

14th Sunday After Pentecost

Holy Prophet Samual &

Afterfeast of Dormition

20 August / 2 September

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

Troparion of the Feast tone 1: In giving birth thou didst keep thy virginity, / and in thy dormition thou didst not forsake the world, O Mother of God. / Thou didst pass on to life, since thou art the Mother of Life, / and by thine intercessions thou redeemest our souls from death.

Troparion of the Prophet Samuel tone 4: Thou didst blossom as a scion of righteousness from a barren mother, O great Prophet Samuel. / Thou didst reveal beforehand the blessings we should receive; / from childhood thou didst serve the Lord in the priestly office. / As a prophet thou anointedst kings; / ever remember those who acclaim thee.

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

Kontakion of the Feast tone 2: The grave and death could not hold the Mother of God, / who is sleepless in her intercessions and an unchanging hope in her mediations. / For as the Mother of Life she was transferred to life / by Him Who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb.

Kontakion of the Prophet Samuel tone 8: Thou wast a precious gift to God before thy conception, / thou didst serve Him from infancy like an angel / and wast granted to foretell future events, wherefore we cry to thee: / Rejoice, O Samuel, thou Prophet of God and great high priest.



Matins Gospel III

Epistle: Corinthians 1:21 - 2:4

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, Who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand. But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

WHO ALSO HAS SEALED US AND GIVEN US THE SPIRIT IN OUR HEARTS AS A DEPOSIT

Again, from the past He establishes the future. For it is He Who establishes us in Christ (that is, who does not suffer us to be shaken from the faith which is in Christ) and He Who anointed us and gave the Spirit in our hearts. How will He not give us the future things? For He gave the principles and the foundations, and the root and the fount (to wit the true knowledge of Him, the partaking of the Spirit) how will He not give the things that come of these? ...And what is 'anointed,' and 'sealed?' He gave the Spirit, by Whom He did both these things, making at the same time prophets and priests and king, for in old times these three ranks were anointed ...For we are both to enjoy a kingdom and to be made priests by offering our bodies for a sacrifice (for he says 'present your members a living sacrifice to God') and moreover we are constituted prophets too: for 'the things eye has not seen, nor ear heard,' (I Cor. 2:9) these have been revealed to us. And in another way, too, we become kings: if we have the mind to get dominion over our unruly thoughts, for such a one is a king and more than one who wears a diadem.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily III on II Corinthians I, 4, 5. B#56, pp. 289-290.

Gospel: St. Matthew 22: 1-14

The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, And sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding." ' But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

THE WEDDING FEAST

Such a Gospel the Holy Church offers today for our attention: the Gospel about the wedding feast. And in verses 10 to 13 is the section which refers to both the good and the evil ones who gathered at the meal. And when the lord entered, he found one man who was not dressed in a wedding garment. And just for this, that he was not wearing a wedding garment, such a terrible punishment followed. He was thrown out, bound, and was cast into a place of fire. For us this may even be incomprehensible. What is this actually? God is merciful, compassionate, and suddenly such a terrible punishment. Here is something we must understand. Let us look at it. If you remember, brothers, the Gospel which was read Sunday before last, you will recall also the pious young man who approached the Lord and asked Him what to do in order to enter the Kingdom of God. The Lord said, Fulfil the commandments. He said that he had fulfilled them. But seeing his heart, the Lord said: Give away everything you possess and follow me (Mt. 19:16-21).

The Lord called the young man to follow Him, but this young man was rich. And he trusted in these earthly riches, in the things that surround us. He somehow didn't understand that this very night his soul might be taken away and pass into eternal life. And what did he go away with? The Lord called him for renewal, to remove from his heart all the scabs, which are human passions. The Lord called. But he had riches which made him think that this earth is ours and is the purpose of our life. This is all we have: our houses, our villas, our cars, our relationships with each other. And we don't notice that one after another we depart. So this means that the Gospel of the Sunday before last is pointing out: do not trust, do not persist in your strivings for possession of earthly things, because this very night eternity may open for us. The earth is given to us only as a means of receiving those things which should be in a man's soul. And our soul should be suffused, as if saturated with the Beatitudes.

