



24th Sunday After Pentecost

Nun-martyr Anastasia the Roman & Saint Abramius the Recluse

29 October / 11 November

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 Anastasia tone 4: O holy Virgin Anastasia, / thou didst redden thy robe of purity / with the blood of thy martyr's contest. / Thou dost illumine the world with the grace of healing / and interceed with Christ our God for our souls.

Troparion of St Abramius and his Niece Mary tone 1: Thou didst abandon all earthly comforts, / O Father Abramius, / thou didst live righteously in hope of things to come / and receive a sacred anointing. / Initiated into divine mysteries / thou dost enlighten those who cry: / Glory to Him Who has strengthened thee; glory to Him Who has crowned thee; / glory to Him Who through thee works healings for all.

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 Anastasia tone 3: Purified by the streams of thy virginity / and crowned by the blood of martyrdom, / thou dost grant healing to those in sickness, / and salvation to those who lovingly pray to thee. / For Christ has given thee strength which flows to us as a stream of grace, / O Virgin Martyr Anastasia.

Kontakion of St Abramius and his Niece Mary tone 3: Thou didst live on earth as an angel in the flesh / and flourish as a well planted tree, / watered by abstinence and tears, / O Abramius, vessel of the Holy Spirit.

Matins Gospel II

EPISTLE: Ephesians 2: 14-22

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, And that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, In whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, In whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

YOU ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

Is this then the great privilege, it may be said, that we are admitted into the commonwealth of the Jews? ...What is this, 'both one?' He does not mean that He has raised us to that high heritage of theirs, but that he has raised both us and them to a yet higher. However, the blessing to us is greater, because to the Jews it had been promised, and they were nearer than we ...For this reason he says, 'And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy' (Rom. 15:9). The promise He gave indeed to the Israelites, but they were unworthy; to us He gave no promise, no, we were even strangers. We had nothing in common with them, yet He has made us oneHe calls 'the enmity in the flesh,' a middle wall, in that it is a common barrier, cutting us off alike from God. As the Prophet says, 'Your iniquities separate between you and Me' (Isa. 54:2) ...And this, while the law existed, was not only not abolished, but rather was strengthened; 'for the law,' says the Apostle, 'works wrath' (Rom. 4:15) ...The law was a hedge ...Listen again to the Prophet, where he says, 'I made a trench about it' (Isa. 5:2). And again, 'You have broken down her hedges, so that all who pass by the way pluck her fruit' (Ps. 80:12) ...It became a middle wall, no longer establishing them in security, but cutting them off from God ...His death, says the Apostle, has 'slain' the enmity ...How then is it that it does rise again? From our exceeding depravity. For as long as we abide in the body of Christ, as long as we are united, it does not

rise again, but lies dead ...He calls those acts which the soul performs of herself 'natural,' and those which the body performs of itself 'carnal' ...The virtue of the flesh is her subjection to the soul. It is her vice to govern the soul ...He did not send Angels or Archangels on the mission, because to repair so many and such vast mischiefs and to declare what had been wrought was in the power of none other, but required His own coming. The Lord then took upon Himself the rank of a servant, no, almost of a minister.

St. John Chrysostom. Homilies V and VI on Ephesians II. B#57, pp. 71-74.

for the Saint: Gal. 5:22-6:2

THE GOSPEL: LUKE 8: 26-39

Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

JESUS ASKED..."WHAT IS YOUR NAME?"AND HE SAID,"LEGION," BECAUSE MANY DEMONS HAD ENTERED HIM

So, brothers and sisters, ends today's Gospel reading where, as you heard, the Lord tells the healed man to reveal the mystery of his healing before all the Gadarene people. And this is what he did. The Gospel does not tell us how he related what had happened to him; but according to the meaning of the Gospel narrative, we can fully imagine what he must have said and what he most likely did say. Here is what he must have said:

"You Gadarenes have known me from my childhood. I was born among you and grew up among you, in your Gadarene land, a land of transgression. You have seen what happened. You lived not according to the Law which God revealed to you, but according to your lawlessness. In your desire for riches and comfort you engaged in a sinful trade, a trade which was not blessed by God. You raised pigs. You had whole herds of them, and yet according to the Law, they are unclean animals. God punished you and gave you over to the power of the devil.

