

# The Fifth Sunday of Great Lent / Venerable Mary of Egypt

1 / 14 April



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

**Tropar of St. Mary of Egypt, Tone 5:** Enlightened by the grace of the Cross, thou wast shown forth as a radiant lamp of repentance, dispelling the darkness of the passions, O all-holy one. Wherefore, thou didst appear as an angel in the flesh unto the sacred Zosimas in the wilderness. O Mary, our righteous mother, do thou intercede with Christ for us.

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

**Kondak of St. Mary of Egypt, Tone 3:** Thou who once of old wast filled with all manner of fornication, art now seen today to be a bride of Christ by thy repentance. Thou didst love and emulate the life of the angels. By the Cross, thou didst annihilate the hordes of demons; for this cause thou art a bride now in the kingdom of the heavens, O Mary, thou all-modest one.

**St. Mary of Egypt** - The recorder of the life of this wonderful saint was St Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem. A hieromonk, the elder Zossima, had gone off at one time during the Great Fast a twenty-days' walk into the wilderness across the Jordan. He suddenly caught sight of a human being with a withered and naked body and with hair as white as snow, who fled in its nakedness from Zossima's sight. The elder ran a long way, until this figure stopped at a stream and called: 'Father Zossima, forgive me for the Lord's sake. I cannot turn round to you, for I am a naked woman.' Then Zossima threw her his outer cloak, and she wrapped herself in it and turned round to him. The elder was amazed at hearing his name from the lips of this unknown woman. After considerable pressure on his part, she told him her life-story. She had been born in Egypt, and had lived as a prostitute in Alexandria from the age of twelve, spending seventeen years in this way of life. Urged by the lustful fire of the flesh, she one day got into a ship that was sailing for Jerusalem. Arriving at the Holy City, she tried to go into one of the churches to venerate the Precious Cross, but some unseen power prevented her from entering. In great fear, she turned to an icon of the Mother of God that was in the entrance, and begged her to let her go in and venerate the Cross, confessing her sin and impurity and promising that she would then go wherever the Most Pure led her. She was then allowed to enter the church. After venerating the Cross, she went out again to the entrance and, standing in front of the icon, thanked the Mother of God. Then she heard a voice: 'If you cross the Jordan, you will find true peace.' She immediately bought three loaves of bread and set off for the Jordan, arriving there the same evening. She received Communion the following morning in the monastery of St John, and then crossed the river. She spent forty-eight whole years in the wilderness in the greatest torments, in terror, in struggles with passionate thoughts like gigantic beasts. She fed only on plants. After that, when she was standing in prayer, Zossima saw her lifted up in the air. She begged him to bring her Communion the next year on the bank of the Jordan, and she would come to receive it. The following year, Zossima came with the Holy Gifts to the bank of the Jordan in the evening, and stood in amazement as he saw her cross the river. He saw her coming in the moonlight and, arriving on the further bank, make the sign of the Cross over the river. She then walked across it as though it were dry land. When she had received Communion, she begged him to come again the following year to the same stream by which they had first met. Zossima went, and found her dead body there on that spot. Above her head in the sand was written: 'Abba Zossima, bury in this place the body of the humble Mary. Give dust to dust. I passed away on April 1st, on the very night of Christ's Passion, after communion of the divine Mysteries.' Zossima learned her name for the first time, and also the awe-inspiring marvel that she had arrived at that stream the previous year on the night of the same day on which she had received Communion—a place that he had taken twenty days to reach. And thus Zossima buried the body of the wonderful saint, Mary of Egypt. When he returned to the monastery, he recounted the whole story of her life and the wonders to which he had been an eyewitness. Thus the Lord glorifies repentant sinners. St Mary is also commemorated in the Fifth Week of the Great Fast. The Church holds her up before the faithful in these days of the Fast as a model of repentance. She entered into rest in about 530.

