



16th Sunday After Pentecost

Heiromartyr Anthimus of Nicomedia & St Theoctistus

3 / 16 September

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

Troparion of St Anthimus the Hieromartyr tone 1: Thou didst protect thy Flock with thy blood,/ not fearing shine adversaries./ Now thou dost rejoice in heaven, standing before the throne./ Glory to Christ Who has strengthened thee;/ glory to thy courage; glory to shine endurance,/ O holy Hieromartyr Anthimus.

Troparion of St Theoctistus tone 4: Dedicated as God's priest from tiny youth,/ thou didst spurn all worldly aims./ O righteous Theoctistus, thou wast radiant in thy solitude/ and strict in the training of monks./ Guide those who come to thee and lead them in the way of salvation.

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

Kontakion of St Anthimus the Hieromartyr tone 4: Illustrious priest and steadfast martyr,/ Anthimus worthy of praise:/ thou didst assail idol-worship/ and champion thy flock who fervently cry out to thee:/ By thine intercessions deliver us from dangers.

Kontakion of St Theoctistus tone 4: Thou didst keep thy soul pure and present it to God as His creation./ Enlightened by Him, Theoctistus, thou didst rise to the peak of endeavour./ By thy works thou hast confirmed the grace that was given thee.

Matins Gospel V

Epistle: II Corinthians 6:1-10

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We give no offence in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in sleeplessness, in fastings; By purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

What is the 'acceptable time'?

The 'acceptable time', what is this? That of the Gift, that of the Grace, when it is appointed not that an account should be required of our sins, nor penalty exacted, but besides being delivered, that we should also enjoy ten thousand good things, righteousness, sanctification, and all the rest. For how much toil would it have behoved us to undergo in order to obtain this 'time!' But, behold, without our toiling at all it has come, bringing remission of all that was before. He also calls it 'acceptable,' because He accepted those who had transgressed in ten thousand things, and not merely accepted, but advanced them to the highest honour ...Let us, too, therefore strive for the mastery in the time of this gift. It is a day of grace, of grace divine; wherefore even we will obtain the crown with ease. For if, when laden with such great evils, He both received and delivered us, after being delivered from all and actually contributing our part, will He not accept us even more?...

He shows that afflictions are weapons which not only do not strike down, but do even fortify and make stronger ...And let us therefore, when we suffer anything for Christ's sake, not merely bear it nobly, but also rejoice. If we fast, let us leap for joy as if enjoying luxury; if we are insulted, let us dance as if praised; if we spend, let us feel as if gaining; if we bestow on the poor, let us count ourselves to receive: for he who does not give this way will not give readily. When therefore you have a mind to scatter abroad, do not look only at what you spend, but at the fact that you gain more. And not only in almsgiving, but also in every kind of virtue, compute not just the severity of the toils, but also the sweetness of the prizes, and before all the subject of this struggle: our Lord Jesus. And if you will readily enter upon the contest, you will love the whole time with pleasure.

For nothing is so apt to cause pleasure as a good conscience. Therefore Paul, though wounded every day, rejoiced indeed and exulted. But the men of this day, although they do not endure a shadow even of what he did, grieve and make lamentations from no other cause than that they do not have a mind full of heavenly philosophy.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XII on II Corinthians VI, 1, 3, 5. B#56, pp. 336-338, 340.
for the Hieromartyr: Heb . 13:7-16

GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 25:14-30

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

The reading of the Gospel, dearly beloved, would have us consider that those of us who receive more gifts than others in this world will be judged more strictly by its Creator. For according as the gifts increase, the account demanded will be more exacting; therefore a man should be more humble and use his gift more diligently in God's service ...Who is this man who sets out on a journey, but our Redeemer, who ascended into heaven in that same flesh which He had assumed? The earth is the proper home of the flesh, but it travels, as it were, to foreign lands, when our Redeemer ascends with it to heaven ...He left spiritual gifts to the faithful who believed in Him ...There are five senses of the body ...so the five talents represent the gift of the five senses: that is to say, external knowledge.