And by the incomprehensible Providence of God, all this demonic power lodged in me alone—I bore your punishment. I was changed from a human being into a beast. I couldn't live in houses—I lived in a desert place, in a cave where the dead were buried. You bound me with chains, and I broke them. There wasn't just one devil within me but a whole legion of devils; as you saw in reality when He Who healed me permitted the demons to enter your herd of pigs, which threw itself from the precipice into the lake and drowned. Yes, now you can truly imagine why I caused so much evil and trouble. There was a terrible power in me. The devils took possession of all my human passions and brought them to a monstrous state. That is why I hated you so savagely, why I wanted to torment you, destroy you.

And now this force has left me. I am asking you to forgive me. I love you now as a brother—I want to become your fellow citizen. And how grateful I am to Him Who freed me - He is my Saviour—He is my God! And I am calling all of you to Him. Everything you are looking for: peace, happiness, joy—everything you will find in Him. All of you who weep, go to Him. He will wipe away your tears. He will give you what no earthly riches can give."

This is what the formerly possessed man told the Gadarenes. He could also say the same to us. And we would not be surprised, because the very same thing is going on right now. All our newspapers tell us about such horrors which cannot be explained without the participation of the power of evil. And against the background of this nightmare we seem to hear the voice of this man healed by Christ: "I have peace and quiet in my soul. This was given to me by Christ. He will give it to you, too. Hasten to Him. My heart is filled with sweet compunction." But our sceptical mind will ask: Is this so? And even if it is so, how long will this sweet compunction last? Here we are given an answer in today's reading from the Apostle: "But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the GIFT OF GOD" (Eph. 2:4-5, 8). In these words of the Apostle we have a whole revelation. We have heard about the sufferings of the possessed one and how the Grace of God delivered him from them. This same Grace can do the very same for us. But Grace is given through faith. What is faith? In answer to this question I will tell you one incident from my student life.

I studied at the Polytechnic Institute. At the same time I was a member of a Christian student society. Once, we students decided to invite to our meeting our teacher, Father John Egorov, a famous professor of theology. He would have to travel to Lesnoye, a suburb of St. Petersburg, where our polytechnic institute was located. We asked him to come visit us, but he answered: "I have never been there, and I don't know how to go."

Our friend who had come to invite him said: "Father, it is very simple. First, go to the railroad station, and there you will find the street car. Wait until number 20 comes and take it. Without asking anyone, go to the very end. The conductor will say: 'Polytechnic Institute—last stop.' Walk out, stand with your back to the street car and before you will be a lane. Here, look for number 6 and before you will be a courtyard, and in the courtyard a house. Go up to the second floor, and you will find us there."

Father John said: "A week passed and Sunday came. I took my notebook, looked at what I had written, and knew at once what I had to do. I remembered everything that your friend told me, and accepted it within myself as if I had already done it. I did all this in reality, and here I am with you." This is what faith means: to accept within oneself what was said, and put what was said into action.

Here in the Holy Gospel promises are given to us, and also instructions of what we must do to receive these promises. Let us accept them with faith. Let us perform everything that we are instructed to do in our lives, and we will receive the same Grace, the same peace, the same joy. We will receive everything that was received by the possessed man healed by Christ. Then the words of Christ will also refer to us. "Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee."

Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful

for the Saint: Matt . 11:27-30

Saints of the week

29 October / 11 November – Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Anastasia the Roman - She was born in Rome of well-born parents and left an orphan at the age of three. As an orphan, she was taken into a women's monastery near Rome, where the abbess was one Sophia, a nun of a high level of perfection. After seventeen years, Anastasia was known in the whole neighbourhood, to the Christians as a great ascetic and to the pagans as a rare beauty. The pagan administrator of the city, Probus, heard of her and sent soldiers to bring her to him. The good Abbess Sophia counselled Anastasia for two hours on how to keep the Faith, how to resist flattering delusion and how to endure torture. Anastasia said to her: 'My heart is ready to suffer for Christ; my soul is ready to die for my beloved Jesus.' Brought before the governor, Anastasia openly proclaimed her faith in Christ the Lord and, when the governor tried to dissuade her from the Faith, first with promises and then with threats, the holy maiden said to him: 'I am ready to die for my Lord, not once but—oh, if it were only possible!—a thousand times.' When they stripped her naked, to humiliate her, she cried to the judge: 'Whip me and cut at me and beat me; my naked body will be hidden by wounds, and my shame will be covered by my blood!' She was whipped and beaten and cut about. She twice felt a great thirst and asked for water, and a Christian, Cyril, gave her a drink, for which he was blessed by the martyr and beheaded by the pagans. Then her breasts and tongue were cut off, and an angel of God appeared to her and upheld her. She was finally beheaded with the sword outside the city. Blessed Sophia found her body and buried it, and Anastasia was crowned with the wreath of martyrdom under the Emperor Decius (249-251). Our Holy Father Abraham the Recluse and his niece Maria; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Timothy of Esphigmenou; St. Kea, bishop of Devon & Cornwall, St. Odrada, nun (7th c.)