## Matins Gospel II

### Epistle: for Sunday: Heb 9:11-14

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

### HE ENTERED THE MOST HOLY PLACE ONCE FOR ALL, HAVING OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION

If the priesthood established by the law has come to an end, and the priest who is 'in the order of Melchizedek' has offered his sacrifice, and has made all other sacrifices unnecessary, why do the priests of the new covenant perform the mystical liturgy? Now it is clear to those instructed in divinity that we do not offer another sacrifice, but perform a memorial of that unique and saving offering. For this was the Lord's own command: 'Do this in remembrance of me' (1 Cor. 11:24). So that by contemplation we may recall what is symbolised, the sufferings endured on our behalf, and may kindle our love towards our benefactor, and look forward to the enjoyment of the blessings to come.

*Theodoret of Cyprus. The Eucharist. interpr. in XIV ep. S. Paul in Heb.8.4. B#15, p. 276.*

### for the Saint: Gal 3:23-29

### Gospel: for Sunday: Mark 10:32-45

Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; And they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

"This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting (Mk. 9:29). So if you will remember, last Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Great Lent, the Gospel proclaimed to us: "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." What is "this kind"? If you will remember, brothers and sisters, we were told there about a youth who was possessed and sometimes fell into fire and sometimes into water, as his father said when he brought him to Christ. And Christ said, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." This is what kind. The kind which possessed the youth and was casting him down. This unfortunate youth not only knew no rest, but not even life itself And Christ said, "can come forth." This means that it was something separate. Now do we understand this or not?

Brothers, if you just open a newspaper, you will at once understand what "This kind" means. See how many people who, in a state of despair, jump into water in order to end their lives, thinking there is no eternal life. And into fire. Here you find so many who again, out of despair, throw themselves into fire, become human torches in order to burn themselves. It is the same thing: a state of insanity or despondency, or on the contrary, a state of mind which almost reaches madness—human pride. And how many people become victims of those terrible excesses of sex. How many terrible mental conditions there are in which a person commits robbery, murder, which are connected with the terrible greed for money, for power. What is this? It is precisely "this kind." We seem not to participate in it. Oh, if only we would not participate!

Now we are in the period of life which we call spiritual spring. If a farmer is late in sowing, then there will be no harvest and, therefore, no bread. Likewise, if a person is late in acquiring sobriety, attention to his inner man, his heart, then he will be left without spiritual nourishment, in spiritual hunger. And if there is some kind of passion in his heart and he realises it, then he will also understand that no one can drive out this passion except He Who created man. But for this to happen, preparation is needed. And this preparation is fasting and prayer.

We should have remained with such feelings during the past week. And if we possessed the state of mind which a Christian should possess, then during this fifth week, when the Church was crying: "O Lord, before I perish to the end, save me," when the Canon of St. Andrew of Crete was being read, which exposes and overturns our heart and reveals to us such passions; it would be possible for us to approach God and say: "O God, forgive me, heal me, give me Thine everlasting light; give me Life, because maybe I have only one year left to live, and maybe not even that; I might be going to Thee right now."

We are all going there into eternity; and the Church gives us this time for preparation, in order to look at ourselves, so that we might acquire the forces necessary for entering eternal existence.

The Church said to us in the last Gospel that this kind is driven out by fasting and prayer. We think that fasting is when we do not have vegetable oil on the table. Yes, certainly limitation in food is also fasting. But fasting does not consist of this alone; this is only part of fasting. Fasting is when a person opens his heart in such a way that he sees what is unneeded and rejects it, keeping only what is needed in order to preserve his heart. And prayer? Prayer is the state in which our soul, sensing Divine peace, unceasingly calls to the Lord; "Help me; don't let it happen. Don't allow the murder of the most important feeling within me—conscience."

