



## All Saints of Russia

### Second Sunday After Pentecost

17 / 30 June

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 1:** When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; / while the soldiers were guarding Thy Most Pure Body; / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour, / granting life to the world. / The Powers of Heaven therefore cried to Thee O Giver of Life: / glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ! / Glory to Thy Kingdom; / Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

**Tropar of All Saints of Russia, Tone 8:** As a beautiful fruit of the sowing of Thy salvation, / the land of Russia doth offer to Thee, O Lord, all the Saints that have shone in her. / By their prayers keep the Church and the world in profound peace, // through the Theotokos, O Most-merciful One.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 1:** As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, / Raising the world with Thyself. / Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. / Adam exults O Master, Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to Thee; / Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ.

**Kondak of All Saints of Russia Tone 3:** Today the choir of the saints who pleased God in the land of Russia / doth stand before us in Church and invisibly doth pray for us to God. / With them the angels glorify Him, / and all the saints of the Church of Christ keep festival with them; // and they all pray together for us to the Eternal God.

#### Matins Gospel II

#### Epistle: St. Paul's Epistle To The Romans 2:10-16

But glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

#### BUT THE DOERS OF THE LAW WILL BE JUSTIFIED

He makes inquisition, not into the quality of persons, but into the difference of actions. By so saying, he shows that it was not in actions, but in persons only, that the Jew differed from the Gentile ...For it is not because one is a Jew and the other a Gentile, that one is honored and the other disgraced, but it is from the works that either treatment comes ...He shows not only the equality of the Jew and the Gentile, but that the Jew was even much burdened by the gift of the Law. For the Gentile is judged without law. But this 'without law' here expresses not the worse plight, but the easier, that is, he does not have the Law to accuse him; ...he is condemned solely from the reasoning of nature, but the Jew ...the greater the attention he enjoyed, the greater the punishment he will suffer ...For in that they said they did not need grace, being justified by the Law, he shows that they need it more than the Gentiles, considering they are liable to be punished more.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily V on Romans I. B#55, p. 364.*

Second Reading: Hebrews 11:33 - 12:2

## Gospel: St. Matthew 4:18-23

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, And immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

### HE SAID TO PETER AND ANDREW, FOLLOW ME, AND I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN

Yet John says that they were called in another manner. Therefore it is evident that this was a second call. One may perceive this from many things. For there it is said that they came to Him when 'John was not yet cast into prison,' but here, after he was in confinement. And there Andrew calls Peter, but here Jesus calls both. And John says, Jesus seeing Simon coming, says, 'You are Simon, the Son of Jonah, you shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone' (John 1:42). But Matthew says that he was already called by that name ...And from the place whence they were called, and from many other things, one may perceive this: such as their ready obedience and abandonment of all. For now they were well instructed beforehand ..But mark both their faith and their obedience. For though they were in the midst of their work ...'They forsook all and followed.' Such is the obedience which Christ seeks of us... We can see this, too, when some other had come to Him and was asking leave to bury his own father: He permitted not even this (Matt.8:21,22).

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XIV on Matthew IV, 3. B#54, pp. 87- 88.*

### Second Reading: St. Matthew 4:25 – 5:12

Last Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost, we celebrated the Feast of All Saints. We asked the question, "What makes a person a saint?" We talked about how saints are consecrated, set apart for the service of God, and no longer focused on worldly purposes. We looked at the icons, and the saints we see there, in our family picture album, and our church "hall of fame." The conclusion was that they yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit, and so were set apart, consecrated to God – and that each one of us has received the same Holy Spirit, and that we are meant to be temples of the Holy Spirit, to minister to the needs of others and to proclaim the good news of our deliverance from death by our Lord Jesus Christ. We are all saints; and we are all meant to be "Saints," in the way that we talk about those whom we remember, who we venerate through their icon.

