

3rd Sunday After Pentecost

St. Metrophanes, first Patriarch of Constantinople

4 / 17 June

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 2: When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendour of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, Glory to Thee!

Troparion of St Metrophanes tone 1: O good shepherd thou didst proclaim the great mystery of the Trinity/ and manifest Christ's dispensation to all./ Thou didst put to flight the spiritual wolves who menaced your rational flock/ and didst save the lambs of Christ who cry:/ Glory to Him Who has strengthened thee; glory to Him Who has exalted thee;/ glory to Him Who through thee has strengthened the Orthodox Faith.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 2: Hell became afraid, O Almighty Saviour, seeing the miracle of Thy resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee! And the world, O My Saviour, praises Thee forever.

Kontakion of St Metrophanes tone 2: Thou didst proclaim the Faith of Christ by thy words,/ and by thy life thou didst increase Christ's flock to a multitude./ Now thou dost rejoice with the Angels,/ and art ceaselessly praying for us, O Metrophanes.



Matins Gospel III

EPISTLE: Romans 5:1-10

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; And perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

THROUGH WHOM ALSO WE HAVE ACCESS BY FAITH INTO THIS GRACE

And let me beg you to consider how he everywhere sets down these two points, His part, and our part. His part, however, is varied and numerous and diverse. For He died for us and reconciled us; He brought us to Himself, and gave us grace unspeakable. But we brought only faith as our contribution. And so he says, 'by faith, into this grace.' What grace is this? Tell me. It is being counted worthy of the knowledge of God; being forced from error; coming to a knowledge of the truth; obtaining all the blessings that come through baptism. For the purpose of His bringing us close was that we might receive these gifts. It was not only that we might have simple remission of sins and that we should be reconciled, but that we might also receive countless benefits ...He unveils the whole of things to come ...For this is the nature of God's grace. It has no end; it knows no bounds, but is on the advance at all times to greater things ...Take an instance of what I mean. A person has acquired rulership and glory and authority, yet he does not stay in that status continuously, but is speedily cast out of it. If man does not take it from him, death comes, and is sure to seize it. But God's gifts are not of this kind: for neither man, nor occasion, nor crisis of affairs, nor even the Devil, nor death, can come and cast us out of them. But when we are dead, we then more strictly speaking have possession of them, and continue enjoying them more and more.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily IX on Romans IV: B#55, p. 396.

GOSPEL: Matthew 6:22-33

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Last week, we considered the question asked by St Herman of Alaska, "What do you love more than anything else, and what would you wish for your happiness?" Today in the Gospel we heard the answer to that question given by our Lord Jesus Christ. "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ... your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." Our Lord gives us a definite direction where to look for those things which will bring to us the greatest value and happiness – not the things of this world, but He seeks instead to lift our awareness onto a higher level, to something greater and more important.

In order to reach this awareness, we need to acquire first, humility. We tend to think that all of reality is somehow contained in or connected to this created universe and that we, that is mankind, are the masters of this world. We need to realize that this world in which we live is in and of itself of no value; it is a limited creation and is far surpassed by the uncreated eternity wherein God dwells. Not only is the created universe surpassed by eternity, but that eternity (the Kingdom of God) is beyond the comprehension of this world. Anything that we might acquire in this world, anything that we might become in this world is worthless in the Kingdom of God. This world is not and never was meant to be an end in and of itself, but rather it was always, from the moment of its creation, a means by which man could come to God. Thus rather than being in any way the goal of our lives, this world is simply a tool to prepare us for the life for which we were created – the life of communion with God. We have to set aside the inherent pride that tells us that we are God's equal, or even that this world is all there is and that we can be the masters of it (and therefore the most important being in it). For that, we need humility – we need to remember that we are simply dust, animated by the breath of God Himself. Once we see ourselves in this light, once we have this orientation of humility, then we can begin to see that only those things which bring us nearer to God, the source of our life, have any value at all. For this reason our Lord instructs us to "seek first the kingdom of God" because the Kingdom of God is the only thing that has any value at all.

