



PASCHA

The Resurrection of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ

15 / 28 April

ODE ONE

Heirmos: IT is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant, O ye peoples; Pascha, the Lord's Pascha; for Christ God hath brought us from death unto life, and from earth unto Heaven as we sing the triumphal hymn.
Troparia: LET us purify our senses and we shall behold Christ, radiant with the unapproachable light of the Resurrection, and we shall clearly hear Him say: Rejoice! as we sing the triumphal hymn.
 FOR meet it is that the Heavens should rejoice, and that the earth should be glad, and that the whole world, both visible and invisible, should keep the feast; for Christ, our everlasting Joy, hath arisen.
Katavasia: It is the day of Resurrection . Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life. (Thrice) JESUS, having risen from the grave as He foretold, hath granted us life everlasting and great mercy. These last two hymns are chanted thus after each Ode.

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation : For Thine is the dominion, and Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

ODE THREE

Heirmos: COME, let us drink a new drink, not one marvellously brought forth from a barren rock, but the Source of incorruption, which springeth forth from the grave of Christ, in Whom we are established.
Troparia: NOW are all things filled with light; Heaven and earth, and the nethermost regions of the earth. Let all creation, therefore, celebrate the arising of Christ, whereby it is established.
 YESTERDAY I was buried with Thee, O Christ, and today I arise with Thine arising. Yesterday was I crucified with Thee; do Thou Thyself glorify me with Thee, O Saviour, in Thy Kingdom.
Katavasia: Come, let us drink a new drink . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For Thou art our God, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

THE HYPAKOE - Fourth Tone

WHEN they who were with Mary came, anticipating the dawn, and found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, they heard from the Angel: Why seek ye among the dead, as though He were mortal man, Him Who abideth in everlasting light? Behold the grave-clothes. Go quickly and proclaim to the world that the Lord is risen, and hath put death to death. For He is the Son of God, Who saveth the race of man.

And a reading from the Theologian, beginning with the words, It is the Day of Resurrection, and my beginning hath good auspices.

ODE FOUR

Heirmos: LET the Prophet Habakkuk, the proclaimer of divine things, keep the divine watch with us, and show forth the radiant Angel who with resounding voice hath declared: Today doth bring salvation to the world, for Christ is risen as omnipotent.
Troparia: CHRIST revealed Himself as of the male sex when He opened the Virgin's womb, and as a mortal was He called the Lamb. Thus, without blemish is our Pascha. for He tasted not corruption; and since He is truly God, perfect was He proclaimed. CHRIST, our blessed Crown, like unto a yearling lamb, of His own good will did sacrifice Himself for all, a Pascha of purification: and from the grave the beautiful Sun of Righteousness shone forth again upon us.
 DAVID, the ancestor of our God, danced with leaping before the symbolical Ark of the Covenant. Let us also, the holy people of God, beholding the fulfilment of the symbols, rejoice in godly wise: For Christ is risen, as omnipotent.
Katavasia: Let the Prophet Habakkuk, the proclaimer of divine things . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For a good and man-befriending God art Thou, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

ODE FIVE

Heirmos: LET us arise in the deep dawn and, instead of myrrh, offer praise to the Master; and we shall see Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, Who causeth life to dawn for all.
Troparia: WHEN those held captive in the bonds of Hades beheld Thy boundless compassion, O Christ, they hastened to the light with a joyful step, exalting the eternal Pascha.
 BEARING lights, let us go forth to meet Christ, Who cometh forth from the grave like a bridegroom. And with the ranks of them that love and keep this festival, let us celebrate the saving Pascha of God.
Katavasia: Let us arise in the deep dawn . . .
Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For hallowed and glorified is Thine all-honourable and majestic Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

ODE SIX

Heirmos: THOU didst descend into the deepest parts of the earth, and didst shatter the everlasting bars that held fast those that were fettered, O Christ. And on the third day, like Jonas from the sea monster, Thou didst arise from the grave.

Troparia: HAVING kept the seals intact, O Christ, Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Thou Who didst not break the seal of the Virgin by Thy birth; and Thou hast opened unto us the gates of Paradise.