Today we celebrate the Feast of all the saints whose light has shined upon us from the land of Russia, from the time of the baptism of Russia in the year of our Lord 988 through trials and invasions and wars, to those who are among the new martyrs and confessors, some of whom suffered and died during our own lifetimes. It took almost a thousand years for the good news to reach Kievan Rus'; it took another 800 years to make the journey from there across the steppes and the taiga to the western shore of the Pacific Ocean, and then, from the port city of Saints Peter and Paul, to come to Alaska, and down the west coast of the North American continent, in the year 1794. The faith was carried across the Russian land, first by monks, who fled from cities and towns and villages to struggle in the wilderness; and then by others, who formed small sketes, and then monasteries. People began to move nearby, and settlements became villages, and then towns, and then cities; and so monks would again flee further east, into the wilderness, starting the cycle again. Time and again, the Orthodox faith was embraced by the people who heard the Gospel as the roving monks came their way, and so the Church grew, and her influence spread. Many miracles were performed, many people were healed, and many, many more were protected and comforted in troubled times. We could speak for hours on end about the many wondrous saints who lived in Russia, and not discuss them all – to say nothing of those whose names and circumstances are known to God alone, in Whose presence they dwell.

It is good for us to remember and to celebrate this heritage, this great treasure, this inheritance that is ours in the Orthodox Church that is Russian in its background and practice. But, like a buried treasure or an unclaimed fortune, we gain nothing from this inheritance that has been given to us if we do not claim it as our own, and put in on, so to speak, and wear it, and use it, and show it forth in the world as so many of the saints who have gone before us have done. If we do not embrace the faith whole-heartedly, with that spiritual hunger and thirsting, as we hear in the Beatitudes, and live it out in our lives, there is no point in celebrating the feast today. If we do not draw near to the faith, as did those who lived next to the monasteries did, there is no point in celebrating the feast today. If we do not flee from the cities of the world, so that we can put aside the temptations of the world and draw closer to God, as did so many monastic saints in Russia, there is no point to celebrating the feast today. And if we are not willing to undertake the ascetic labors needed to transform us, so that we, also, may draw those living in a world of darkness to the light of the life of Christ in us, there is no point in celebrating the feast today – for if we will not do these things, then we do not value the saints who have arisen in the Russian land.

Brothers and sisters, let us pray that God will bless us with grace and strength to learn and follow the examples of saintly living given to us by all the saints of Russia, that we may join them in glorifying God, and to making known to our land, as they did in theirs, the good news of our salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

O all you saints of the Russian land, pray to God for us!

*Source: Rumbings from a Desert Cave*

**Saints of the Week**  
**Apostles Fast Continues**

**17 / 30 June — The Holy Martyrs Manuel, Sabel and Ishmael** - these three brothers were Persians, of a pagan father and a Christian mother. Brought up in a Christian spirit and baptised, they were high officials at the court of King Balanos, and were sent to the Emperor Julian the Apostate to conduct negotiations and confirm the peace between the Persian and Graeco-Roman Empires. The apostate Emperor had arranged some sort of vile celebration in honour of the idols at Chalcedon, and he went there with his nobles bearing sacrifices for the idols. The Persian delegates absented themselves from the celebration. The Emperor summoned them and ordered them to take part in the festivities and offer sacrifice to the gods. They then declared that they were foreign envoys who had come from the King of Persia to establish peace between the two Empires, and not for any other reason. They said that they were Christians and considered it unworthy to bow down before lifeless idols and offer them sacrifice. The Emperor, in fury, had them thrown into prison. They were brought out the next day, and he began to dispute with them about the Faith, but the holy brothers were irrefutable and unwavering. They were then bound naked to trees and struck and flayed with iron flails. During their torture, they prayed to God, thanking Him for it: 'O sweet Jesus, these pains are sent to us for love of Thee.' An angel of God appeared to them, comforted them and took away all their pain. Contrary to all understanding of the rights of foreign envoys, the wicked Emperor Julian finally issued the order that the three brothers were to be slain with the sword. There was a great earthquake at their execution, thus making it impossible for the pagans to burn them as the Emperor had commanded. The earth later gave up the martyrs' bodies for Christians to find and bury. Many miracles were worked over their relics, bringing many pagan witnesses to the Christian faith. When the Persian king heard of the inhuman death that Julian had provided for the envoys, he prepared for war against him. Julian set out for Persia convinced of victory, but he was beaten to his knees and perished miserably. Our Holy Father Pior;