In addition to humility, we must also be single-minded in the pursuit of the Kingdom of God. In the beginning of the Gospel that we heard today, our Lord said, "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." The "eye" here has many meanings the most common and powerful of which is that the eye of the soul is the essence and core of our being, our spirit which is the point of contact between God and man. In order for our whole being to be "full of light", that is full of the grace of the Holy Spirit, that point of contact must be whole, single and not divided. It must not be distracted and pursuing after a multitude of things, but it must be focused only on the pursuit of the grace of God. That pursuit must be the single motivation that determines everything else in our lives. If we become scattered and divide our desires and attentions among many pursuits then we gain nothing. If we pursue that which is worthless we likewise gain nothing. Thus it is paramount that we focus our soul on acquiring only those things which are of true value – that is only on acquiring the grace of God. Everything else is either a means to acquire that grace or it is a distraction to be set aside.

To further refine this single-minded pursuit of the grace of God, our Lord continues saying, "No man can serve to masters ... you cannot serve God and mammon." Here He clarifies for us the core of the soul's conflict. We are created to seek after God and to love Him, but because of the fallen and sinful nature which was passed on to us by our first parents (which was fractured due to their own sin) the tendency of the soul is to love and seek after the things of this world.

For a moment let us pause to clarify this word "mammon" which has fallen out common use and so may not have a clear meaning. "Mammon" means "riches" or "wealth" which in turn means simply "a plentiful supply of material goods." Thus our Lord places the pursuit of material goods in opposition to the pursuit of the grace of God saying that we cannot serve God and Mammon.

This is not to say that material goods are in and of themselves opposed to God and detrimental to our spiritual life. Rather our Lord tells us that the pursuit of and attachment to worldly and material goods impedes or even rules out the pursuit of and attachment to God. Therefore each one of us must make a choice – indeed we must make a constant and conscious choice to seek after God, rather than the things of this world. Among the saints there are many who were wealthy,

who had an abundance of material goods – but those goods had no hold on them and they parted with their material wealth willingly as the need and opportunity arose; they gave freely and cheerfully of all that they had, even down to the last penny and the clothing that they wore. St John of Kronstadt – being the rector of a large city cathedral and being known and respected by many wealthy and powerful people – constantly received gifts and large donations. But these gifts had no hold on him for as soon as he would receive it with one hand, he would give it away with the other. I knew a monk some years ago who seemed to always have a collection of material things – many beautiful and valuable items as well as other items which were less valuable (but no less beautiful). He seemed to “attract” gifts even from strangers. But these possessions had no hold on him – he freely and constantly would give away that which he was given without a second thought. He had material “wealth” in one sense, but it did not hold him, nor was he bound by it. He freely gave all of what he had to others. These examples show us how it is that we ourselves should consider our material possessions and wealth. Accept whatever God gives and be prepared – eager even – to give away all that you have whenever the need arises. There is no need to keep some back for yourself or to save some extra for a “rainy day”, God will provide all that you need in this life.

Rather than pursuing the material wealth of this world, our only goal and focus should be to acquire the spiritual wealth of the grace of God. St Seraphim also tells us this when he says that the purpose of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. This is our primary, indeed our only, task in this life – to use the life of this world and the material possessions that we have as tools and as “currency” with which to acquire the grace of God. Great wealth is nothing and worthless if it remains in our hands – whatever God gives to you, freely use it to draw near to Him. Make your decisions based not on how to become wealthy in this life, but rather choose what you do based on what will bring you closer to God, what will bring to you more of His grace. Material wealth is nothing – material poverty is nothing – the only thing that is of value at all is the grace of God and the spiritual wealth of the Kingdom of God.

Therefore, seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness because these are the only things worth possessing. Do not be turned aside by the desire for the things of this world, even those which we might see as necessary such as food, shelter and clothing. God knows that we need these things and provides abundantly for our need. All we need to do is to single-mindedly, with our whole heart and soul and strength, fix our desire on the riches of the Kingdom of Heaven, on the acquisition of the grace of God, and all that we need will be provided for us by God, our loving Father Who cares for us.