And this past Sunday. In the Gospel reading it told about the vineyard workers. The lord created the vineyard, gave them livelihood for their work. This livelihood consisted of everything that was needed for their life. But they, like the young man, accepted in their heart that this vineyard was their riches, that it belonged to them. This very vineyard, which was serving only as a means of acquiring goodness of heart, became for them an object of temptation. They decided to use it as their own. And therefore, they drove off all symptoms that were telling them that, after all, this was not theirs, that it belonged to the Lord; and you have to do what the Lord requires of you: cultivate the vineyard. Then you will receive in your heart that goodness with which you can depart from this vineyard and go to something much better and greater, to something which God has prepared for you. But they did not pay attention to these symptoms. The vineyard became for them such a temptation, as the earth is for us, in which we seem to have everything we need. On it we build our villas, and close by are lying Lazaruses—beggars, widows, unfortunate children who have to be raised. But we do not concern ourselves with them. We are busy with our fine clothes, our meals, with such matters that will remain here. And the person departs into eternal life hungry, without good deeds.

Now that we have analysed these two Gospels, we ask: Why did the Lord tell this parable, and why does the Holy Church offer it today for our attention? Everyone who knows the Gospel knows also that, in addition to the Evangelist Matthew whose Gospel was read today, the Evangelist Luke also refers to this parable in some detail (Lk. 14:15-24). It tells there how Christ was invited to the meal of Simon the Pharisee. At this meal Christ saw what the Jews did who accepted the law of Moses, how they changed the law of Moses into a means of their own greatness and pride. And Christ, seeing this and feeling sorry for Simon who had invited Him, started to teach him. This was heard by all who were present at the meal. And they were supposedly right-believing Jews, Pharisees of Pharisees. And when Christ began to speak, He was for them...who was He? Just a rabbi. Here one of the Jews could not contain himself. And when Christ said that people will receive for their good deeds the Kingdom of God, he exclaimed, "Blessed is He that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!" (Lk.14: 15). Blessed! Because this blessedness belongs to the children of Abraham; what you are talking about belongs to us. Why bother with good deeds? The promise which was given to Moses is ours and we are using it—we, the Jews. This is our kingdom.

Then Christ, answering about this "kingdom," gave them this parable. Here He pointed out that the Jews were called by God for such a long time to receive blessedness, were called to a pure life; but they did not come. They were busy in the same way as that young man, as the workers in the vineyard—with earthly things. Apparently they were building for themselves palaces, buying unfortunate slaves, living in comfort, and they had no concern for anything else. And therefore, why bother with a king's feast? So their response to this feast was such that almost everyone refused to come. Then the Lord called his soldiers and through the soldiers called everyone, both evil and good, without discrimination: everyone had to come.

In the East when a feast was given, not only was food presented but also raiment. In this way, when garments were given to those who came—harlots, tax collectors, and other sinners—everyone was given an equal garment. But among them was also a Pharisee who entered. What he saw seemed horrible to him. Among those who were invited were great sinners, harlots, and tax collectors. He did not want to be on a level with them. His own garment, as it appeared to him, was much better. And he remained in it. The king entered to look at the guests and said to him: "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless" (Mt. 22:12). But in his soul one could imagine that he was rebelling. Rebelling, because those present at the wedding feast were all sinners. And he, as it seemed a righteous man, a son of Abraham, here he had to sit together with them. And the most degrading thing of all was that they wanted him to exchange his rich garment for the garment in which all the sinners were dressed, for this wedding garment. No...never.

So what happened—happened! The Lord ordered him to be bound for disrupting unity. What unity? The unity of the Church of Christ. See, brothers and sisters, how important this unity is, how precious the Church of Christ is in the eyes of the Lord. So let us obey the voice of the Church; let us fulfil with our whole soul whatever she requires of us; let us keep the garment which she has given us. And may it never happen to us what happened to him, who was not wearing a wedding garment.