The gifts of understanding and action are signified by the two talents, and the single talent represents the understanding alone. But he who received the five talents gained another five, for there are some people who, although they cannot understand interior and mystical things, nevertheless, by their desire for their heavenly home, teach sound doctrine to all whom they meet, doctrine concerning those exterior matters which they can understand ...Likewise, there are some who ...have a good grasp of what refers to intellect and action: they understand the subtleties of the interior life ...When they teach others by their learning and example they derive, as it were, a double profit from their trading..

To hide one's talent in the earth is to occupy the intelligence God gives us in purely earthly matters, not to seek spiritual profit, never to lift our heart above worldly considerations. For there are some who received the gift of understanding, but who, nevertheless, understand only the flesh. Of these the prophet says, "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jer.4:22)...

Paltry are the goods of this world, however great they may seem in comparison with that reward of eternal life. But the faithful servant ...is taken to that everlasting dwelling, to mingle with the assembly of the angels and to relish that joy in such a way that he can never more suffer the external pains of temporal distress ...The worthless servant ...is a figure of many in the church, who are afraid to lead a better life, but not afraid to continue in the quagmire of their inertia; because they consider themselves to be sinners, they tremble to approach the way of sanctity, but they are not afraid to persist in their vices ...

It will be given to him who already has and he shall abound, for everyone who has the gift of charity receives other gifts besides. But he who has not the gift of charity will lose even those gifts which he seemed to have. So it is necessary, brethren, that charity should be the motive of all your actions ...No idler is completely deprived of talent...One receives the gift of intelligence ...Another receives worldly wealth ...another ...the craft with which he learns his livelihood ...a fourth the friendship of a rich man.

St. Gregory the Great. Parables of the Gospel, IX. B#48, pp. 59-65.

for the Hieromartyr: John 10:9-16

Saints of the week

3 / 16 September - The Hieromartyr Anthimus - Born in Nicomedia, he was brought up from childhood as a true Christian. 'His body was mortified, his spirit humble; jealousy was uprooted, anger tamed, sloth banished.... he had love for all and was at peace with all, had a good understanding with all, was filled with zeal for the glory of God and was open to all.' It is not surprising that a man of such virtues was made a bishop. St Anthimus worked as a bishop in Nicomedia at the time of a harsh persecution of Christians under the two wicked Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Streams of Christian blood were spilled, especially in Nicomedia. One year, on the feast of the Nativity of Christ, twenty thousand martyrs were burned in one church (see Dec. 28th). This happened during Anthimus's episcopate. The persecution did not end with this, but continued, and many Christians were thrown into prison and kept there for torture and death. St Anthimus withdrew to a village, Omana, not to escape death but to be able thence to strengthen his flock in the path of martyrdom, that none should draw back through fear. One of his letters to the Christians in prison was seized and taken to the Emperor Maximian. The Emperor sent twenty soldiers to find Anthimus and take him. The grey-beard, discerning this, went out to meet the soldiers, brought them into his house as his guests and only then revealed that he was Anthimus. The soldiers, amazed at his kindness, urged him to hide, and said that they would tell the Emperor that they had been unable to find him, but Anthimus replied that he dared not allow God's Law to be violated by a lie in order to save his life. So he set out with the soldiers. On the way, all the soldiers came to faith in Christ and were baptised by Anthimus. Brought before the Emperor, Anthimus was submitted to harsh and long-drawn-out torture, and was finally beheaded with an axe. He glorified God and entered into rest in the Lord at the beginning of the fourth century. The Holy Martyr Vasilissa; St Joannicius, Archbishop and first Patriarch of Serbia; Our Holy Father Theoctistus.