Archpriest David Moser
<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/propoved/info>

Saints of the Week *Apostles Fast Continues*

4 / 17 June — Metrophanes of Constantinople - His father Dometius, brother of the Roman Emperor Probus, fled from Rome as a Christian during a persecution and went to Byzantium. The Bishop of Byzantium, Titus, ordained Dometius priest and, after Titus's death, Dometius became Bishop of Byzantium. After Dometius's death, his elder son Probus occupied the episcopal throne (Dometius had children from his earlier, pagan days), and Metrophanes succeeded him on his death. When the Emperor Constantine first set eyes on Metrophanes, he loved him as a father. At the time of the First Ecumenical Council, Metrophanes was a very old man and, being unable to take a full part in the Council's deliberations, appointed his assistant bishop, Alexander, as his representative. The Emperor had Metrophanes raised to the rank of Patriarch by the Council, and he thus became the first Patriarch of Constantinople. The Emperor further invited the whole Council to visit the sick and aged hierarch. When the Emperor asked him who he wished to succeed him on the patriarchal throne, Metrophanes named Alexander of Alexandria, after which he said to him: 'My brother, you are my chosen successor!' He also took Archdeacon Athanasius (later Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria) by the hand and praised him before them all. After this prophetic act, he took leave of them all and, ten days later, gave his soul to God, in 325. The Holy Martyr Concordius; The Holy Martyrs Frontasius, Severinus, Severian and Silanus; Our Holy Father Zossima, Bishop of New Babylon; The Hieromartyr Astius, Bishop of Dyrrachium; Ss Martha and Mary, the Sisters of Lazarus;

New Martyr Archbishop Andronicus of Perm - an outspoken critic of the Communist decree which ordered the separation of Church and State. Upon reading the Moscow Overland Assembly's instructions on the matter, Archbishop Andronicus ordered his archdeacon to anathematize the Communists. The Archbishop was arrested, shot by two members of the Perm CHEKA, then buried on the road from Perm to Motoviliha. Bishop Theophanes, an assistant to Archbishop Andronicus, was also arrested about this time. He was then drowned in the River Kama. When they learned of the execution of the Perm bishops, the Moscow Church Assembly sent a special commission, headed by Bishop Basil of Chernigov, to investigate their murder. The Communists, however, took steps to conceal the facts from the investigators. As the members of the commission were on their way back to Moscow, their train was attacked by Red soldiers somewhere between Perm and Viatka. Bishop Basil and the others were killed, and their bodies were thrown from the coach. The bodies were buried by peasants, but were later dug up and burned by the Communists when pilgrims began flocking to the graves;

New Martyr Basil of Chernigov, and those with them (1918) - Archbishop Basil (Bogoyavlensky) was born on February 1, 1867, into the family of a priest in Tambov diocese. Brought up in strict church piety, Basil was filled from early childhood with love for the Church and his earthly homeland, and for that reason, on attaining adulthood, he never had any hesitation in following in the steps of his father and devoting himself to the service of the Church. In 1888 he finished his studies at Tambov seminary, and in the same year was ordained to the diaconate. Two years later, on March 11, he was ordained to the priesthood and appointed to serve in the church of the village of Ovsyanki, Kirsanvosky uyezd, Tambov province. The