The One Thing Needful – Archbishop Andrei

Saints of the Week

20 August / 2 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition – The Holy Prophet Samuel - The fifteenth and last of the Judges of Israel, he lived eleven hundred years before Christ. He was of the tribe of Levi, born of Elkanah and Hannah in a place called Ramatha or Arimathea, where noble Joseph was later born. The barren Hannah besought Samuel of the Lord with tears, and dedicated him to God when he was three years old. Living in Shiloh near the Ark of the Covenant, Samuel, at the age of twelve, had a true revelation from God of the punishment which would come upon the house of the High Priest, Eli, because of the worthlessness of his sons Hophni and Phineas. This revelation was swiftly fulfilled: the Philistines routed the Israelites, slew both of Eli's sons and captured the Ark of the Covenant. When the messenger brought these bad tidings to Eli, he fell dead on the ground, breathing his last at the age of ninety-eight, and the same thing happened to his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phineas. Israel was under the Philistine yoke after this for twenty years. When this time had elapsed, God sent Samuel to the people to preach repentance to them as the one means of their salvation from their enemies. The people repented and cast out the foreign idols which they had served, accepting Samuel as prophet, priest and judge. Then Samuel set out with the army against the Philistines and, with God's help, put them to confusion and slew them, freeing the land and the people. After that, Samuel judged the people in peace to old age. Seeing him growing old, the people asked him to give them a king in his place. In vain, Samuel urged the people against this, saying that God was their only king, but the people remained adamant in their desire. Although this desire was not pleasing to God, He commanded Samuel to anoint Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, as king. Saul reigned a short time, and God rejected him for impudence and disobedience, and then commanded Samuel to anoint David the son of Jesse as king in Saul's place. At the time of his death, Samuel gathered all the people together and took leave of them, and when he died all Israel wept for him and buried him solemnly in his house at Ramah.; The Hieromartyr Philip, Bishop of Heraklion;

St. Oswin, king and martyr (651) - St. Oswin grew up in the political turmoil of early 7th century Northumbria. In AD 633, his father, Osric, had managed to secure the crown of Deira (modern Yorkshire) after the death of his cousin, King Edwin of Northumbria, at the Battle of Hatfield Chase. Bernicia was taken by his rival, Eanfrith, but, within a year, both men had been massacred by their enemy, the Northern Welsh and Mercians who were sweeping across the Country. The young Oswin fled to safety in Wessex. While Oswin grew into a burly young man, Eanfrith's half-brother, Oswald was accepted by both Bernicia and Deira as King of a united Northumbria and he drove off their south-western invaders. He married the daughter of the King of Wessex in AD 635, but there is no evidence of his making trouble for Oswin. Seven years later, however, Oswald was dead. His brother, Oswiu, became King of Bernicia, but was rejected by the Deirans who recalled Oswin in AD 644. He may have made his peace with the Mercians at this time and used their armies to assert his rights in the north. According to St. Bede, Oswin was "a man of handsome appearance and great stature, pleasant in speech and courteous in manner. He was generous to high and low alike and soon won the affection of all by his kingly qualities of mind and body, so that even men of very high birth came from nearly every province to his service." He was a great friend of St. Aidan and a man of "piety and devotion". Oswin was, however, despised by King Oswiu who greedily coveted the Deiran lands which had once belonged to his brother. In August AD 651, he raised a vast army, which Oswin was obliged to march out to meet, but, finding he was greatly outnumbered, the King of Deira wisely decided to withdraw from the battlefield and avoid unnecessary bloodshed. He took refuge in the house of his friend, Ealdorman Hunwald, at Gilling in North Yorkshire, but was treacherously betrayed by him. Oswiu sent his soldiers to the manor and King Oswin was cut down where he stood. He was the last King of the House of Aelle. Oswiu's wife was Oswin's cousin and she insisted her husband build a monastery at Gilling in expiation for his crime. Oswin was, however, buried at Tynemouth in Northumberland. He was remembered as a Christian martyr because he had died "if not for the faith of Christ, at least for the justice of Christ"; and his shrine became a popular place of pilgrimage.

Rest of Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) of Platina (1982) - born Eugene Rose in 1934 in California in an American Protestant family. As a college graduate, his search for philosophical truth led him initially to Buddhism and other eastern religions. A friend encouraged him to visit the old Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Mother of God, "Joy of All Who Sorrow", in San Francisco. Upon entering the Cathedral, during Vespers of Great Friday, he felt that his search was over and that he had "come home." He began attending the Divine Services regularly and was received into the Church. In 1963, with the blessing of Archbishop John (Maximovitch), he and another young man formed the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood as a missionary endeavour towards the conversion of English-speaking people. They opened a bookstore and began publishing a magazine in English, *The Orthodox Word*. They laboured tirelessly for the glorification of St. Herman, a missionary and wonderworker