**St. Nectan of Hartland, martyr (Devon, 6th c.)** - The Welsh saint Nectan has always been venerated as a martyr killed by robbers, although we have no details about his life. He is the patron of Hartland, Devonshire, which is near the site of his hermitage. The fullest surviving vita dates only to the 12th century in the Gotha manuscript. This work describes Nectan as the oldest of the 24 children of Saint Brychan of Brecknock. It tells us that Nectan was already a monk when he and his many relatives sailed from southern Wales to northern Devonshire. Seeking solitude, he settled in the dense forests. His family would meet him at his hermitage the last day of each year. After several years he found an even more remote valley with a spring. There he helped a swineherd find his pigs; later the owner rewarded Nectan with a gift of two cows, which were stolen. Nectan found them, remonstrated with the thieves, and tried to convert them to Christ. They rewarded his efforts by cutting off his head. After his death, we are told, he carried his head for half a mile to the spring by his hut. Bishop Lyfing of Crediton (1021-1046) provided treasures for the church at Hartland, including bells, lead for the roof, and a sculpted reliquary. Nectan's staff was decorated with gold, silver, and jewels. Manors were built around the church to give it some protection from the Danish invaders. Five churches are dedicated to Nectan in Devon and Cornwall and possibly two Breton placenames may be connected with him. His feast is commemorated at Launceston, Exeter, Wells, and elsewhere. The date of his death is thought to be May 18.

**St. Botolph of Boston, England, abbot and confessor (680)** - (also known as Botulf, Bostolph) Died c. 680; feast of his translation is December 1. Botulph and his brother, Saint Adulph, were two noble English brothers at the dawn of Christianity on that island. They were probably born in East Anglia. At some point they traveled into Belgian Gaul to learn more about Christian discipline in a monastery because they were then scarce in England. They progressed in the spiritual life to the point that Adulph is said to have been raised to the episcopate, though this is questioned. Botulph is said to have been chaplain to the convent where two of his king's sisters lived, possibly at Chelles. (Liobsynde, the first abbess of Wenlock (Salop), was from Chelles and Wenlock was initially dependent on Ikanhoe.) Botulph returned to England with the treasure he had found and begged King Ethelmund of the South Saxons for land on which to set it. The king gave him the wilderness of Ikanhoe (Icanhoh), formerly thought to be near Boston (Botulph's stone) in Lincolnshire but now believed to be Iken in Suffolk. (Others relate that the land was provided by the king of East Anglia, either Ethelhere, 654, or more likely Ethelwold, 654-64.) There he built an abbey and taught the assembled brethren the rules of Christian perfection and the institutes of the holy fathers. He became one of the foremost missionaries of the 7th century. Everyone loved Botulph: He was humble, mild, and affable. He always practiced what he preached, finding an upright example far more important than sermons. Nevertheless, Saint Ceolfrid travelled all the way from Wearmouth to converse with this man "of remarkable life and learning" before joining Saint Benedict Biscop at Wearmouth. Botulph thanked God in good times and in bad, knowing that God works all things to the good of those who love Him. He lived to a venerable age and was purified by a long illness before his happy death. Although his monastery was destroyed by the Danes, his relics were carried to Ely (the head) and Thorney Abbeys. It is said that when Ethelwold sent his disciple Ulfkital to collect the relics of Botulph for Thorney Abbey, he found that he could not move them without also taking those of Adulph as well. Saint Edward the Confessor gave some of them to Westminster and others are at Bury Saint Edmunds. More than 70 English churches were dedicated to Saint Botulph, including four parishes in London. Other place names also recall his sanctity including the town of Boston in Lincolnshire and Botulph's bridge, now Bottle-bridge, in Huntingdonshire.