incurable illness of his wife forced Fr. Basil to think of other conditions of service to the Holy Church. In 1896 he entered the Kazan Theological Academy, where he became friendly with the rector, Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky). In 1900 Fr. Basil graduated from the academy, and accepted the suggestion of his abba that he stay on to serve as a teacher there. After the death of his wife, Fr. Basil took the advice of Bishop Anthony and entered the Holy Trinity Alexander Nevsky Lavra, where on August 14, 1908 he was tonsured into monasticism. On October 15 of the same year he was appointed rector of the Chernigov theological seminary with promotion to the rank of archimandrite. On July 26, 1909 (May 12, 1911, according to another source), he was consecrated Bishop of Sumsk, a vicariate of the Kharkov diocese, in St. Petersburg. On March 4, 1911, he was transferred to the see of Novgorod-Seversk, a vicariate of the Chernigov diocese, and on May 12 - to the see of Chernigov and Nezhin. Bishop Basil's period of service in Chernigov was marked by the successful completion of many projects: the construction of two large houses for pilgrims coming to venerate the relics of St. Theodosius, and a sanatorium for the students at the seminary; the opening of the second women's school in the diocese with funds given from the state treasury by Tsar Nicholas; a large increase in the sphere of activity of the Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Michael, Prince of Chernigov; the publication of the journal Faith and Life by the same Brotherhood (in 1912); the creation in Chernigov of a yedinoverstny deanery in whose administration were numbered twelve churches. Vladyka also devoted much attention to charitable work, supporting the existing charitable institutions and organizing the collection of alms for the starving peasants of the eastern provinces during years of bad harvests. On July 6, 1916 he was appointed president of the Publishing Council attached to the Holy Synod. On October 5, 1916, in recognition of his services to the diocese, Vladyka was raised to the rank of Archbishop of Chernigov and Nezhin. On May 6/19, 1917 he was retired, and was appointed administrator of the Nikolayevsky Terebensky Desert in Tver diocese. From August 11 (or 14), 1917 he was placed in charge of the Moscow Zaikonospassky monastery. In 1917 Vladyka Basil was called to Moscow to participate in the Preconciliar Commission which was preparing for the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. When Archbishop Andronicus of Perm was killed by the Bolsheviks in 1918, the Moscow Church Council sent a special commission, headed by Archbishop Basil, who had a high reputation as an administrator, to investigate the circumstances of the murder. The Soviet government consented to an investigation and even provided a private coach for the use of the commission. (During the early days of the Soviet government, the Church Assembly addressed it several times with requests, declarations and protests). But the activity of the investigating committee in Perm aroused the indignation of the communists, especially those who were guilty of the crime, and they took measures to conceal information from the Moscow Assembly. After concluding its investigation, the commission was on its way back when a band of Red soldiers broke into the coach, between the towns of Perm and Viatka. On May 6, 1919, according to one account, Archbishop Basil, Archimandrite Matthew, rector of the Perm seminary (who is called a bishop in one account) and a layman, all the members of the commission, were killed, and their bodies thrown out of the moving train into the water from the Kama bridge. They were buried by local peasants, but as their graves began to attract pilgrims, and miracles were recorded, the communists dug up the bodies and burned them. According to another version, Archbishop Basil was arrested and after a short imprisonment was shot together with other members of the commission.

5 / 18 June — The Hieromartyr Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre - He was Bishop of Tyre from the time of Diocletian right up to the time of Julian the Apostate, under whom he was tortured and suffered for the Orthodox faith. He lived on earth to the age of 107, and, being pleasing to God, entered into eternal life in 361. He was a great scholar and wrote many learned books both in Greek and Latin. Our Holy Father Theodore the Hermit; Our Holy Father Anoub; Blessed Igor, Prince of Chernigov and Kiev; Our Holy Father Peter of Korisa; Blessed Constantine, Metropolitan of Kiev;

Hieromartyr Boniface (Wynfrith) of Crediton, England (754), archbishop of Mainz, Germany - born around the year 680 at Crediton in Devonshire, England. Educated at monastery schools near Exeter and at Winchester, he decided to become a missionary to the continent. Pope Gregory II made him a regional bishop in Germany. Boniface started a monastery at Ohrdruf in Thuringia. He brought English monks there as missionaries. Then he moved to Bavaria, founding missionary monasteries at Reichenau, Murbach and Fritzlär. In the year 735 he and his disciple Sturmian founded the most famous of all these monasteries, at Fulda. In 747 he was made supreme bishop of Germany. On the peak of Mount Gudenberg at Geismar in Germany, grew a huge oak, which the heathen venerated as sacred to the god Thor. Boniface arrived at Geismar and announced that he was about to cut it down. A huge crowd of pagans gathered, in the belief that their god would strike him dead. But Boniface had hardly begun to strike at the tree with his axe when it split into four and crashed to the ground. The pagans were astonished. Many of them became Christians; and Boniface built a chapel dedicated to Saint Peter out of the wood of Thor's tree.