And here at the end of this week, I don't know about you, but I still have a feeling of being unworthy. And for me today is a great comfort. In what sense? Here before us, before our spiritual eyes, stands Mary of Egypt. This was a sinner who became a classic type, a classic image of a Christian woman. She was an outrageous courtesan of Alexandria in Egypt. She was a harlot; she was a prostitute; she was a beauty; and her depravity knew no limits.

Once she chanced to see a crowd of people boarding a ship. And she, not in order to go to Palestine, but in order to be active in her profession among the pilgrims, she also boarded this ship. And so she sailed to Jerusalem. She went with the crowd to worship the Cross of the Lord. Why not? The whole crowd was going and so she went too. And here, when the crowd had entered the vestibule of the church; then here, no matter what Mary did, she could not enter the church. By now almost everyone had entered, but she was somehow nailed to the floor. It was as if a gust of wind or a wave threw her out and drove her away. No matter how she trembled, no matter how eager she was to enter, she could not; something would not let her. Finally, she understood that some kind of terrible force would not let her in. And here she looked up: before her was a face; it was the icon of the Mother of God with the Child. Immediately the curtain which covered up her conscience was opened. She had heard about Christ and she had heard that Christ called to chastity. And here her conscience revealed to her all her sin, and she fell before the Heavenly Queen with this cry: "Forgive me, help!"

And then she herself did not see or understand what happened. All at once, as if lifted by wind, she was brought into the church and she fell down before the Cross of the Lord. And here a miracle happened to her: there appeared in her the thirst for purity, for chastity. She wanted to feel the lightness of a clean conscience. And when she felt forgiveness, without looking around and without any provisions, she rushed to the Jordan, walked through it, and then disappeared into the desert.

And so for seventeen years she lived in a state of sobriety; and as she said later, she had to bite the ground in order to destroy lustful feelings, carnal longings, the demonic bodily movements of "this kind." And later on, for seventeen more years she praised God's Grace. She was like an angel.

Therefore, I say that for us this day which the Church puts before us is a comfort. There is no sinner whom the Lord would not forgive. Brothers and sisters, without doubt every one of us will be covered by the lid of a coffin. Every one of us will disappear into the grave. And the soul will pass over into eternity. What will be there? Do we ever think about what will be there? The Church is calling and calling us to repentance. But how do we start? Now pay attention to this: Mary could not enter the Church; somebody was not letting her in. Look at yourself, at your conscience. The same happens to you; somebody is not allowing you to surrender fully to Christ. Stop this. But how? In the same way Mary did—rush to the Mother of God.

This is what I am asking you to do. This is the greatest joy. And rush to the Lord and say, "Lord, help me to be Christian. Help me, so that the motion of my heart beats out just one feeling: surrender to the Lord, fulfilment of His commandments. Then a clear, bright spring will come. And approaching Pascha we will hear the words of Christ, "Peace be unto you!" (Lk. 24:36). May this peace rest in you.

*The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei*

for the Saint: Luke 7:36-50

### **Saints of the Week**

**1 / 14 April — St Mary of Egypt** - The recorder of the life of this wonderful saint was St Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem. A hieromonk, the elder Zossima, had gone off at one time during the Great Fast a twenty-days' walk into the wilderness across the Jordan. He suddenly caught sight of a human being with a withered and naked body and with hair as white as snow, who fled in its nakedness from Zossima's sight. The elder ran a long way, until this figure stopped at a stream and called: 'Father Zossima, forgive me for the Lord's sake. I cannot turn round to you, for I am a naked woman.' Then Zossima threw her his outer cloak, and she wrapped herself in it and turned round to him. The elder was amazed at hearing his name from the lips of this unknown woman. After considerable pressure on his part, she told him her life-story. She had been born in Egypt, and had lived as a prostitute in Alexandria from the age of twelve, spending seventeen years in this way of life. Urged by the lustful fire of the flesh, she one day got into a ship that was sailing for Jerusalem. Arriving at the Holy City, she tried to go into one of the churches to venerate the Precious Cross, but some unseen power prevented her from entering. In great fear, she turned to an icon of the Mother of God that was in the entrance, and begged her to let her go in and venerate the Cross, confessing her sin