**18 June / 1 July — The Holy Martyr Leontius** - a Roman military commander in Tripoli in Phoenicia in the reign of the Emperor Vespasian, he was born in Yelada, 'of great physical stature, powerful, strong and bold in battle'. The imperial governor, Hadrian, sent a military detachment to seize Leontius, Hadrian being a fierce adversary and persecutor of Christians. The commander of the detachment, Hypatius, fell ill on the way with a grave fever and the unit had therefore to slow its pace. One night an angel of the Lord appeared to Hypatius and said to him: 'If you desire to be healed, you and your soldiers must cry to heaven three times: "O God of Leontius, help me!"'. Hypatius told his companions about this vision, and they all shouted together as the angel had instructed him, and Hypatius was immediately healed. This miracle amazed them



all, and especially a certain Theodulus. Then Hypatius and Theodulus went on ahead of the other soldiers to find Leontius. Leontius received them courteously and offered them refreshment. When he had expounded his faith in Christ, their hearts began to burn with love towards the Lord, and a bright cloud descended upon Hypatius and Theodulus, shedding dew over them. In this way the Holy Spirit of God Himself baptised these two converted souls while St Leontius spoke the words: 'In the name of the All-holy Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.' The evil Hadrian discovered that Hypatius and Theodulus had become Christians and ordered that they be beaten without mercy and then beheaded with an axe. In this manner Leontius's spiritual children died. Then Hadrian ordered a most cruel torture for Leontius, but Leontius remained unwavering in his faith. His entire body was covered with wounds, but he prayed to God unceasingly to remain with him. In the midst of these most vicious torments, an angel of the Lord appeared to comfort and encourage him. At last they threw the martyr onto the ground and flogged him until he gave his soul to God. Leontius's sufferings were witnessed by a certain Notarius, who recorded all that he saw on tablets and placed them in the martyr's grave. St Leontius suffered with honour in the year 73.

**Our Holy Father Leontius the Seer or Discerner** - of Greek descent from the Peloponnese. He lived a life of asceticism sixty years in the monastery Dionysiou [Mt. Athos] and entered into rest in the year 1605 A.D. being eighty-five years of age. It is said that this saint entered the monastery only once and only once did he leave the monastery in sixty full years. That is: he entered when he first went to Dionysiou and departed when they carried him out to bury him. He possessed the miraculous gift of discernment and prophecy and following his death myrrh flowed from his relics.

**19 June / 2 July — The Holy Apostle Jude, the brother of Our Lord** - one of the Twelve Apostles, he was the son of Joseph and Salome (not the Salome from Bethlehem, but another), and brother to James the Lord's Brother. Joseph the Carpenter had four sons by Salome: James, Hosea, Simon and Jude. Jude is often called 'Jude the brother of James', to note his relationship with his brother (Lk. 6:16; Acts 1:13). St Jude begins his Epistle: 'Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James'. Although he could call himself the Lord's brother, just as James did, he did not do so. This was out of humility and out of shame, because he did not believe in Christ the Lord at the very beginning. When the aged Joseph desired to give Jesus His portion of the property before his death, just as he was doing for his other children, all of them were against it, including Jude, and only James voluntarily shared out his portion and laid some aside for Jesus. Jude is also called Levi and Thaddeus. There is another Thaddeus, or Jude; one of the Seventy (see August 21st), but this Thaddeus or Jude was one of the Great Apostles. He preached the Gospel in Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Idumea, Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia and Armenia. At Edessa, the city of Abgar, he continued and developed the preaching of the other Thaddeus. While he was preaching in the region around Ararat, he was seized by the pagans, crucified and shot through with arrows, that he might reign forever in the Kingdom of Christ. Our Holy Father Paissius the Great; The Holy Martyr Zossima; Our Holy Father John the Solitary; St. John (Maximovitch) II, archbishop of Shanghai & San Francisco;

**St. Romuald, abbot of Camaldoli, Ravenna (1027)** - About the year 970, when Romuald was twenty years old, his father quarrelled with a fellow-citizen of Ravenna in Italy and Romuald was horrified when his father killed his opponent. Just outside Ravenna stands the monastery and church of Sant 'Apollinare in Classe and Romuald sought refuge there as a monk. After three years he asked an austere hermit named Marinus if he might join him as a disciple outside Venice. Romuald's early experience in his family made him exceedingly stern against those who pursued their public careers violently. Peter Orseolo, the Doge of Venice, had reached that office by murdering his predecessor. Romuald and Marinus, helped by the Abbot of Catalonia, persuaded Peter Orseolo to repent and resign the office he had gained with blood. Eventually the emperor appointed Romuald head of the monastery where he had first sought refuge from the evils of the world. But after two years he went to live as a hermit again. He spent his last years founding monasteries and hermitages in Italy, dying on 19 June 1027 at Val di Castro in Piceno. .