whose relics lay on American soil. A gifted intellectual with a promising career before him, Father Seraphim (then Eugene) turned his back on this world. He devoted himself full-time to missionary endeavours and the study of the Holy Fathers. Inspired by the ancient desert-dwellers and ascetics, he and his companion left San Francisco to live as monks in the Northern Californian forest. He was tonsured into the Small Schema in 1969, receiving the name Seraphim after his beloved St. Seraphim of Sarov. He built a small hut on the mountainside where he prayed and prepared many articles for publication. He wrote and translated many soul profiting books, articles, and church services, including the service to St. Herman of Alaska (sung at his glorification in 1970) and an akathist to St. John of Shanghai & San Francisco. He laboured greatly to preserve St. John's memory and to publish reports of miracles worked through him. He struggled in the face of modernism to preserve a patristic Orthodox understanding of the life of the soul after death. 'spirituality' outside the Church, and the book of Genesis, among other things. His best known works are Orthodoxy & the Religion of the Future and The Soul after Death. Father Seraphim was ordained hierodeacon in January 1977 and was raised to the rank of hieromonk on the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearers in the same year. As a priest, he ministered not only to the brethren and pilgrims at the monastery, but also to a number of small parishes in Northern California and Oregon. His constant counsel was: "Censure yourself. Never excuse yourself. If you must, or think you must give way to a weakness, then be certain that you recognise it as a weakness and a sin. But see your own faults and condemn not your brother!" During the latter portion of his life, Father Seraphim continually emphasised the need for spiritual attentiveness in preparation for struggles to come. He said often: "It is later than you think. Hasten therefore to do the work of God!" Father Seraphim reposed in the Lord in 1982 after an acute illness. He was an inspiration to many and accomplished much for the glory of God and the spread of the true Orthodox Christianity amongst English-speaking people. Forty days after his repose, Bishop Nektary (Kontzevich) of Seattle stated that he was 'a righteous man, possibly a saint'. May God grant him rest with His saints where the light of His countenance shall visit him. An may his memory be eternal!

St. Edbert + 768 - The successor of St Ceolwulf on the throne of Northumbria in England. After a prosperous reign of twenty years he resigned and went to the monastery of York, where he spent a further ten years in prayer and seclusion

21 August / 3 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Apostle Thaddeus - One of the Seventy, he was not that Thaddaeus who was one of the Twelve. St Thaddaeus first saw and heard John the Baptist, and then saw the Lord Jesus and followed Him. The Lord included him among His seventy, lesser apostles, whom He sent two and two before His face (Luke 10:1). After His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, the Lord sent Thaddaeus to Edessa, Thaddaeus's birthplace, in fulfilment of His promise to Avgar, which He made when He sent him the napkin with the imprint of His face. By kissing this napkin, Avgar was healed of his leprosy, though not entirely; a little of the leprosy remained on his face. When St Thaddaeus visited Avgar, the latter received him with great joy. Christ's Apostle instructed him in the true Faith and then baptised him. When the baptised Avgar came up out of the water, the remaining leprosy fell from him and he was completely healed. Glorifying God, Prince Avgar desired that his people should come to the knowledge of the true God and glorify Him. The prince called together all the citizens of Edessa before the holy Apostle Thaddaeus, to hear him preach about Christ. Hearing the Apostle's words and seeing their miraculously-healed prince, the people cast away their idols and their unclean living, embraced the Christian faith and were baptised, and the city of Edessa became resplendent with the Christian faith. Prince Avgar brought much gold and offered it to the Apostle, but Thaddaeus said to him: 'Having abandoned my own, do I accept another's?' St Thaddaeus preached the Gospel throughout Syria and Phoenicia, and entered into rest in the Lord in the Phoenician city of Beirut.; The Holy Martyr Bassa and her children: Theognius, Agapius and Pistus; Our Holy Father Abraham of Smolensk; Our Holy Forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