and impurity and promising that she would then go wherever the Most Pure led her. She was then allowed to enter the church. After venerating the Cross, she went out again to the entrance and, standing in front of the icon, thanked the Mother of God. Then she heard a voice: 'If you cross the Jordan, you will find true peace.' She immediately bought three loaves of bread and set off for the Jordan, arriving there the same evening. She received Communion the following morning in the monastery of St John, and then crossed the river. She spent forty-eight whole years in the wilderness in the greatest torments, in terror, in struggles with passionate thoughts like gigantic beasts. She fed only on plants. After that, when she was standing in prayer, Zossima saw her lifted up in the air. She begged him to bring her Communion the next year on the bank of the Jordan, and she would come to receive it. The following year, Zossima came with the Holy Gifts to the bank of the Jordan in the evening, and stood in amazement as he saw her cross the river. He saw her coming in the moonlight and, arriving on the further bank, made the sign of the Cross over the river. She then walked across it as though it were dry land. When she had received Communion, she begged him to come again the following year to the same stream by which they had first met. Zossima went, and found her dead body there on that spot. Above her head in the sand was written: 'Abba Zossima, bury in this place the body of the humble Mary. Give dust to dust. I passed away on April 1st, on the very night of Christ's Passion, after communion of the divine Mysteries.' Zossima learned her name for the first time, and also the awe-inspiring marvel that she had arrived at that stream the previous year on the night of the same day on which she had received Communion—a place that he had taken twenty days to reach. And thus Zossima buried the body of the wonderful saint, Mary of Egypt. When he returned to the monastery, he recounted the whole story of her life and the wonders to which he had been an eyewitness. Thus the Lord glorifies repentant sinners. St Mary is also commemorated in the Fifth Week of the Great Fast. The Church holds her up before the faithful in these days of the Fast as a model of repentance. She entered into rest in about 530.

**St Meliton, Bishop of Sardis** - A well-known pastor of the Church in the second century, he was a man of great learning and laboured to codify all the books of Holy Scripture. He laboured also in meekness and devotion to bring peace to the Church in Laodicea, involved in a quarrel about the celebration of Easter. Apart from this, he defended Christianity against the pagans. He travelled to Rome in about 170, bringing a written apologia on the Faith and the Christian Church to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. St Meliton, this learned, devout and zealous man, entered peacefully into rest in the Lord in about 177;

**2 / 15 April — Our Holy Father Titus the Wonderworker** - He conceived a love for Christ from his earliest years, and despised the vanities of the world. For His sake, he left the world, went off to a monastery and received the angelic habit. With not a backward glance, he gave himself to the sober and narrow way of monasticism. Through great patience, he attained the two basic virtues of humility and obedience, and in these virtues he exceeded 'not only the brethren, but all men'. He preserved his purity of soul and body right from his youth. In the time of the iconoclast heresy, he was seen to be a steadfast pillar of the Church of God. For his great humility and purity, he was endowed by God with the gift of wonderworking, both in his lifetime and after his death. And when he went to the Lord, he left a large number of disciples behind him. He entered peacefully into rest in the 9th century;