**20 June / 3 July — Apostles' Fast — The Hieromartyr Methodius, Bishop of Patara** - he devoted himself from his youth to the ascetic life and, like a city set on a hill, was seen and called to the episcopate in the city of Patara in Lycia. Methodius was a learned and eloquent hierarch and wrote against the heresy of Origen. His words, 'inspired by God, illumine the whole world like lightning'. The pagans rose up against him, tortured him and beheaded him in 311, in Chalcis in Syria. The Holy Martyrs Aristocles, Dimitrianus and Athanasius;

**Our Holy Father Naum of Ochrid** - During this his summer feast there is a great assembly of people at the monastery of St. Nahum. Many sick people come or are brought to beseech healing through faith and prayer over the relics of the saint. Not only Orthodox people but also those from other faiths come to seek favour from St. Nahum. In 1926, a Muslim from Resna brought and donated a bell to the monastery out of thanksgiving because St. Nahum healed his brother from his deathbed and restored him to life. The donor was Jemail Zizo and his brother, who was healed, was called Suleiman Zizo. Both were prominent citizens of Resna.; St Kallistos I, Patriarch of Constantinople; St Leucius, Bishop of Brindisi; Blessed Studios.

**21 June / 4 July — Apostles' Fast — The Holy Martyr Julian of Tarsus** - of a noble senatorial family, he lived in Tarsus in Cilicia and suffered in the reign of Diocletian. Although only eighteen years old when he was taken for trial for the Faith, St Julian was already both educated and resolute in Christian faith and devotion. The imperial governor took him from city to city for a whole year, torturing him all the while and attempting to persuade him to renounce Christ. Julian's mother followed her son at a distance. When the governor seized her and sent her to urge her son to renounce Christ, she spent three days in the prison with him, giving him precisely the opposite advice, teaching him and giving him the strength not to lose heart but to go to his death with courage and gratitude to God. His torturers then sewed Julian into a sack of sand with scorpions and snakes and threw him into the sea, and his mother also died under torture. The waves carried his body onto the shore, and the faithful took it to Alexandria, where they buried it in 290. His relics were later taken to Antioch. St John Chrysostom himself gave an eulogy for the holy martyr Julian: 'A holy voice comes forth from the lips of the martyr, and with this voice is poured out a light brighter than the rays of the sun.' He said further: 'Take whomsoever you will, be he a madman or one possessed, and lead him to the grave of this saint, to the martyr's relics, and you will see the demon immediately jump out and flee as

from blazing fire.' It is evident from this speech that many wonders must have been wrought at St Julian's grave. Our Holy Fathers Julius and Julian; The Holy Martyr Archil II, King of Georgia; The Holy Martyr Luarsab II, Prince of Kartli.