22 August / 4 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Martyrs Agathonicus, Zoticus and others - St Agathonicus was a citizen of Nicomedia and a Christian. He turned the Greeks from idolatry with great fervour, and instructed them in the true Faith. The imperial governor, on orders from the Emperor Maximian, was persecuting Christians with great harshness. In this persecution, he seized St Zoticus in a place called Carpe, crucified his disciples and took him off to Nicomedia, where he also seized and bound Agathonicus, Princeps, Theoprepus, Acyndinus, Severian, Zeno and many others. They were taken, securely bound, to Byzantium. On the way, Zoticus, Theoprepus and Acyndinus died from exhaustion and of their wounds. Severian was killed near Chalcedon and Agathonicus and the others were taken to Thrace, to a place called Silybria, where, after torture before the Emperor himself, they were beheaded with the sword and entered into eternal life and the joy of their Lord. The Holy Martyr Eulalia; The Holy Martyr Anthusa;

St. Sigfrid, abbot of Wearmouth (688) - Nothing is known about the early life of Saint Sigfrid, a disciple of Saint Benedict Biscop. He was known for his knowledge of Scripture, his temperance, and obedience. During Benedict's absence on his fifth visit to Rome, Saint Esterwine died. Saint Ceolfrid and the other monks elected the deacon-monk Sigfrid to take Esterwine's place as coadjutor abbot of Jarrow and abbot of Wearmouth in 686. Both saints fell deathly ill upon Benedict's return to Jarrow. Knowing that their earthly lives were about to end and wanting a final meeting to inquire about the welfare of each other and their monks, Sigfrid, suffering from a lung disease, was carried on a stretcher to Benedict's cell. They were both too weak to even embrace one another unaided. After consulting Sigfrid, Benedict sent for Ceolfrid and appointed him abbot over both monasteries. Benedict and Sigfrid, of one heart in life, died the same year. Sigfrid was buried by Saint Ceolfrid in the abbey-church of Saint Peter next to his master, Saint Benedict, and his predecessor, Saint Esterwine;

St. Symphorian (c.2nd-3rd c.) - he lived in Gaul in the Roman city of Autun, where the pagan goddess Cybele was particularly revered. On her feast day the image of this goddess was wheeled through the streets of Autun on a chariot, while the mob bowed and worshipped. Taking part in the ceremonies was the provincial governor, Heraclius. Heraclius commanded Symphorian to worship Cybele as the mother of all the gods. Declaring that he worshipped the one true God, Symphorianus asked for a hammer to smash the pagan idol. Learning that Symphorian came from a noble family, the governor decided to

give him another chance. When the saint persisted in his faith, he was flogged. The governor then tried to bribe him, offering him an army commission if he would recant. But all this was in vain, and he eventually condemned the saint to be killed by the sword. Soldiers led him to the place of execution outside the city wall. As they went he saw his mother standing on the walls. She shouted to her son, 'Do not be afraid, Symphorian. Your death will lead straight to eternal life.' Then swordsmen cut off his head and he was buried in a tomb. 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!

23 August / 5 September - Fast Day - Apodosis of the Dormition - The Holy Martyr Lupus - this holy man was a servant of St Dimitrios of Salonica. When St Dimitrios was beheaded by the Emperor Maximian, Lupus dipped the hem of his garment and his ring in the martyr's blood. Lupus worked many miracles in Salonica with this garment and ring, healing people of every pain and infirmity. The Emperor Maximian, who was still staying in Salonica, discovered this, and commanded that Lupus be tortured and killed. But the soldiers who drew their weapons on Lupus turned one on the other and wounded one another. As Lupus was not yet baptised, although he was a Christian, he prayed to God that He would somehow bring about his baptism before his death. On this, water suddenly poured down on the holy martyr from a cloud, and he thus received baptism. After harsh torture, he was beheaded and entered into the heavenly Kingdom; The Hieromartyr Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons; The Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons - He was in his youth a pupil of St Polycarp, the disciple of the apostles, who sent him to preach in Gaul. After St Pothinus's death by martyrdom, Irenaeus was made bishop. In his numerous writings, Irenaeus both expounded the Orthodox faith and defended it against heretics. He suffered for Christ in the time of the Emperor Severus, in 202, along with nineteen thousand Christians; St Victor;

Holy Martyr Ebba the Younger, abbess of Coldingham, sister of King Oswy and her companions (870) - Abbess at Coldingham, Berwickshire, Scotland, a double monastery that had been founded by Saint Ebbe the Elder, and which was the largest in the country at the time. When the monastery was attacked by Scandinavian pirates, Ebbe gathered her nuns and exhorted them to save themselves from falling into the hands of the pirates by voluntary disfiguring themselves. She then set an example by cutting off her own nose and upper lip; the other nuns did the same. When the Vikings broke into the convent, they were so horrified and angry by what the women had done to escape being raped, they locked them all in, set fire to the house, and burned them all to death.