30 October / 12 November - The Hieromartyr Zenobius and his sister Zenobia - From the town of Aegae in Cilicia, they inherited the true Faith and great material wealth from their parents. Inflamed with zeal for the Faith, they, with great love, gave away their riches to the poor. Because they were so open-handed, God shielded these hands from every evil intent by men or demons. The merciful hands of Zenobius, which gave to the poor, were endowed by God with the gift of wonderworking, so that Zenobius was able to heal the sick of every sort of infirmity simply by the touch of his hand, and he was made Bishop of Aegae. At a time of persecution, the judge Licinius seized him and said: 'I offer you the two: life and death—life if you bow down to the gods, and death if you do not.' Holy Zenobius replied: 'Life without Christ is not life, but death; and death for Christ's sake is not death, but life.' When Zenobius was put to harsh torture, his sister presented herself before the judge and said: 'I also want to drink this cup of suffering and be crowned with that wreath.' After torture by fire and in boiling pitch, they were both beheaded with the sword in about 285, and thus brother and sister entered into the immortal Kingdom of Christ the King. The Holy Apostles Cleopas, Tertius, Mark, Justus and Artemas; The Holy King Milutin.

31 October / 13 November - The Holy Apostles Stachys, Amplias, Urban, Narcissus, Apelles and Aristobulus - They were of the Seventy. St Stachys was a helper of St Andrew the First-Called, who made him bishop of Byzantium. He built a church in Argyropolis, and governed his flock with faithfulness and zeal. After sixteen years as bishop, he entered peacefully into rest in the Lord. Amplias and Urban were also fellow-workers with St Andrew, and were made bishop by him, Amplias in Lydda and Urban in Macedonia. They both died as martyrs for Christ the Lord. Narcissus was made Bishop of Athens by the Apostle Philip, and holy Apelles was Bishop of Heraklion in Trachis.

Aristobulus - Born in Cyprus, Aristobulus was the brother of the Apostle Barnabas. He followed the Apostle Paul, who mentions him in his Epistle to the Romans saying, "Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus" ([Romans 16:10](#)). When the great apostle appointed many bishops throughout the various parts of the world, he appointed Aristobulus as bishop for the British, that is, England. In Britain the people were savages, heathen and wicked. Aristobulus endured many indescribable tortures, misfortunes and evil among them. They struck and beat him mercilessly, dragged him about the streets, ridiculed and mocked him. Finally this holy man succeeded by the power of the Grace of God. He enlightened the people, baptized them in the name of Christ the Lord, built churches, ordained priests and deacons and, in the end, died there peacefully and entered into the Kingdom of the Lord, Whom he faithfully served.

The Holy Martyr Epimachus – born in Egypt, he lived there in ascetism, and there finished his earthly course a martyr. In imitation of St John the Baptist, he went off as a young man into the desert. In response to his great love for God, the Spirit of God instructed him in all truth and, with no other teacher, taught him how to live the ascetic life. Epimachus discovered how the pagans were torturing and slaughtering the Christians in Alexandria, so, all afire with zeal for the Faith, he went to the city and knocked down the idol. When the pagans began to torture him for this, he cried out: 'Smite me, spit on me, put a crown of thorns on my head and a reed in my hand; give me gall to drink, crucify me and pierce me with a spear. The Lord endured all that, and I want to endure it!' In the vast crowd that was watching the martyrdom of holy Epimachus, there was one woman with a blind eye. She wept bitterly on witnessing the soul-less torture of the man of God, and, when the torturers flayed his holy body, blood spurted from it and a drop fell on her eye. Suddenly she could see, and her blind eye became as whole as the other. Then the woman cried out: 'Great is the God in whom this sufferer believes!' After that, St Epimachus was beheaded and his soul entered into eternal joy, in about 250. ; The Holy Martyr Nicolas of Chios; Our Holy Fathers Spiridon and Nicodemus;

St. Begu, nun of Harkness - reputed by St. Bede to have seen in a vision the death of St. Hilda, the foundress of both Whitby and Harkness.