**St. Mewan, abbot of St. Meen** - One of the most famous of the Breton saints was Saint Mewan. A relative of Saint Samson of Dol,\* (\* A Life of St. Samson appeared in OA #40, June 1984) he was born in Gwent of a noble family, and was well-educated, intelligent and serious-minded. When quite young he chose to renounce the world and lead a life of poverty. As a disciple of his kinsman, he travelled with Saint Samson and a small group of monks on a missionary journey to Brittany. After some time in the monastery of Dol which they founded, Samson sent young Mewan to a certain count to beg for assistance in building his basilica. On the way Mewan met a wealthy and pious man, who promised him his own estate as a site for the monastery. This offer was taken up later with Samson's blessing when Mewan desired to lead a more solitary life. The site proved suitable for a monastery except that there was no water. Mewan prayed fervently, and struck his staff into the ground. Immediately a spring of water gushed out. This water healed both sick men and animals, so that soon the fame of it spread abroad, and people flocked to it from distant places. The number of monks increased rapidly as his sanctity became known. Once a count imprisoned and sentenced to death one of his servants for a trifling misdemeanour. St. Mewan begged the count to release him without avail. Through the prayers of St. Mewan, the servant was miraculously released, and fled to the monastery for sanctuary. The infuriated count broke in and seized him, ignoring St. Mewan's warning that as a punishment he would die in three days' time. As the count was returning home, he was seriously injured by a fall from his horse. He repented, confessed and died on the third day. Many miracles, particularly of healing, are recorded in the life of the Saint. After his death his cult gradually spread all over France. His well was famous for its powers of curing a malady popularly called "St. Mewan's evil," namely a malignant mange that eats the flesh down to the bone. In the Middle Ages it was established that between four and five thousand pilgrims came annually for healing. The name Méen (Mewan) is pronounced like the French word for hand, main, so pilgrims used to wear a hand-shaped piece of cloth sewn on their clothes or hat. They were supposed to live on alms throughout their pilgrimage, and give to the poor on their return the money they would have spent on the journey. It is recorded that in the mid-seventeenth century some fifteen thousand pilgrims passed each year through Rennes, where a hospice was built to accommodate them. Even in the late eighteenth century, annual pilgrimages were still being made and numerous healings of skin diseases reported. A charming anecdote is told about Saint Mewan's death. Knowing beforehand the hour of his repose, he called the brethren together in words of love to give them his last instructions. His godson Austol, who had never been parted from him and had always served him humbly, was pierced with grief. "Why, father," he cried, "do you leave me your servant desolate? It had been better that I had been buried by your hands and commended by your holy prayers before your departure." He wept bitterly, and his beloved godfather replied, "Dearest godson, continue with your usual labour, for by God's mercy, in seven days you shall join me in the glory of the heavenly life. The bond of love which unites us is not broken; no, it will be made even stronger." After the Saint's death, Austol continued to serve the brothers as before. On the seventh day, having observed a three-day fast, he went alone to the church, and there peacefully reposed. The brothers, finding him dead, and remembering the love which these two servants of God had for each other, opened Saint Mewan's tomb and discovered that the Saint's body, which diffused a divine fragrance, had moved and was lying on the right of the grave facing the space on the left as if waiting for his disciple. So Austol, who later was also glorified, was buried beside his beloved friend. The bones of the two saints thus declared the love that had always united them. In the year 919 the relics of Saint Mewan and his disciple Saint Austol were moved to Central France to escape the Norsemen, and were brought back in 1074 on January 18, the day on which they are commemorated

**22 June / 5 July — Apostles' Fast - The Hieromartyr Eusebius of Samosata** - he was a major opponent of Arianism. When the patriarchal throne of Antioch became vacant, Meletius was elected Patriarch. This Meletius was a shining light in the Church, and deserved the great eulogy given by St John Chrysostom at his death. But the Arians soon drove Meletius from Antioch. When Constantine's evil son, died, he was followed by Julian the Apostate, a man even worse than he, as ruler of the Empire. During Julian's persecution of Christians, St Eusebius took off his cassock, clad himself in soldier's garb and travelled around the persecuted churches of Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, strengthening the Orthodox faith everywhere and creating the necessary priests, deacons and other clergy and raising some to the episcopate. After the news of Julian's death, St Eusebius advised Meletius to summon a Council of the Church in Antioch. This took place in 363, and the twenty-seven hierarchs present denounced Arianism once again and proclaimed the Orthodox faith as it was expressed at the First Ecumenical Council. Besides Meletius and Eusebius, St Pelagius of Laodicea, a man of great asceticism and chastity, made a great impact at this Council, which took place during the reign of the devout Emperor Jovian. But he died soon after, and the evil Valens took the throne, and the persecution of Orthodoxy began afresh. St Meletius was banished to Armenia, Eusebius to Thrace and Pelagius to Arabia. After Valens, the Emperor Gratian came to the throne and restored freedom to the Church, returning the exiled bishops to their rightful places: Meletius to Antioch, Eusebius to Samosata and Pelagius to Laodicea. Many dioceses were vacant at that time and Eusebius was quick to find canonical pastors for the people. But when he arrived at the city of Doliche with the newly-chosen bishop, Marinus, to install him as bishop and denounce the Arian heresy (which was strong in that city), a certain fanatical heretic threw a tile from the roof and gave him a mortal wound. This great zealot for Orthodoxy, this saint and martyr, died and entered into eternal life in the blessedness of Paradise in the year 379. The Holy Martyrs Xenon and Xenas;