**The Holy Martyrs Amphianus, and Edesius** - These two young men were blood brothers from the city of Patara distinguished but pagan parents. While they were studying the secular sciences in the city of Beirut, they were enlightened by the Spirit of God, and acknowledging the falsehood of paganism, discerned the truth of Christianity. When they returned home they could no longer live with their pagan parents and kinsmen and secretly fled to Caesarea in Palestine to the presbyter Pamphilius, renowned for his sanctity and spiritual learning. With Pamphilius, they studied the Law of God day and night and practiced Christian asceticism. It is said of Pamphilius that he was twenty years old according to the flesh but, in understanding and generosity, he was a hundred years old. When a persecution began during the reign of Maximian, many Christians fled the city and hid themselves. Others, willingly and rejoicingly, gave themselves into the hands of the persecutors in order to suffer for the Name of Him, Who first suffered for them. Amphianus was among the latter. Unafraid, he entered a pagan temple where Prince Urban was offering sacrifices to the idols, grabbed the prince by the hand which was holding the sacrifice and cried to him to refrain from serving and making sacrificial offerings to dead idols and to acknowledge the True God. Some of the pagans who heard these words and witnessing the great courage of Amphianus, repented and embraced the Faith of Christ. The enraged prince subjected Amphianus to torture. Among the other tortures, they wrapped the legs of Amphianus with cotton and set them on fire. When he remained alive, they tossed his body into the sea with a stone around his neck. The sea became turbulent and hurled his martyred body back into the city. At first, Edesius was sent to a cooper mine in Palestine and was later taken to Egypt. In Alexandria, Edesius was filled with holy zeal against a certain Prince Hierocles who, in the market place, assembled Christian nuns, maidens and virtuous women and handed them over to the most shameful perverts for derision. Edesius, filled with holy zeal, struck the disgraceful prince. For that, he was tortured and drowned in the sea as was his brother Amphianus. As two innocent lambs, they were sacrificed for Christ about the year 306 A.D. and were translated to the glorious mansions of the Lord.

**3 / 16 April — St Nicetas the Confessor** - He was born in Bithynia, in the town of Caesarea. His father, Philaret, losing his wife, became a monk. Nicetas remained with his paternal grandmother. After he had grown up and finished his schooling, he went to a monastery in Midikion, where Nicephorus, the abbot, tonsured him as a monk. After seven years of toil and asceticism, he was ordained hieromonk by Patriarch Tarasius. After the deaths of Nicephorus and Nicetas's great friend, Athanasius, the brethren chose Nicetas as abbot, much against his will. St Nicetas was a holy example of life and asceticism to his brethren for many years. But when Leo V, the Armenian, came to the throne, following the devout Empress Irene and the pious Emperors Nicephorus and Michael, the iconoclast heresy sprang up again. The Emperor deposed Patriarch Nicephorus and sent him into exile, and in his place put a heretic, Theodotus Cassiteras, a man of impure life. Nicetas was imprisoned and tortured, but remained unwavering in his Orthodoxy. He was taken from prison to prison and tortured by hunger and thirst, by cold and heat and malice. But he remained utterly unwavering. A certain Nicolas pestered him particularly with his derision and malice. But one night the dead father of this Nicolas appeared to him in a dream and said: 'Leave that servant of

God alone!' From that moment Nicolas repented, and not only refrained from pestering him but prevented others doing likewise. When the Emperor Leo the Armenian had made an evil end, the throne passed to the Orthodox Emperor Michael Balbus, who freed all the Orthodox sufferers. Nicetas retired to a lonely place near Constantinople, where he spent the remaining days of his earthly life in prayer and thanksgiving to God. When he died, his body was taken to his monastery and, during that journey, many of the sick, on touching his body, were healed. His relics were placed close to the graves of his spiritual father, Nicephorus, and his friend Athanasius. This great hierarch entered into rest in 824; St Paul the Wretched; **The Holy Martyr Ulphianus** - a young man from the city of Tyre. He suffered for Christ at the hands of Urban, the mayor of the city of Tyre, who also was the torturer of Amphianus [April 2]. Finally, he was tied in a sack along with a dog and a snake and tossed into the sea. He suffered and was glorified in the year 306 A.D.

