with two of his disciples. Thus, this saint of God died and took up habitation in the Kingdom of God in the year 363 A.D.

The Venerable Or, Hermit of Thebaid - Or attained great perfection through the greatest mortification. When he firmly established himself and attained holiness in solitude, he then gradually established several monasteries and was a superb spiritual leader and teacher of many monks. Rufinus, who visited him describes Or in the following way: "In his dress [habit], he resembled an angel of God; a ninety-year old elder with a long beard, as white as snow; externally was very pleasant. His gaze shone with something super human." Often times, he saw the angels of God. He especially endeavoured never to speak an untruth. He had great temptations from the demons but overpowered them all soberly and courageously. He received Holy Communion daily. On one occasion, one of his disciples reminded him that the Feast of the Resurrection had come and that it should be celebrated. Hearing this, Or came out, raised his hands to heaven and spent three days in prayer without rest. He explained to his disciple: "For the monk, this is the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ: to elevate his mind and to unite it with God." He rested in deep old age about the year 390 A.D.

The Holy Martyrs Marinus and Asterius - Marinus was a soldier and Asterius was a Roman senator. At the time of Emperor Gallienus, St. Marinus served as a soldier in Caesarea in Palestine. Marinus was beheaded for the sake of the Faith of Christ. Asterius, the senator, also a Christian, was present at his martyrdom. He removed his dolman and, with it, wrapped the body of the martyr, placed it on his shoulders, took it and honourably buried it. Seeing this, the pagans beheaded him also. They both died honourably for Christ about the year 260 A.D.

8 / 21 August - Dormition Fast - SAINT EMILIAN THE CONFESSOR, BISHOP OF CYZICUS - Emilian served as bishop in Cyzicus during the reign of the nefarious Emperor Leo the Armenian, the iconoclast. Since he did not want to submit to the decrees of the emperor concerning the removal of icons from the churches, Emilian and other Orthodox bishops were banished into exile. He spent five years in exile, enduring much pain and humiliation for the sake of Christ. Emilian died in the year 820 A.D. and took up habitation among the citizens of heaven.

SAINT MYRON, MIRACLE-WORKER AND BISHOP OF CRETE - At first, Myron was married and engaged in farming. Myron, gladly and abundantly distributed the fruits of his land to needy people. At one time, he encountered unknown thieves stealing wheat from his threshing floor. Not telling them who he was, St. Myron helped the thieves fill the sacks, lift them on their backs and to escape. Because of his exceptional virtues, Myron was ordained a presbyter and after that consecrated a bishop.

He was a great miracle-worker and performed many good and mighty works in the name of the Lord Jesus. Myron died about the year 350 A.D. in the hundredth year of his life.

THE HOLY NEO-MARTYRS TRIANDAPHYLLUS AND SPASO - Triandaphyllus was born in Zagora and Spaso was born in Radoviste in the Diocese of Strumica. They were both Slavs. Both were young and simple men. But their love for Christ was more precious to them than this world or this life. They gave their lives and did not betray Christ. They suffered at the hands of the Turks for the Faith of Christ: Triandaphyllus in Constantinople in the year 1680 A.D. and Spaso in Thessalonica in the year 1794 A.D.

9 / 22 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast – Wine & Oil Allowed — The Holy Apostle Matthias -
Epistle: The Acts of St. Apostles 1:12-17 & The Gospel According to St. Luke 9:1-6

Tropar of St. Matthias, Tone 3: Thy divine Spirit choose thee to fill the twelve-numbered rank of the apostles, O glorious one. And with them thou didst proclaim the kenosis of the Word, and wast made wondrous, O Apostle Matthias. Therefore, intercede for them that honour thee, that they be granted forgiveness of sins and great mercy.

Kondak of St. Matthias, Tone 4: Like the rays of the sun hast thy word gone forth unto all the world, and it enlighteneth with grace the Church of the nations, O wondrous Apostle Matthias.

Born in Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah, he was a pupil of St Simeon the Host of God in Jerusalem. When the Lord began preaching the Kingdom of God, Matthias was among those who loved the Lord with all their hearts, heard His words and saw His works with delight. Matthias was at first included among the seventy, lesser apostles of Christ, but, after the Lord's Resurrection, because the place of Judas the betrayer fell vacant, the apostles chose this Matthias by lot in Judas's place as one of the twelve Great Apostles (Acts 1: 23) . Receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Matthias began to preach the Gospel, first in Judea then in Ethiopia, where he suffered greatly for the sake of Christ. It is held that he preached also in Macedonia, where they tried to bind him, but he became invisible to his tormentors and thus escaped danger. When he was imprisoned, the Lord appeared to him, gave him courage and set him free. He finally returned to work in Judea. There he was arrested and taken for trial before Ananias the High Priest, before whom he fearlessly witnessed to Christ. Ananias (the same who had earlier killed the Apostle James) condemned Matthias to death. They took Matthias out and stoned him to death, then cut off his head with an axe (the Roman way of executing those condemned to death. The hypocritical Jews used this method on the dead man, to prove to the Romans that he had opposed Rome). So died this great apostle of Christ, and went to the eternal joy of his Lord

The Holy Martyr Antony - Anthony was a citizen of Alexandria. Brought before the pagan prince, he freely confessed his faith and was tortured, flogged and scrapped but he would not deny Christ. Finally, he was thrown into a fire and, from the midst of the fire, he spoke to the people: "My beloved brethren, do not be a slave to the body but rather concern yourself more about the soul which is given to you by God and is kindred to God and to the heavenly hosts." And so, instructing his people and burning in the fire, Anthony gave up his holy soul to God.; The Holy Martyrs Julian and Marcian, and others with them.

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

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

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

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

Our Holy Fathers Basil and Theodore of the Kiev Caves; in Ireland

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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