**St. Alban, protomartyr of Britain (c.305)** - when the people of Britain began to follow our Saviour, Jesus Christ, many of them were killed by those who worshipped Satan. The first British Christian to be martyred was St. Alban. Alban lived in the city of Verulamium, which today is called Saint Albans. We do not know who his parents were, or what kind of work he did. But we do know that he was a very kind man. When the soldiers were looking for the local presbyter in order to kill him, Alban hid God's servant in his own house. Alban was not yet a Christian, but as he watched and spoke with the presbyter, and heard his prayers, he began to believe in Christ. The presbyter taught St. Alban about our Saviour and about the Christian Faith, and the saint believed with all his heart, and asked to be baptised. One day, the soldiers heard that the presbyter was hiding in Alban's house. They came to search the house and arrest God's servant. St. Alban, however, put on the presbyter's

robes and the soldiers, thinking that he was the presbyter, arrested him and took him before the judge. The judge was very angry with Alban. "Why did you hide this presbyter?" he shouted. "Turn him over to my soldiers, or else you will be punished." at this, Saint Alban declared, "I am also a Christian and I adore the true, living God." The judge was furious. He cried out, "Renounce Christ and worship our idols, or I will have your head cut off!" The saint, however, gave glory to God. The judge ordered, "Take him to the hill and cut off his head." The holy martyr was very happy. He was joyful that he was going to give up his life for Christ. As the saint was being led to Holmhurst Hill to be killed, they came to the River Ver. The bridge over the river was crowded with people who had come to watch his martyrdom, and so the saint walked to the river, signed it with the Cross, and the river opened and left a path for the saint and the soldiers. When the executioner saw this, he fell at the saint's feet and confessed Christ. The soldiers quickly arrested this new Christian also. The two were taken to the top of the hill, where their heads were cut off, and they received the Martyr's Crown from Christ.

**23 June / 6 July — Apostles' Fast - The Holy Martyr Agrippina** - born and brought up in Rome. She trained herself from childhood to live by the Gospel, expelling the stench of the passions from her heart with the sweet-smelling perfume of purity and chastity. She was betrothed to Christ the Lord, and suffered as a bride of Christ in the reign of the Emperor Valerian. She endured beating with staves until her bones were crushed. An angel of the Lord appeared to her to strengthen her, until she surrendered her soul to God under fresh tortures. Her friends, Vassa, Paula and Agathonica, took her relics to the island of Sicily and buried them there. A church was later built there in her name, where countless miracles were wrought over her relics. She entered into eternal rest and was crowned with glory in the year 275. The Holy Martyrs Eustochius, Gaius and those with them; The Vladimir Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God; The Tale of Theophilus' Repentance ;

**St. Etheldreda of Ely, England, (679)** - Twice Saint Etheldreda (who is also called Saint Audrey) married. released from these unwelcome ties first by the death of her husband after five years and secondly after she managed to persuade her second husband that they should live as brother and sister a relationship that led him to release the saint after twelve years. At last she was able to fulfil her life's desire. In between her two marriages she had lived in solitude for five years on the island of Ely. Now she founded a nunnery and a monastery about the year 672, ruling this double house as abbess. Etheldreda was a woman of noble birth, the daughter of King Anna of East Anglia. But from now on she ceased to wear clothing of fine linen and dressed only in woollen garments. Except at Easter, Pentecost and Epiphany, she washed only in cold water. Only when she was ill or on great church festivals did she eat more than one meal a day. Seven years after the foundation of the double monastery, she died of a plague. The year was 679. The Venerable Bede tells how the body of the saint was exhumed. When she died, she had a tumour on her neck. She attributed this to divine punishment because she was once vain enough to wear a costly necklace. When her coffin was opened sixteen years later, the tumour had healed. Thus Etheldreda became the patron saint of those suffering throat and neck ailments. He also wrote, "Now Etheldreda shines upon our days, Shedding the light of grace on all our ways. Born of a noble and a royal line, She brings to Christ her King a life more fine."