**4 / 17 April — Our Holy Father Joseph the Hymnographer** - He was born in Sicily of devout and virtuous parents, Plotinus and Agatha. After the death of his parents, he moved to Salonica, where he became a monk. As a monk, he was an example to all in fasting, restraint, ceaseless supplication, psalmody, vigils and toil. The Bishop of Salonica ordained him hieromonk. The famous Gregory of Decapolis, visiting Salonica, loved Joseph with heart and soul for his rare character, and took him back with him to his monastery in Constantinople. When the flame of iconoclasm sprang up again under Leo the Armenian, Joseph was sent to Rome to call the Pope and the Roman Church to battle for the true Faith. But pirates captured him on the way and took him to Crete, where he was kept in prison for six years by the heretics. Joseph rejoiced that he was made worthy to suffer for Christ, and thanked God constantly, regarding the iron chains with which he was bound as golden ornaments. In the sixth year, around Christmas, the wicked Emperor was murdered at the morning service in church. At the same moment, St Nicolas appeared to Joseph in the prison and said to him: 'Get up and follow me.' Joseph felt himself lifted up in the air, and found himself all at once in Constantinople. His arrival was a source of rejoicing to all the Orthodox faithful. He composed Canons and hymns for many of the saints. He had the gift of insight, because of which Patriarch Photius made him spiritual father and confessor to his priests, recommending him as 'a man of God, an angel in the flesh, a father of fathers'. In great old age, he gave his soul into the hands of the God he had served so faithfully in work and song. He died peacefully on the eve of Holy Thursday in 883;

**The Holy Martyr Pherbutha** - During the reign of the Persian Emperor Saborius, St. Simeon, the bishop, was slain. At the wish of the empress, Pherbutha, the sister of Bishop Simeon, was taken to the palace. Pherbutha was exceptionally beautiful and because of that many suitors thronged to her among whom were many pagan priests and soothsayers. Pherbutha rejected them all and provoked much anger against herself. At that time, the empress became ill and all the pagan priests explained to the emperor that the empress was poisoned by Pherbutha and, as a cure for the ailing empress, they recommended the following: that Pherbutha, her sister and their slave, as Christians, be sawn and that three parts of their bodies be placed on one side and three parts on the other side and that the empress should be borne between them. The emperor agreed to the recommendation of these blood-thirsty pagan priests. Pherbutha, together with her sister and their slave, suffered for Christ in the year 343 A.D., thereby earning the incorruptible wreath in the eternal kingdom of their Lord; Our Holy Father Zossima; **Our Holy Father, the Martyr Nicetas** - a Slav from Albania. As a monk of the Holy Mountain (Mt. Athos), he went to Serres where he debated with the Mullahs about religion. Being that they could not overcome him with reason, the Turks subjected him to torture under which Nicetas, the holy one, died and gave up his soul to his God in the year 1808 A.D.

**5 / 18 April — The Holy Martyrs Agathopous and Theodulus** - The first was a deacon and the second a reader in the Church in Salonica; the first adorned with the white hairs of age and the second with the chastity of youth. In the time of Diocletian's hunting of Christians, these two were summoned for trial. They went there joyfully, and, each holding the other by the hand, went in crying: 'We are Christians!' The whole court's urging them to deny Christ and worship idols was in vain. After long imprisonment and starvation, they were condemned to death by drowning in the sea. Their hands were bound behind them and a large stone tied to their necks, and they were taken off to be drowned. When they went to throw Agathopous into the depths, he cried out: 'Lo, by a second baptism we are washed from all our sins, and will go cleansed to Christ Jesus!' The sea quickly threw their drowned bodies onto the shore, and Christians gave them burial. St Theodulus appeared to his friends in the form of a shining angel in white raiment and commanded them to distribute all his remaining goods to the poor. These great soldiers of Christ suffered with honour under the Emperor Diocletian and Faustinus, the governor of Salonica, in the year 303;