4 / 17 September - The Hieromartyr Babylas - This 'great and wonderful man, if one can call him a man', as St John Chrysostom expresses it, was archbishop in Antioch in the time of the wicked Emperor Numerian. This Numerian made a peace-treaty with some barbarian king, who was of better character and a greater lover of peace than himself. As a sign of his sincere desire for a lasting peace, the king gave his little son to be brought up at Numerian's court. One day, Numerian butchered the boy and offered him as a sacrifice to the idols. Still hot from his wicked shedding of innocent blood, this evildoer went to a Christian church to see what was happening there. Holy Babylas was at prayer with the people. He heard that the Emperor was coming with his retinue and intended to enter the church. Babylas stopped the service, went out in front of the church and told the Emperor that, as an idolater, he was not permitted entry to the holy church where the one, true God was worshipped. Speaking of Babylas, Chrysostom says: 'Who else in the world would he fear, having with such authority withstood the Emperor? By this he taught kings not to spread their power further than the measure given them by God, and also showed the clergy how to use their authority.' The shamed Emperor turned back, but planned revenge. The following day, the Emperor summoned Babylas, and began to berate him and bid him offer sacrifice to idols, which the saint, naturally, steadfastly refused to do. The Emperor then bound him with chains and threw him into prison. He also tortured three children: Urban, aged twelve, Prilidian, aged nine and Hippolinus, aged seven. Babylas was their spiritual father and teacher, and they had stayed near him out of love for him. They were the sons of a Christian woman, Christodoula, who herself suffered for Christ. The Emperor first ordered that each child be beaten with the number of blows that totalled his age, and then had them thrown into prison. Babylas, in bonds, was present at the beheading of the children, giving them courage, and then laid his honoured head under the sword. He was buried by Christians in the chains in which he was bound at his death, in one grave with the three children. Their holy souls flew off to the company of heaven, and their wonderworking relics remained to be of support to the faithful, along with the enduring witness of their heroism in the Faith. They suffered in about 283. The Holy Prophet Moses; The Holy Martyrs Marcellus and Cassian; Translation of the relics of Ss. Cuthbert & Birinus, bb, to Durham, England

Icon of the Unburnt Bush - This beautiful Icon calls to mind the burning Bush which Moses saw, but which was not consumed by the flames. The Prophet Moses is also commemorated on this day. On the Icon is a representation of the Mother of God with Her Child. She holds a ladder on which is sometimes represented St John of the Ladder, the ascetic who wrote a great spiritual treatise called "The Ladder." This richly meaningful Icon depicts the Mother of God Who contained within Her Womb the Eternal God Who is Fire, and yet was unconsumed, like the Unburnt Bush. She is a true Ladder by which we ascend to Heaven, as the Son of God took His Body from Her. The Prophet David is also depicted in the Icon, as the Ancestor of the Most Holy Theotokos and of Christ. He foretold the coming of the Messiah, especially through his Psalms. Many Icons of the Feasts of the Orthodox Church have depictions of David for the fact that his Psalms are used throughout to celebrate the events of our salvation. This icon has been known for its miracles of preservation from fires in Churches and homes.

5/ 18 September - The Holy Prophet Zacharias - He was the father of St. John the Forerunner. Zacharias was the son of Barachias, from the lineage of Abia, of the sons of Aaron. Zacharias was a high priest who held the eighth degree of service in the Temple at Jerusalem. His wife Elizabeth was the daughter of Sophia and sister of St. Anna, who was the mother of the Holy Theotokos. During the reign of King Herod the child-slayer, Zacharias was serving one day at the Temple of Jerusalem according to his turn. An angel of God appeared to him in the sanctuary, and Zacharias had great fear. The angel said to him: Fear not, Zacharias (Luke 1:13), and announced that Elizabeth would bear a son, in answer to their prayers. But both Zacharias and Elizabeth were old. When Zacharias doubted the words of the heavenly herald, the angel said: I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God (Luke 1:19). Zacharias was struck dumb from that hour, and could not speak until his son was born and he had written on a tablet: His name is John (Luke 1:63). Then his speech returned, and he magnified God. Some time later, when the Lord Jesus had been born and Herod began to slaughter the children of Bethlehem, he sent men to find and kill the son of Zacharias-for Herod had heard all that had happened to Zacharias, and how John had been born. Upon seeing the soldiers coming, Elizabeth took John into her arms-he was a year and a half old at that time-fled from the house with him, and ran to a rocky and desolate place. When she saw the soldiers following her, she cried out to the mountain: `O mountain of