1 / 14 November - Fast Day - Ss Cosmas and Damian - Unmercenary and wonderworkers, they were brothers in the flesh and in the spirit, born somewhere in Asia of a pagan father and a Christian mother. After their father's death, their mother Theodota devoted all her time and energy to the bringing-up of her sons as true Christians. God helped her, and her sons grew as two choice fruits and as two holy lamps. They were skilled in medicine and ministered to the sick without payment, and so fulfilled Christ's command: 'Freely have ye received; freely give' (Matt. 10:8). They were so strict in their unpaid ministry to men that Cosmas became greatly enraged with his brother Damian when he took three eggs from a woman, Palladia, and gave orders that, after his death, he should not be buried with his brother. In fact, holy Damian had not taken those eggs as a reward for healing Palladia's sickness, but because she had sworn by the Most Holy Trinity that he should have them. However, after their death in Feremans, they were buried together in obedience to a revelation from God. These two holy brothers were great wonderworkers both during their lifetime and after their death. A farm labourer, on lying down to sleep at one time, was attacked by a snake, which entwined itself around his mouth and stomach. This poor man would have breathed his last in the greatest torment had he not at the last moment invoked the help of Saints Cosmas and Damian. Thus the Lord glorified forever by miracles those who glorified Him here on earth by their faith, purity and mercy. The Holy Martyr Hermenegild the Heir; Our Holy Father, the Martyr James with his disciples James and Dionysius; St Ethelnoth of Canterbury, Holy First Hierarch of the English Church.

2 / 15 November - The Holy Martyrs Acyndinus, Pegasius, Anempodistus, Aphthonius, Elpidophorus and others with them - They were Persian Christians, and suffered in the time of King Sapor, in 355. The first three were servants at the court of this king, but secretly served Christ their Lord. When they were arrested and brought to trial before the king, he asked them whence they came. To this they replied: 'Our paternity and life is the most holy Trinity, consubstantial and undivided, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God.' The king gave them over to harsh torture, and they endured it all courageously, singing psalms and with prayer on their lips. At the time of their torture and imprisonment, angels of God appeared to them several times, and once the Lord Christ Himself, as a man 'with a face radiant as the sun'. When one of the torturers, Aphthonius, saw with wonder that boiling lead did no harm to the martyrs, he believed in Christ and cried out: 'Great is the Christian God!' He was then immediately beheaded, and many others saw and believed. Then the King commanded that Acyndinus, Pegasus and Anempodistus be sewn into goat-skins and thrown into the sea. Then St Aphthonius appeared from the other world with three shining angels, and they bore the martyrs to dry land and set them free. Elpidophorus was a courtier. When he revealed that he was a Christian, and denounced the king for his slaughter of innocent Christians, the king condemned him to death, and Elpidophorus was beheaded along with about seven thousand other Christians. Then the three first-named martyrs were finally thrown into a burning furnace, along with twenty-eight soldiers and the king's mother, who had also come to faith in Christ. And so, in the flames, they gave their righteous souls into the hands of the Lord. Our Holy Father Marcian of Cyrus; The Hieromartyr Victorinus, Bishop of Patav.

St. Cadfan, abbot of Bardsey Island - Breton in origin he migrated to Wales, gathered numerous disciples and founded the church of Towyn (Gwynedd) and the large famous monastery of Bardsey Island, both of which claimed to be the place of his death.

3 / 16 November - Fast Day - The Hieromartyr Acepshimas, Bishop of Naeson - The eighty-year-old Acepshimas, filled with every Christian virtue, was sitting one day in his house with his guests when a child, filled with the Spirit of God, ran up to the aged bishop, kissed him on the head, and said: 'Blessed is this head, for it will be martyred for Christ!' This prophecy was soon fulfilled. King Sapor raised a fierce persecution of Christians throughout Persia, and St Acepshimas was seized and taken before a prince who was also a pagan priest. When the bishop had been arrested and bound, he was approached by one of his household, who asked him what he wanted done about his house. The saint replied: 'It's no longer my house; I'm going to a

higher home, and shall not return.' After long interrogation, he was thrown into prison, whence, the next day, were brought a seventy-year-old priest called Joseph and a deacon, Aeithalas. After three years' imprisonment and many sufferings, Aceptimas was beheaded, and Joseph and Aeithalas were buried up to the waist in the ground, being stoned by a group of men who were without mercy towards Christians. Joseph's body, by God's providence, disappeared that night, and above Aeithalas's body there grew a tree, which healed all manner of disease and pain. Five years passed, then the wicked and jealous pagans cut down this tree. These soldiers of Christ suffered in Persia in the fourth century, in the time of the pagan King Sapor. The Holy and Great Martyr George; Our Holy Father Elias of Egypt; Elevation of the relics of St. Edith, abbess of Wilton, by St. Dunstan;