Tropar (Tone 8): Thou hast shown thyself, O God-inspired Boniface, as a guide to the orthodox faith, a teacher of true worship and purity, O star of the universe and companion of the bishops, O wise one. Through thy light thou hast enlightened all, O harp of the Spirit. Therefore, intercede with Christ to save our souls.

6 / 19 June — Our Holy Father Bessarion born and educated in Egypt, he devoted himself to the spiritual life at an early age, and 'never soiled the spiritual garment in which he was clothed at his baptism'. He visited St Gerasim by the Jordan and learned from St Isidore of Pelusium. He conquered his flesh in strict fasting and vigils, but, as far as possible, hid his asceticism from men. He once spent forty days in prayer, neither eating nor sleeping, and had one single garment that he wore summer and winter. He had a great gift of wonderworking. He had no fixed abode, but lived in the mountains and forests, healing the sick and performing many other miracles to help men and glorify God. He entered peacefully into rest in 466. Our Holy Father Hilarion the New; Our Holy Mothers the Martyrs Archelais, Thecla and Susanna.

7 / 20 June — The Holy Martyr Theodotus of Ancyra - was a secret Christian and, as such, used to help the Church and give burial to the bodies of the martyrs. He buried the bodies of seven young maidens who had suffered for Christ. When the pagans discovered this, they attacked him and he was killed (see May 18th for more about him). The Holy Martyrs Kyria, Valeria and Maria; The Hieromartyr Marcellus, Pope of Rome; The Hieromartyr Marcellinus, Pope of Rome; Our Holy Father Daniel of Scetis; St. Colman, bishop of Dromore, Ireland (6th c.).

8 / 21 June — St Ephraim, Patriarch of Antioch - during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius, Ephraim was governor of the eastern regions. He was famed for his great piety and compassion, and was much esteemed for these virtues. When the rebuilding of Antioch, which had been destroyed by earthquake and fire, was put in hand, the Emperor ordered Ephraim to oversee the work. Ephraim performed this work with diligence and love. There was among the ordinary workers a certain bishop who had left his see for unknown reasons and was working as a labourer. Not a soul knew that the man was a bishop. One day he lay down to take a rest from the exhausting work with the other labourers, and fell asleep. Ephraim glanced at him, and saw a flaming pillar rising above the man and reaching up to heaven. Amazed and frightened, Ephraim summoned him and bound him under oath to reveal who he was. The man hesitated a long time, but finally admitted that he was a bishop and foretold that Ephraim would shortly be consecrated Patriarch of Antioch (the patriarchal throne having been empty since the old Patriarch, Euphrasius, perished in the earthquake). Ephraim was indeed elected and consecrated as Patriarch. For his goodness, purity and zeal for Orthodoxy, a great gift of wonderworking was given him by God. Once, in order to convince some heretic that Orthodoxy is the true Faith, he placed his omophor in the flames and prayed to God. The omophor remained unharmed in the fire for three hours. When the heretic saw this, he was afraid and cast his heresy aside. Ephraim entered peacefully into rest in 546. Our Holy Father Zossima of Phoenicia; The Holy and Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates.