God, receive a mother with her child!" and the rock opened and hid the mother and child. Then Herod, enraged that the child John had not been slain, ordered that Zacharias be slain before the altar. The blood of Zacharias was spilled on the marble and dried solid as stone, and remained as a witness to Herod's evil deed. In the place where Elizabeth hid with John a cave opened, water flowed out of it, and a fruit-bearing palm grew, all by the power of God. Forty days after the death of Zacharias, the blessed Elizabeth died. The child John remained in the wilderness, fed by an angel and protected by God's providence, until the day he appeared at the Jordan; The Holy Martyrs Juventius and Maximinus; Seventy Holy Martyrs; Venerable Athanasius

6 / 19 September - Fast Day - Commemoration of the Miracles of the Holy Archangel Michael - There was in Phrygia a place called Chonae (plunging), not far from Hierapolis, and in that place there was a miraculous spring of water. When the Apostle John the Theologian, together with Philip, was preaching the Gospel in Hierapolis, he looked at this place and foretold that a spring would gush forth in it, a spring of healing water from which many would be restored to health, and that the place would be visited by Michael, the great archangel of God. This prophecy was very soon fulfilled: a spring of water appeared, which became known far and wide for its miraculous power. A pagan in Laodicea had a dumb daughter, which caused him great grief, but the Archangel Michael appeared to him in a dream and urged him to take his daughter to this spring, that she might be restored to health. The father immediately obeyed, took his daughter and there encountered many people who had come to seek deliverance from various ills. They were all Christians. The man asked how he should seek healing, and the Christians told him: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, you must beg the Archangel Michael.' The father made his petition accordingly and dipped his daughter in the water, and the girl began to speak. Then this pagan was baptised along with his daughter and his whole household, and built a church to the Archangel Michael over the spring. Later, a young man called Archippus settled there. Pagans did him much malicious harm, for they did not want such power to be felt from a Christian holy place and many people be drawn to it. In their wickedness, they altered the course of a nearby river, so that it inundated the church and the spring. But, at the prayers of Archippus, the Archangel Michael appeared and opened a fissure in the rock at the end of the church, through which the flooding river plunged. So the place was saved, and became known as Chonae — plunging — from the river's plunge through the opened fissure. St Archippus lived there in asceticism till the age of seventy, and entered peacefully into rest in the Lord. The Holy Martyr Romulus and the 11,000 soldiers; St Eudoxius; Our Holy Father David;

St. Bega, virgin, first abbess of Copeland in Cumbria – of Irish royalty. Her family arranged her marriage to the Prince of Norway. Bega wanted to devote her life and virginity to the Lord, refused the arrangement, and fled. It is said that she was carried across the sea to the coast of Cumberland by riding on a clod of earth. She lived as an anchoress in Cumberland for many years, being fed by the birds in the woods. Saint Oswald of Northumbria, on a raid to dispel some highwaymen, convinced her to enter a convent for her own safety. She agreed, and took the veil from Saint Aidan of Lindisfarne and founded a monastery which later was named after her. As Abbess she was known for her generosity to the poor and oppressed who came to the abbey for assistance.

7 / 20 September - Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos - The Holy Martyr Sozon - Born in Lycaonia, Sozon was a shepherd and lived by the Law of God, teaching his brothers and sisters, and his friends, his devout faith. He learned in a vision that he would suffer martyrdom for Christ. At that time, there was a great persecution of Christians near the city of Pompeiopolis on the part of Maximian, the governor of Silicia. In the city, there was a golden idol which was worshipped by the pagans. Sozon left his sheep, went to the city, entered the pagan temple and knocked an arm off the golden idol, melting it down and giving the gold to the poor. There was a great outcry in the city because of this, and the pagans began to search for the guilty man. That no-one else should suffer for his action, Sozon went to the governor and declared himself to be a Christian and the performer of that act. The torturers first beat him, then chained him to a tree and flogged him with iron flails. When he was at his last breath, they cast him into the flames, where holy Sozon gave his soul to God. He suffered in about 304. His relics were found to be wonderworking, and a church dedicated to him was built over them. The Holy Apostles Euodus and Onesiphorus; The Holy Martyr Euppsychius; St John, Archbishop of Novgorod; One of the feasts of St. Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury.