O MY Saviour the life-giving and unslain Sacrifice, when, as God, Thou of Thine own will, hadst offered up Thyself unto the Father, Thou didst raise up with Thyself the whole race of Adam when Thou didst rise from the grave.

Katavasia: Thou didst descend . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For Thou art the King of Peace, and the Saviour of our souls, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

KONTAKION - Tone 8: THOUGH Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades, and didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

OIKOS: THE myrrh-bearing maidens anticipated the dawn, seeking, as it were day, the Sun Who was before the sun and Who had set in the tomb, and they cried out one to another: O friends, come, let us anoint with sweet-smelling spices the life-bringing and buried Body, even that Flesh which raiseth fallen Adam, who lieth in the grave. Let us go hence, let us make haste like the Wise Men, and let us adore and offer before Him myrrh as it were a gift to Him, Who is no longer wrapped in swaddling bands, but in a winding-sheet. And let us make lamentation and cry aloud in exclamation: Arise, O Master, Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

The Synaxarion of the Menaion, then the following: On this, the holy and great Sunday of Pascha, we celebrate the life-bringing Resurrection of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Verses: Christ, going down alone to the struggle with Hades, Came forth again and brought with Him plenteous spoils of victory. To Him be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then there is chanted in Tone 6: LET us who have beheld the Resurrection of Christ worship our holy Lord Jesus, Who is alone without sin. We worship Thy Cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Thy holy Resurrection. For Thou art our God, and we know none other beside Thee, and we call upon Thy Name. Come, all ye faithful, let us worship Christ's holy Resurrection, for behold, through the Cross joy hath come to the whole world. Forever blessing the Lord, we praise His Resurrection. He endured the Cross for us, and by death destroyed death. (Thrice)

JESUS, having risen from the grave as He foretold, hath granted us life everlasting and great mercy. (Thrice)

ODE SEVEN

Heirmos: THE only blest and most glorious God of our Fathers, Who hath redeemed the Children from the furnace, is become man, and as a mortal doth suffer, and through suffering doth clothe mortality with the grace of incorruption.

Troparia: THE godly-wise women followed after Thee in haste with sweet-smelling myrrh. But Him Whom they sought with tears as dead, they joyfully adored as the living God, and announced unto Thy disciples, O Christ, the glad tidings of the mystical Pascha.

WE celebrate the death of death, the destruction of Hades, the beginning of an everlasting life. And with leaps of joy we praise the Cause thereof, the only blest and most glorious God of our Fathers.

TRULY sacred and supremely festive is this saving night, radiant with light, the forerunner of the bright-beaming Day of the Resurrection, whereon the Timeless Light in bodily form shone from the grave for all.

Katavasia: The only blest . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: Blessed and glorified be the dominion of Thy Kingdom, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

ODE EIGHT

Heirmos: THIS chosen and holy day is the first of the sabbaths, the queen and lady, the feast of feasts, and the festival of festivals, wherein we bless Christ unto the ages.

Troparia: COME on this auspicious day of the Resurrection, let us partake of the new fruit of the vine of divine gladness and of the Kingdom of Christ, praising Him as God unto the ages.

CAST thine eyes about thee, O Sion, and behold! For lo, like divinely-radiant luminaries, from the West, the North, the Sea, and the East have thy children assembled unto thee, blessing Christ unto the ages.

O FATHER Almighty, the Word, and the Spirit, one Nature in three Hypostases united, transcending essence and supremely Divine! In Thee have we been baptized, and Thee will we bless unto all the ages. We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord.

Katavasia: This chosen and holy . . .

Then the Little Litany, with the exclamation: For blessed is Thy Name, and glorified is Thy Kingdom, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. The choir: Amen.

The deacon: The Theotokos and the Mother of the Light, let us magnify in song.

And the choirs chant the hymns of the ninth Ode:

ODE NINE

Megalynarion: Magnify, O my soul, Him Who suffered willingly, and was buried, and arose from the grave on the third day.

Heirmos: SHINE, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord hath arisen upon thee; dance now and be glad, O Sion, and do thou exult, O pure Theotokos, in the arising of Him Whom thou didst bear.

Megalynarion: Magnify, ... And again the Heirmos:

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem . . .

Megalynarion: Christ is the new Pascha, the living sacrificial Victim, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Troparion: O THY divine and beloved and most sweet voice; Thou hast truly promised that Thou wouldst be with us unto the end of the world, O Christ; and we faithful rejoice, having this as an anchor of hope.

Megalynarion: Today the whole creation is glad and doth rejoice, for Christ is risen, and Hades hath been despoiled.

And again the Troparion: O Thy divine and beloved . . .

Glory. Megalynarion: Magnify, O my soul, the dominion of the Undivided Godhead of Three Hypostases.

Troparion: GREAT and most sacred Pascha, Christ; O Wisdom and Word and Power of God! Grant that we partake of Thee fully in the unwaning day of Thy Kingdom. Both now.

Megalynarion: Rejoice, O Virgin, rejoice; rejoice, O blessed one; rejoice, O most glorified one, for thy Son hath arisen from the grave on the third day.

And again the Troparion: O great and most sacred Pascha . . .

Megalynarion: The Angel cried unto her that is full of grace: O pure Virgin, rejoice, and again I say, rejoice; for thy Son hath arisen from the grave on the third day.

Katavasia: SHINE, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord hath arisen upon thee; dance now and be glad, O Sion, and do thou exult, O pure Theotokos, in the arising of Him Whom thou didst bear.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life. (Thrice)

JESUS, having risen from the grave as He foretold, hath granted us life everlasting and great mercy.

Then the little litany with the exclamation: For all the hosts of the Heavens praise Thee, and unto Thee do they send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. The Choir: Amen.

EXAPOSTILARION, Second Tone: WHEN Thou hadst fallen asleep in the flesh as one mortal, O King and Lord, Thou didst rise again on the third day, raising up Adam from corruption, and abolishing death: O Pascha of incorruption ! O Salvation of the world! (Thrice)

FROM THE OCTOECHOS, First Tone:

Verse: Praise Him for His mighty acts, praise Him according to the multitude of His greatness.

WE praise Thy saving Passion, O Christ, and glorify Thy Resurrection.

Verse: Praise Him with the sound of trumpet, praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

THOU Who didst endure the Cross, and didst abolish death, and didst arise from the dead: Make our life peaceful, O Lord, since Thou alone art omnipotent.

Verse: Praise Him with timbrel and dance, praise Him with strings and flute.

THOU Who didst despoil Hades, and didst raise up man by Thy Resurrection, O Christ: Deem us worthy to hymn and glorify Thee with purity of heart.

Verse: Praise Him with tuneful cymbals, praise Him with cymbals of jubilation. Let every breath praise the Lord.

GLORIFYING Thy God-befitting condescension, we praise Thee, O Christ; for thou wast born of a Virgin, and yet Thou wast inseparable from the Father. Thou didst suffer as man, and didst endure the Cross willingly. And as one coming forth from the bridal chamber, Thou didst rise from the grave that Thou mightest save the world. O Lord, glory be to Thee.

THE STICHERA OF PASCHA WITH THEIR VERSES, Tone 5:

Verse: Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Him flee from before His face.

A SACRED Pascha hath been shown forth to us today; a new and holy Pascha, a mystic Pascha, an all-venerable Pascha, a Pascha that is Christ the Redeemer; a spotless Pascha, a great Pascha, a Pascha of the faithful, a Pascha that hath opened unto us the gates of Paradise, a Pascha that doth hallow all the faithful.

Verse: As smoke vanisheth, so let them vanish; as wax melteth before the fire.

COME from that scene, O women, bearers of good tidings, and say to Sion: Receive from us the tidings of joy, of the Resurrection of Christ. Exult, dance, and be glad, O Jerusalem, for thou hast seen Christ the King as a bridegroom come forth from the tomb.

Verse: So let sinners perish at the presence of God, and let the righteous be glad.

THE myrrh-bearing women at deep dawn drew nigh to the tomb of the Giver of life; they found an Angel sitting upon the stone, and he, addressing them, in this manner did say: Why seek ye the Living among the dead? Why mourn ye the Incorruptible amid corruption? Go, proclaim it unto His disciples.

Verse: This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein.