24 August / 6 September - The Hieromartyr Eutyches - one of the lesser apostles, born in Sebastopol, he was a disciple and friend of the Apostles John the Theologian and Paul. Although he was not included in the Seventy, he was called an apostle by virtue of having been a disciple of the great apostles, and because he showed true apostolic zeal in the service of the Gospel. Consecrated as a missionary bishop, St Eutyches travelled widely, having an angel as a companion, and he also received heavenly bread from an angel while in prison. When his body was flayed with serrated iron rods, his blood ran down mingled with a sweet myrrh. He was thrown into the flames and before wild beasts, and was finally beheaded with the sword in Sebastopol; The Holy Martyr Tation; The Holy Martyr Syra; Our Holy Father Arsenius of Komel; St George Limniotes.

25 August / 7 September - Fast Day - The Holy Apostle Titus - One of the Seventy, he was born in Crete and educated in Greek philosophy and poetry. Led by a dream, he read the Prophet Isaiah and came to doubt all Hellenic learning. Hearing of Christ the Lord, he went to Jerusalem with some other Cretans, and himself heard the words of the Saviour and saw His mighty works. His youthful heart clave utterly to Christ. He was later baptised by the Apostle Paul, whom he served in the works of the Gospel as a son serves his father. Paul loved Titus so greatly that he sometimes called him his son (Titus 1:4), and sometimes his brother (II Cor. 12:18). Titus travelled widely with the great Apostle of the people, and was by him made Bishop of Crete. At the time of Paul's suffering in Rome, Titus was there, and buried the body of his teacher and spiritual father. He then returned to Crete, where he had great success in baptising the pagans, and wisely governed the Church to great old age. He entered into rest at the age of ninety-four; .The Holy Apostle Bartholomew - Today is the commemoration of the translation of St. Bartholomew's relics, while his main feast falls on June 11th. When this great Apostle was crucified in Ourbanopolis in Armenia, Christians took his body and buried it in a leaden coffin. When numerous miracles had been wrought over the Apostle's grave, especially healings of the sick—which led to an increase in the number of Christians—the pagans took the coffin containing Bartholomew's relics and cast it into the sea. At the same time, they threw in four other coffins with the relics of four martyrs: Papias, Lucian, Gregory and Acacius. By God's providence, the coffins did not sink, but floated, carried by the waves, to various places: Acacius's to the city of Askalon, Gregory's to Calabria, Lucian's to Messina, Papias's to another place in Sicily and Bartholomew's to the island of Lipara. By some mysterious revelation, the Bishop of Lipara, Agathon, learned of the approach to Lipara of the relics of St Bartholomew. Agathon, with his clergy and people, went out to the shore and awaited the coffin with great joy. On that occasion, many of the sick were healed by the holy Apostle's relics. They were placed in the church of St Bartholomew and lay there until the time of Theophilus the Iconoclast (about 839), then, when the Moslems threatened the Liparites, the Apostle's relics were taken to the town of Benevento. Thus God glorified His apostle by miracles, both during his lifetime and after his death; the Holy Confessors of Edessa; St. Menas, Patriarch of Constantinople; at York the translation of the relics of St. Hilda of Whitby (680).

26 August / 8 September - The Holy Martyr Adrian and his wife Natalia - Husband and wife, they were both of noble and wealthy families in Nicomedia. Adrian was the governor of the Praetorium and a pagan, and Natalia was a secret Christian. They were both young, and had lived in wedlock for thirteen months in all before their martyrdom. When the wicked Emperor Maximian visited Nicomedia, he ordered that the Christians be seized and put to torture. There were twenty-three Christians hidden in a cave near the city. Someone handed them over to the authorities and they were cruelly flogged with leather whips and staves, and thrown into prison. They were then taken from prison and brought before the Praetor for their names to be noted. Adrian looked at these people, tortured but unbowed, peaceful and meek, and he put them under oath to say what they