8 / 21 September - Fast Day - The Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God - Epistle: Phil. 2:5-11 & Epistle: St. Luke: 10:28-42 & 11:27-28) The Holy Virgin Mary was born of her aged parents, Joachim and Anna. Her father was of the tribe of David and her mother of the tribe of Aaron, and so she was of royal blood from her father and priestly blood from her mother. By this, she foreshadowed Him who would be born of her as King and High Priest. Her parents were already old and had no children, and, because of this, were ashamed before men and humble before God. In their humility, they prayed with tears that God would bring joy to their old age with the gift of a child, as He had once given joy to the aged Abraham and Sarah, giving them their son Isaac. God, almighty and all-seeing, gave them a joy far exceeding all their expectations and their wildest dreams, for He gave them not just a daughter, but the Mother of God; He illumined them not only with temporal joy but with eternal. God gave them just one daughter, who later gave them just one grandson—but what a daughter and what a grandson! Mary full of grace, blessed among women, the temple of the Holy Spirit, altar of the living God, table of living bread, ark of God's holy things, tree of the most delicious fruits, glory of the

human race, praise of womanhood, fount of virginity and purity—this was the daughter given by God to Joachim and Anna. Born in Nazareth, she was after three years taken to the Temple in Jerusalem, whence she returned again to Nazareth and shortly afterwards heard the tidings of the holy Archangel Gabriel concerning the birth of the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, from her most pure and virginal body. The Feast of the Kalishto Icon of the Mother of God; The Feast of the Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God;

Troparion of the Mother of God tone 4: Thy birth, O Mother of God,/ has brought joy to all the world;/ for from thee arose the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God,/ Who, having dissolved the curse, has given His blessing,/ and having abolished death, has granted us life eternal.

Kontakion of the Mother of God tone 4: Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness/ and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death, O Immaculate One, by thy holy nativity./ And thy people, redeemed from the guilt of sin,/ celebrate thy birth by crying to thee:/ The barren woman gives birth to the Mother of God and the nurse of our life.

Ss. Ina, king of Wessex, restorer of Glastonbury, & his queen Ethelburga. (8th c.) - He was a son of the underking Cenred and ascended the West-Saxon throne in 688, a year before the death of his predecessor Caedwalla. For thirty-seven years he ruled over a turbulent and war-like people, and by virtue of a varied genius was equally successful as a warrior and legislator. His first efforts were directed towards establishing internal peace, and in the fifth year of his reign he drew up a set of laws which regulated the administration of justice and fixed the legal status of the various elapses of his subjects. With the exception of the Kentish laws this code is the earliest extant specimen of Anglo-Saxon legislation, and for that reason is of particular interest. When matters in his own realm had been adjusted, Ina turned his attention to Withred, King of Kent, and at the head of a formidable army demanded weregild (compensation) for the death of Mul (for Mollo), brother of Caedwalla. Withred paid the full compensation—thirty thousand pounds of silver—and admitted the supremacy of the West-Saxon over all the country held by the English south of the Thames. By successive conquests, Ina added several districts to the western provinces of his domain, and after a bitter war conquered Geraint, King of Cornwall, and built a fortress on the Tone, at the site of the present Taunton. Throughout his entire reign was particularly solicitous for the welfare of religion and religious establishment, founding many monasteries and endowing those already in existence. The Abbey of Glastonbury was erected by him, with the funds, it is thought, which came from the weregild collected from Withred. Other monastic establishments which were recipients of his bounty were those at Malmesbury, Wimborne, Nursling, Tisbury, Waltham, and Sherborne. Worn out by his long rule, Ina determined to abdicate in favour of Æthelheard and Oswald, and to make his peace with God. In pursuance of this project, he convened the Witenagemot and formally announced his abdication. With his wife he proceeded to Rome, to watch and pray at the tomb of the Apostles in the guise of a poor and pious pilgrim. While there he founded a hospice or home for English pilgrims, in the district known as Burges Saxonum, the modern Borgo. Some historians trace the foundation of the English College at Rome back to this hospice. The memory of the hospice still lives in the Church of San Spirito in Sassia, formerly S. Maria in Saxia; it is thought that King Ina and his Queen Ethelburga, lie buried in this church or in the atrium of St. Peter's. They died blessing God that they had been allowed to lay their dust in the consecrated soil of Rome.