St. Winifred of Holywell, abbess of Denbighshire in England, m (630) - Daughter to Trevith, a member of the Welsh landed class and advisor to the king. Spiritual student of her maternal uncle Saint Beuno. Physically beautiful, she made a private vow of chastity, becoming a bride of Christ. Murdered when she rejected the amorous advances of a chieftain named Caradog of Hawarden; she had escaped from him, and was seeking shelter in a church when he caught and killed her. Legend says that where her head fell, a well sprang up which became a place of pilgrimage, and whose waters were reported to heal leprosy, skin diseases, and other ailments. Saint Beuno raised her back to life; he cursed Caradog who was promptly swallowed by the earth. Winifred became a nun, and later abbess at Cwytherin, Denbighshire. Name Meaning - friend of peace (Celtic / Gaelic) . Patronage: incest victims, martyrs.

4 / 17 November - Our Holy Father Joannicius the Great - This great spiritual light was born in the village of Marykata in the province of Bithynia, of his father Myrtrices and his mother Anastasia. He was a shepherd as a youth. Whilst tending his sheep at pasture, he would often retreat into solitude and remain in prayer the whole day, having encircled his flock with the sign of the Cross so that it should not wander off and get lost. After that, he was called into the army, and caused men to marvel at his courage, particularly in the wars against the Bulgarians. After his military service, Joannicius withdrew to Olympus in Asia Minor, where he became a monk and gave himself entirely over to asceticism, persevering in it till his death in great old age. He laboured in the ascetic life for over fifty years in various places, and had from God most abundant gifts of wonderworking: he healed all sicknesses and pains, drove out demons, tamed wild beasts, possessing a particular power over snakes; he walked dryfoot through water, became invisible to men when he so desired and foretold future events. He was distinguished by an outstanding humility and meekness. In outward appearance, he was like a giant, huge and strong. He took an active part in the destiny of God's Church, for, during the iconoclast period he was at first deluded, but then tore himself away and became an ardent defender of reverence towards the icons. He had a great friendship with Patriarch Methodius of Constantinople. Joannicius lived for ninety-four years, and entered peacefully into rest in the Lord in 846. He was a great wonderworker both during his lifetime and after his death. The Hieromartyrs Nicander, Bishop of Myra, and Hermas the Priest.

St. Clether, hermit of Cornwall - probably of Welsh origin and of the family of St. Brychan. After living in Wales by the river Never, he settled in North Cornwall in later life in the remote and beautiful Inny valley at the place which still bears his name.

St. Birstan, bishop of Winchester (931-4) - known for his personal service to the poor; his devotion to the dead evidenced by his frequent prayers for them in the cemetery (to which the departed souls once answered "Amen").

HOMILY **on the glory of the name of God**

And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen (Psalm 72:19). From the grace-filled heart of the prophet flow words full of grace. The prophet speaks of the King and the King's Son, the most unusual King Who has ever appeared on earth. *May His name be blessed forever (Psalm 72:17)*, the prophet said, and then, as if that were not enough, he said it again and added: *His glorious name*. The Church of Christ is the glory of Christ. Blessed is His Holy Church-the fruit of His labors, the wreath of His humiliation, the work of His hands, and the flower of His blood! Blessed is the very name of His Church-holy and salvific! And with His Church, that is, with His work and with His glory, the whole earth shall be filled. By the words, *Forever and ever*, the prophet foretold the immortal work of Christ, that is, His Church. She will be built in time and will be revealed in eternity. She will be built until the end of time, and will be revealed whole in eternity.

O my brethren, let us strive that our souls may be built into Christ's Church, into that living and immortal body whose life has no end, and whose beauty is indescribable. Let us strive that we are not rejected as unsuitable and useless stones, to be cast into the abyss of eternal darkness.

O Lord Jesus Christ, King and Son of the King, write us also in the book of immortality, and remember us in Thy Heavenly Kingdom.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.