St. Merdadus - Bishop of Noyon, b. at Salency (Oise) about 456; d. in his episcopal city 8 June, about 545. His father, Nectardus, was of Frankish origin, while his mother, named Protagia, was Gallo-Roman. It is believed that St. Gildardus, Bishop of Rouen, was his brother. His youth was entirely consecrated to the practise of Christian virtues and to the study of sacred and profane letters. He often accompanied his father on business to Vermand and to Tournai, and frequented the schools, carefully avoiding all worldly dissipation. His exemplary piety and his knowledge, considerable for that time, decided the Bishop of Vermand (d. 530) to confer on him Holy Orders, and caused him to be chosen as his successor. Forced, in spite of his objections, to accept this heavy charge, he devoted himself zealously to his new duties, and to accomplish them in greater security, since Vermand and the northern part of France in general were then generally troubled by wars and exposed to the incursions of the barbarians, he removed his episcopal see in 531 from Vermand, a little city without defence, to Noyon, the strongest place in that region. The year following, St. Eleutherius, Bishop of Tournai, having died, St. Medardus was invited to assume the direction of that diocese also. He refused at first, but being urged by Clotaire himself he at last accepted. This union of the two dioceses lasted until 1146, when they were again separated. Clotaire, who had paid him a last visit at Noyon, had his body transferred to the royal manor of Crouy at the gates of the city of Soissons. Over the tomb of St. Medardus was erected the celebrated Benedictine abbey which bears his name. St. Medardus was one of the most honoured bishops of his time, his memory has always been popularly venerated in the north of France.

9 / 22 June — St Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria - He was of noble birth and a close kinsman of Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, after whose death he was chosen as Patriarch. He fought three fierce battles in the course of his life: against the Novatianist heretics, against Nestorius and against the Jews of Alexandria. The Novatianists began in Rome, and were so called after their leader, the heretic priest Novatian. They were filled with pride at their virtues, went about dressed in white, banned second marriages and declared that one must not pray for those who had committed mortal sin nor receive back into the Church those who had once fallen away, however deeply they might repent. Cyril overcame them and drove them out of Alexandria, together with their bishop. The battle with the Jews was harder and bloodier. The Jews had been in the ascendant in Alexandria right from the time that Alexander the Great founded the city. Their hatred towards the Christians was vicious and mindless. They killed Christians by treachery, by poison and by crucifixion. After a long and difficult struggle, Cyril succeeded in inducing the Emperor to drive the Jews out of Alexandria. His battle, however, against Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, was resolved at the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus. Cyril himself presided at this Council, and also represented Pope Celestine of Rome at his request, he being prevented by old age from attending the Council. Nestorius was condemned, anathematised and exiled by the Emperor to the eastern borders of the Empire, where he died. After the end of these battles, Cyril lived in peace and guided Christ's flock with zeal. He went to the Lord in the year 444. It is said that he composed the hymn: 'Hail, Mother of God and Virgin.' St Kiril of Byelozersk (White Lake);

St. Columba of Iona, enlightener of Scotland (597) - born in County Donegal, Ireland, and spent fifteen years preaching to his native Irish and founding monasteries - the greatest of which were at Derry, Durrow and Kells. In 563 Columba sailed to the Scottish island of Iona, there to found a monastery that for centuries was the most famous in the west. Iona became the heart of Celtic Christianity. Daughter houses sprang up in England and on the Scottish mainland. The next thirty-four years of Columba's life were spent in missionary service. On 8 June 597 Columba was copying out the psalms. At the verse, 'They that love the Lord shall lack no good thing' he stopped, and said that his cousin Baithin must do the rest. He died the next day. 'Alone with none but Thee, my God, I journey on my way; What need I fear when Thou art near, Oh King of night and day? More safe am I within Thy hand. Than if a host did round me stand,' attributed to St. Columba. The Venerable Bede said, 'We know for certain that Columba left successors distinguished for their purity of life, their love of God, and their loyalty to the rules of the monastic life.'