9 / 22 September - Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos — Ss Joachim and Anna - St Joachim was of the tribe of Judah, and a descendant of King David. Anna was the daughter of Matthan the priest, of the tribe of Levi as was Aaron the High Priest. This Matthan had three daughters: Mary, Zoia and Anna. Mary was married in Bethlehem and bore Salome; Zoia was also married in Bethlehem and bore Elisabeth, the mother of St John the Forerunner; and Anna was married in Nazareth to Joachim, and in old age gave birth to Mary, the most holy Mother of God. Joachim and Anna had been married for fifty years, and were barren. They lived devoutly and quietly, using only a third of their income for themselves and giving a third to the poor and a third to the Temple, and they were well provided for. Once, when they were already old and were in Jerusalem to offer sacrifice to God, the High Priest, Issachar, upbraided Joachim: 'You are not worthy to offer sacrifice with those childless hands.' Others who had children jostled Joachim, thrusting him back as unworthy. This caused great grief to the two aged souls, and they went home with very heavy hearts. Then the two of them gave themselves to prayer to God that He would work in them the wonder that He had worked in Abraham and Sarah, and give them a child to comfort their old age. God sent them His angel, who gave them tidings of the birth of 'a daughter most blessed, by whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed, and through whom will come the salvation of the world.' Anna conceived at once, and in the ninth month gave birth to the holy Virgin Mary. St Joachim lived for eighty years and Anna for seventy-nine, and they both entered into the kingdom of God. Commemoration of the Third Ecumenical Council; The Holy Martyr Severian; St Theophanes, Confessor and Faster; St Nicetas the Man of God.;

St. Kieran (Ciaran) of Clonmacnois, Ireland (c.545) - The holy abbot Ciaran was the son of the wagonmaker, Beoit. Beoit was a very good and careful worker, and so he became rich. He and his wife Darerca had five sons and three daughters. Of these sons, four became presbyters and one, a deacon. All three daughters became nuns. This blessed family lived in the province of Meath, but because the local king was greedy and asked for too much tax money, the family moved to Roscommon in the province of Connaught. St Ciaran was born at Roscommon in the year 515. Like other boys his age, the young saint learned to work hard, helping his father, and also working for neighbouring farmers. One of his chores was to herd his family's sheep. Ciaran especially liked this duty, because he could be alone and pray to God in peace. The boy knew many of the psalms by heart, and he loved to chant them as he watched over the flock. The sheep were grazed in a plain called Ai. At that time, the wondrous old man, Saint Diarmat lived on this plain. This holy elder at once saw God's Grace in the young shepherd, and he taught the youth to read the psalms from the book for himself. The two spent many hours together, reading and praying. The elder taught the young saint many things about spiritual struggle, and how to keep himself clean and pure for Christ's sake. When he was old enough, St Ciaran wanted to go to school. In those days, there were no public schools, and the bishops and presbyters taught the students. St Findian had a school at Cluain. Here, he taught the Divine Scripture and the sciences. Saint Ciaran learned quickly, and grew in wisdom and in spirit under his elder. Some of the other students, however, were jealous of the young saint, and they used to torment him and shun him. Ciaran only prayed for them and tried to teach them love and mercy. The students of the school had to take turns working in a flour mill, to help pay for their needs. St Ciaran toiled with meekness and obedience. The saint loved beggars, and from his earliest youth he had sought to help them and give them money, food or clothing whenever possible. He even gave them some of the flour which he ground. As Saint Findian grew older, he called his monks together and announced that when he reposed, Ciaran should take his place as abbot. To this, they