**Our Holy Father Mark of Trache** - also called "Mark the Athenian" because Athens was the place of his birth. His parents died after he completed his higher education in Athens. He thought to himself that death, even for himself, was unavoidable and that one should sufficiently prepare beforehand for that honourable departure from this world. Distributing all of his possessions to the poor, he sat on a plank in the sea and with a tenacious faith in God's help, prayed that God direct him wherever He wills. God, in His Providence, protected him and brought him to Lybia (or Ethiopia) to a mountain called Trache. Mark lived an ascetical life on this mountain for ninety-five years, seeing neither man nor beast. For thirty years, he waged a violent combat with evil spirits and suffered from hunger, thirst, frost and heat. He ate dirt and drank sea water. After thirty years of the most vehement suffering, the defeated demons fled from him and an angel of God began to bring him food daily in the form of bread, fish and fruit. St. Serapion visited him before his death and, afterward, made known the miraculous life of Mark. Mark asked St. Serapion: "Are there any Christians in the world now, who, if they were to say to this mountain, 'Arise from here and hurl yourself into the sea,' would it be so?" At that moment, the mountain upon which they stood moved in the direction of the sea. Mark raised his hand and stopped it. Such was the miracle-working power which this man of God possessed. Before his death, he prayed for the salvation of mankind and then gave up his soul to God. St. Serapion saw angels as they bore Mark's soul and he also saw an extended hand from heaven which received it. St. Mark lived to be one-hundred thirty years old and died about the year 400 A.D.

**6 / 19 April — St Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople** - Born in Phrygia of devout parents, he was the son of an officer. Once, Eutychius was playing with some other children of his own age, their game being to write their names on a wall and put beside them the rank that they reckoned they would have in life. When Eutychius' turn came, he wrote: 'Eutychius— Patriarch!' He became abbot of a monastery in Amasea at the age of thirty, and ten years later the Metropolitan of Amasea sent him to the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 as his representative. At the Council, he shone like a bright star among the Church fathers, both for his learning and his devotion. When a quarrel arose about whether heretics could be anathematised after their deaths or not, he supported his belief that they could by citing III Kings (A.V. I Kings) 13:1-8, and IV Kings (A.V. II Kings) 23:16. He became greatly liked by both Emperor Justinian and Patriarch Menas. The Emperor very frequently turned to him for advice, and Menas (at that time very rich) designated him his heir and asked the Emperor to ensure that this happened. And so it came to pass. Eutychius governed the Church in peace for twelve years. But then the devil raised a storm against him. This storm reached the Emperor Justinian himself. The Emperor was deluded and fell into the Monophysite heresy of Aphantartodocetism, which taught the falsehood that the Lord Jesus, before the Resurrection, had a divine and uncorrupting body, not feeling hunger or thirst or pain. Eutychius stood firmly against this heresy, for which the Emperor sent him into exile to his first monastery. There Eutychius lived for twelve years and eight months, being shown to be a great wonder-worker, healing people of various diseases by his prayers and by anointing with holy oil. Justinian repented and died, and his successor, Justin II, called Eutychius back to the patriarchal throne, on which this saint remained till his death, governing the Church of God in peace. In 582, at the age of seventy, he went to the Kingdom of Christ the Lord; the Lord whom he had served so faithfully and courageously all his life;

**The One Hundred and Twenty Martyrs in Persia** - When the Persian Emperor Sapor plundered the lands of Byzantium, he enslaved one-hundred twenty Christians. Since his attempts to persuade them to deny Christ and worship fire proved to be in vain, the emperor tossed them into the fire and burned them alive. Among those martyrs, were nine virgins dedicated to God. They all suffered honourably between the years 344 A.D. and 347 A.D. and took up habitation in the mansions of Christ the King; St. Govan of Cornwall.

**7 / 20 April — St George the Confessor** - For his great virtues, which he acquired through long asceticism, George was chosen and installed as Metropolitan of Mitylene. And this saint governed his flock with zeal and wisdom to old age. But when a persecution arose under Leo V, the Armenian, who destroyed the holy icons, this holy elder was summoned by the Emperor to Constantinople, to the Council of bishops which was summoned, at the Emperor's desire, to put a stop to the veneration of icons. But George not only refused to act according to the Emperor's desire; he, together with some other courageous bishops, stood up in defence of the holy icons. For this he was held in derision by the Emperor and exiled to the region of Cherson, where, in physical pain and every sort of need, he spent the remainder of his earthly life. He died and went to immortal life in about 816. He was a wonderworker both during his life and after his death, through his great righteousness and love for the Lord Jesus.