10 / 23 June — The Hieromartyr Timothy, Bishop of Brussa - for his great spiritual purity, God gave him the gift of wonder-working, and he healed all manner of diseases and pains among the people. During the reign of the evil Emperor Julian, who had renounced Christ, holy Timothy was thrown into prison. The faithful visited him there to listen to the wise teaching of their bishop. When this came to his ears, Julian commanded that the executioner behead him in the prison. This was in 362, and his soul entered into Paradise while his relics remained, full of miraculous power, to help the people and declare the power of the Lord. The Holy Martyrs Alexander and Antonina; St Bassian, Bishop of Lodi; Synaxis of All Saints of Siberia: St. John (Maximovitch), metropolitan of Tobolsk; St. Innocent, bishop of Irkutsk; St. Macarius (Glukharev) of Altai; St. Macarius (Nevsky), Metropolitan of Moscow, apostle to Altai (1926) and others.

REFLECTION

It is a horrible thing to kill a man. There are no words to describe the horror which lays hold on the murderer. While a man is preparing to kill another man, he thinks that to kill a man is the same as killing an ox. When he carries out his preconceived crime then, all at once, he realizes that he has declared war on heaven and earth and that he has become an exile and cut off from both heaven and earth. The victim does not give him peace neither day nor night. A known criminal came to Zosimus on Sinai and begged him to tonsure him a monk. Zosimus clothed him in the monastic habit and sent him to the monastery of Venerable Dorotheus near Gaza to lead a life of asceticism in the Cenobia. After nine years the tonsured criminal returned to St. Zosimus, returned his monastic habit and sought his secular clothes. To the question why are you doing this, the criminal replied that for nine years he has fervently prayed to God, fasted, kept vigil and fulfilled all acts of obedience and that he feels that many of his sins were forgiven but that one of his sins torments him continually. At one time, he killed an innocent child and that child appears to him day and night and asks him: "Why did you kill me?" Because of that he decided to leave and to turn himself in to the authorities that they may execute him and thus to repay blood for blood. Dressing in his former clothes, he went to the town of Diospolis where he acknowledged his crime and was beheaded. Thus, by his blood, he washed away his bloody sin.

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the miraculous healing of the possessed ones [madmen] of Gergesene [Gadarene]: "Now when He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gerasenes, there met Him two men who were possessed, coming from the tombs, so exceedingly fierce that no one could pass by that way" (St. Matthew 8:28): 1. How the Lord cast out the demons from the ones possessed and the possessed ones became calm and meek; 2. How the Lord stands beside me and waits to be called to help me and to cleanse me from every evil spirit which lays hold of me and separates me from God.

HOMILY

About trust in the Lord and not in your own understanding

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; on your own understanding rely not" [Proverbs 3:5].

If all the mountains would move toward you, would you be able to push them back with your hands? You could not. If darkness after darkness of all the mysteries in the heavens and on the earth rushed to the small taper of your understanding would you, with your understanding, be able to illuminate the darkness? Even less! Do not rely on your understanding for, from the perishable matter which you call intellect, a greater portion of it is nothing more than dead ashes. O man, do not rely on your understanding for it is a road over which a mob rushes a hungry, thirsty, motley and curious mob of sensual impressions.

O man, trust in the Lord with all your heart. In Him is understanding without end and all-discerning. The Lord says: "I am understanding; mine is strength" (Proverbs 8:14). He looks on the paths on which your blood flows and all the crossroads on which your thoughts wander. With compassion and love He offers Himself to you as a leader and you rely on your darkened and perishable understanding. Where was your understanding before your birth? Where was your understanding when your body was taking form, when your heart began to beat and flow with blood, when your eyes began to open and when your voice began to flow from your throat? Whose understanding was all this while your mind was still sleeping as charcoal in a coal mine? Even when your understanding awoke, can you enumerate all the illusions which it has delivered to you, all the lies in which it has entangled you, all the dangers which it did not foresee? O my brother, trust only in the Lord with all your heart! Until now, He has rescued you numerous times from your own understanding, from illusions and its lies and from danger in which it has pushed you. A blind man is compared to the man who can see, so is your understanding compared to the understanding of God. O blind one, trust in the Leader. O brother, trust only in the Lord with all your heart.

O Lord, All-seeing, Eternal and Infallible Understanding, deeper than the universe and more radiant than the sun, deliver us, even now from the errors of our understanding.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.