hoped for from their God, that they should undergo such tortures. They spoke to him of the blessedness of the righteous in the Kingdom of God. Hearing this, and again looking at these people, Adrian suddenly turned to the scribe and said: 'Write my name along with those of these saints; I also am a Christian.' When the Emperor heard this, he asked him: 'Have you lost your mind?' Adrian replied: 'I haven't lost it, but found it!' Hearing this, Natalia rejoiced greatly, and, when Adrian sat chained with the others in prison, came and ministered to them all. When they flogged her husband and put him to various tortures, she encouraged him to endure to the end. After long torture and imprisonment, the Emperor ordered that they be taken to the prison anvil, for their arms and legs to be broken by hammers. This was done and Adrian, along with the twenty-three others, breathed his last under the vicious tortures. Natalia took their relics to Constantinople and there buried them. After several days, Adrian appeared to her, bathed in light and beauty and calling her to come to God, and she peacefully gave her soul into her Lord's hands.

Prayer to the Holy Martyrs of Christ - Adrian and Natalia: O sacred couple, holy martyrs of Christ Adrian and Natalia, blessed spouses and valiant athletes! Harken unto us who beseech you with tears, and send down upon us all that is profitable for our souls and bodies; and entreat Christ God, that He have mercy upon us and deal with us according to His mercy, that we not perish in our sins. Yea, O holy martyrs, accept ye our cry of supplication, and by your intercessions deliver us from famine, pestilence, earthquake, flood, fire, hail, the sword, invasion of aliens and civil strife, from sudden death and from all misfortune, grief and pain, that ever strengthened by your supplication and mediation, we may glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is due all glory, honour and worship, with his unoriginate Father and His all-holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen. Our Holy Father Tithoes: St Zer-Jacob; The Miracle of the Most Holy Mother of God in

The miraculous renewals of icons was first witnessed in the Convent in Harbin on the first Tuesday of Great Lent in 1925. A dark Icon of the Mother of God "of the Akathist" suddenly became light. A priest was asked to serve a Moleben before the renewed Icon, but when he expressed doubts as to whether the Icon had in fact been dark, it quickly became dark again. Abbess Moscow in 1395 Rufina commented that the Icon darkened again due to the "soot of unbelief," but she prophesied that before the renewal of Russia the Icon would once again be renewed. Another miracle of God's Mercy was manifested in the Convent on August 26, 1925 (o.s.), the Feast of the Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God. An Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God was miraculously renewed in Abbess Rufina's hands. In 1924 a pious and elderly lady gave the old and damaged Icon to the Convent, remarking to the novice who accepted it that she couldn't throw it away in spite of its condition. Abbess Rufina accepted the Icon and placed it in a prominent place in the Church, which at that time had few icons. Because of its condition many people complained, and so the Icon was moved to a corner of the Altar. Even there, however, the presence of the Icon was criticized by the clergy. On the Feast day of the Icon, when several people were to be released from prison, Abbess Rufina decided to bless them with the Icon. She requested that the Icon be brought from the Altar and when Mother Ariadna handed it to her, it quickly began to lighten, the way that fog scatters in the sunlight, and became cleaned of the dust and dirt that time had settled upon it. Holding the Holy Icon in her hands, Abbess Rufina exclaimed, "Look, look, a miracle is taking place. The Icon is being restored!" After only a few minutes the Icon looked as though it had just been painted. The face of the Mother of God was lightened, the tin covering was brightened, and the halo above the face of the Virgin radiated a flowing light. This miracle occurred at 2 p.m. An hour later a Moleben was served by one of the hieromonks of the Convent, who only a few days earlier, had recommended that the Icon be burned and the ashes thrown into the river. With tears he begged forgiveness from the Mother of God. This miracle strengthened the Sisters in their faith that the Mother of God was Herself directing their lives invisibly, and was watching over their spiritual progress. Seeing in this miracle an indication from the Mother of God as to what the Convent should be called, Metropolitan Meletius blessed the changing of the name of the Convent to the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God. On April 26, 1926 there was a fire at the Convent and one Icon, that of God the Sabaoth, was miraculously preserved and renewed. A flow of miraculous healings began to occur from that Icon as well as from the Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God. The apparition of these obvious signs of God's Mercy, began to be widely known, not only among the Russian population, but among the Chinese as well, not only in the city of Harbin, but along the whole territory of the Chinese Eastern Railroad.