**Our Holy Father Nil Sorsky** - Nil is one of the great Fathers of the Russian Church. He was the founder of the Scete way of monastic life in Russia. He died peacefully in the year 1508 A.D. His relics repose in the Sorsky Monastery. His "Rule of Life" for the "Scete" way of monastic living represents a first-class work on the spiritual and practical life of a monk;

**The Holy Martyr Calliopius** - an only son granted by God to a senator from Perga in Pamphylia after the senator had shed many tears in prayer. From his early youth his devout mother, Theoclea, taught him to respect God and to live a chaste life. Calliopius was still a youngster when a terrible persecution began during the reign of Emperor Maximian. To spare him from death, his mother placed him in a boat, gave him an ample amount of money and saw him off to the city of Pompeiopolis. However, God in His Divine Providence, planned it otherwise. Landing in Pompeiopolis he fell into the midst of a tumultuous polytheistic celebration. When Calliopius refused to participate in this ridiculous feast, at the insistence of the crazed mob, he was pushed toward Maximus the commander, before whom Calliopius confessed that he was a Christian. The commander ordered that Calliopius be beaten with lead canes and burned by fire. Wounded throughout, they cast him into prison. Learning about the tortures of her son, Theoclea distributed her entire estate to the poor and needy and with a paltry sum of money hurried to her son in prison. Upon entering the prison, Theoclea bowed down before her son and dressed his wounds. Finally, the commander pronounced the ultimate sentence. Calliopius was to be crucified on a cross. Joy and pain intermingled in the heart of his mother. When they brought her son to the place of execution, she slipped five pieces of gold to the executioners to have her son crucified, not as the Lord was, but rather upside down. Theoclea did this out of humility before the Lord. Calliopius was crucified upside down on Holy Thursday. His mother stood beneath the cross-giving praise to God. One the second day when they removed his lifeless body from the cross, she fell upon her son and she, herself, died. Thus, these two went before the Throne of the King of Glory together. They honourably suffered in the year 304 A.D.;

**Our Holy Father Daniel of Pereyaslavl** - he had, as a unique form of mortification, that of caring for the dead. Whenever he heard that someone was found frozen to death or that had died in some other manner, Daniel would hasten to bury him decently and to offer prayers to God for him. He died peacefully in the year 1540 A.D. His relics remain intact; Our Holy Father Gregory the Sinaite.





Lazarus Saturday is a paschal celebration. It is the only time in the entire Church Year that the resurrection service of Sunday is celebrated on another day. At the Liturgy of Lazarus Saturday, the Church glorifies Christ as "the Resurrection and the Life" who by raising Lazarus has confirmed the universal resurrection of mankind even before His own suffering and death.

At the Divine Liturgy of Lazarus Saturday, the baptismal verse from Galatians ("As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" **Galatians 32:27**) replaces the Thrice-Holy Hymn, thus indicating the resurrectional character of the celebration, and the fact that Lazarus Saturday was once among the few great baptismal days in the Orthodox Church Year.

Because of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, Christ was hailed by the masses as the long-expected Messiah-King of Israel. Thus, in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, he entered Jerusalem, the City of the King, riding on the colt of an ass (**Zechariah 9:9; John 12:12**) the crowds greeting him with waving branches and shouts of praise: Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! The Son of David! The King of Israel! Because of this glorification by the people, the Jewish priests and scribes were finally driven "to destroy Him, to put Him to death." (**Luke 19:47; John 11:53, 12:10**)

*Taken from The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II: Worship, by Fr. Thomas Hopko.*