all agreed. Meanwhile, St Ciaran got a blessing from his elder to visit some of the holy places of Ireland. He went to Lake Erne to hear the holy words of St Ninned, and from there, the young man went to the sacred isle of Aran. On Aran Island, the monks lived in great poverty and worked very hard. The holy elder, St Enda, was abbot of Aran in those days, and he accepted St Ciaran with joy. The young saint joined the hard labour and prayers of the monks, and he daily grew in God's Grace. From Aran, the saint made his way to Scatterry Island to learn what he could from Saint Senan. The blessed one journeyed around the whole country, learning much from the holy elders, and working and praying with all the monks. Soon, however, many monks came desiring to have St Ciaran as their elder; The saint built a small monastery on Hare Island (called Inis Aingin in Irish language) which is in Lake Ree. Even though Ciaran was the abbot of this monastery, he served the brothers, and often when a visitor came, Saint Ciaran would wash his feet and serve him like a slave. God worked many miracles and healings through this young saint, and the faithful from all over Ireland began to come to Lake Ree as pilgrims. The saint was sorrowful because of the attention and praises he was receiving, and so after a while, he appointed the holy presbyter Donnan as abbot, and he himself departed to the wilderness of Clonmachnoise. In those days, the elder Diarmat was living in this wilderness in a poor cell. The saint came to this cell and built himself one nearby. He lived here with his old friend and teacher for a long time, and a brotherhood soon grew up around him. St Ciaran became a father of saints, for many of his monks later became wonderworkers. The saint spent many years in struggle and prayer. He travelled throughout Ireland preaching and teaching the rulers and people alike to be merciful and charitable. This holy elder and wonderworker reposed in the Lord on 9 September, in the year of our Lord 550. He was about thirty-five years old; St. Wulfhilda, abbess of Barking, St. Bettelin, hermit of Crowland.

HYMN OF PRAISE **The Nativity of the Most-holy Mother of God**

O greatly desired and long awaited one, O Virgin, thou hast been obtained from the Lord with tears! A bodily temple of the Most-holy Spirit shalt thou become, And shalt be called Mother of the Eternal Word.

The Burning Bush they called thee, For thou wilt receive within thyself the divine fire: Ablaze with fire but not consumed, Thou shalt bear the Golden Fruit and offer it to the world.

Thou shalt be the Bearer of Him Who bears the heavens, To Whom all of heaven offers up praise! The Miracle of miracles shall come to pass within thee, For thou shalt bear heaven, thou who art ``more spacious than the heavens!"

Thou art more precious to us, O Virgin, than precious stones, For thou art the source of salvation for mankind. For this, may the entire universe glorify thee, O Most-holy Virgin, O white Turtledove!

The King of Heaven shall desire to enter the world, And shall pass through thee, O Beautiful Gate! O Virgin, when thou dost become woman thou shalt bear Christ for us; From thy body, the Sun shall blaze forth.

HOMILY **on the equality of the Son and the Father**

The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do (John 5:19).

Brethren, how are we to understand these words? In the same way as some heretics understood them-that is, that the Son is lesser and weaker than the Father? In no way. The mouths that interpreted these words of the Lord this way spoke blasphemy. We must understand these words as our Holy Fathers understood them-that the Son is equal to the Father in all things; and that, because of their equality of will, love, and wisdom, the Son can do nothing contrary to the Father's will, or contrary to the love of the Father, or contrary to the wisdom of the Father. Thus, the Father cannot do anything contrary to the Son, and the Holy Spirit cannot do anything contrary to the Father or the Son. Everything that the Father wills and loves and thinks, is also willed, loved and thought by the Son and the Holy Spirit. Harmony unequalled; unity undivided; being inexpressible! Therefore, it is obvious that the Son can and will do *nothing of Himself*-nothing of His own accord, nothing without harmony and unity with the power of the Father and the will of the Father. The Lord Himself further witnesses that this interpretation is true by His words: *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will* (John 5:21). Do you see the equality of will and power? That which the Father wills, the Son wills also; that which the Father can do, the Son can also do. Therefore, let no one separate Their Divinity, and thus bring down a curse upon himself. God cannot be divided, and one who tries to divide Divinity-and to lessen one Person and to exalt the other Person-cannot be saved.

O Most-holy Trinity our God, Three in Persons, and One in Essence- Life, Light and Love-look down upon us, and have mercy on us.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.