A PASCHA of delight, Pascha, the Lord's Pascha, an all-venerable Pascha hath dawned for us, a Pascha whereon let us embrace one another with joy. O Pascha, ransom from sorrow! Today Christ hath shone forth from the tomb as from a bridal chamber, and hath filled the women with joy, saying: Proclaim it unto the Apostles.

GLORY; BOTH NOW, Plagal of First Tone

IT is the day of Resurrection; let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, O brethren, even to those that hate us: Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection; and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life.

Then Christ is risen is repeated thrice more, and we continue chanting it until the brethren have greeted each other.

Homily of our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople For the Holy and Radiant Day of the Glorious and Saving Resurrection of Christ our God

Master Bless - IF any be pious and a lover of God, let him delight in this fair and radiant festival. If any be an honest servant, let him come in and rejoice in the joy of his Lord. If any have wearied himself with fasting, let him now enjoy the recompense. If any have worked from the first hour, let him receive today his just reward. If any have come after the third, let him feast with thankfulness. If any have arrived after the sixth, in no wise let him be in doubt; in no way shall he suffer loss. If any be later than the ninth, let him draw nigh, let him not waver. If any arrive only at the eleventh, let him not be fearful for his slowness, for the Master is munificent and receiveth the last even as the first; He giveth rest to him of the eleventh even as to him who hath wrought from the first hour. He is merciful to the last and provideth for the first; and to this one He giveth, and to that one He showeth kindness. He receiveth their labours and acknowledgeth the purpose, and He honoureth the deed and praiseth the intention. Wherefore, enter ye all into the joy of our Lord, and let the first and the second take part in the reward. Ye rich and ye poor, join hands together. Ye sober and ye heedless, do honour to this day. Ye who fast and ye who fast not, be glad today. The table is full: do ye all fare sumptuously. The calf is ample: let no one go forth hungry. Let all enjoy the banquet of Faith. Let all enjoy the wealth of righteousness. Let no one lament his poverty, for the Kingdom is made manifest to all. Let no one bewail transgressions, for forgiveness hath dawned forth from the tomb. Let no one be fearful of Death, for the death of the Saviour hath set us free. He hath quenched Death by being subdued by Death. He Who came down into Hades, despoiled Hades; and Hades was embittered when he tasted of Christ's Flesh. Isaiah, anticipating this, cried out and said: Hades was embittered when below he met Thee face to face. He was embittered, for he was set at nought. He was embittered, for he was mocked. He was embittered, for he was slain. He was embittered, for he was cast down. He was embittered, for he was fettered. He received a body, and encountered God. He received earth, and met Heaven face to face. He received what he saw, and fell whither he saw not. O Death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory? Risen is Christ, and thou art overthrown. is Christ, and the demons are fallen. Risen is Christ, and the Angels rejoice. . Risen is Christ, and life doth reign. Risen is Christ, and there is none dead in the tomb. For Christ is raised from the dead, and is become the first-fruits of them that slept. To Him be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Then we chant the Dismissal Hymn of Saint John Chrysostom, Tone 8: GRACE shining forth from thy mouth like a beacon hath illumined the universe, and disclosed to the world treasures of uncovetousness, and shown us the heights of humility; but whilst instructing us by thy words, O Father John Chrysostom, intercede with the Word, Christ our God, to save our souls.
After the dismissal the Liturgy begins:

Epistle: The Acts of St Apostles 1: 1-8

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; For John truly baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

TO WHOM HE PRESENTED HIMSELF ALIVE

But why did He appear... only to the Apostles? Because to the many it would have seemed a mere apparition, inasmuch as they did not understand the secret of the mystery. For the disciples themselves were at first incredulous...and needed the evidence of actual touch with the hand, and of His eating with them...For this reason therefore, by the miracles wrought by the Apostles, He renders the evidence of His resurrection unequivocal...All men thereafter should be certain ...that He was risen...But they did not, you say, perform miracles? How then was our religion instituted?

St. John Chrysostom. Homily I on Acts I, B#55, p. 5.

The Gospel According To St. John 1: 1-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' " And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

AND THE WORD WAS GOD

Now this is a proof that Christ is God the Word, and the Power of God. For whereas human beings cease, and the word of Christ abides, it is dear to all eyes that what ceases is temporary, but that He who abides is God, and the true Son of God, His only begotten Word.

St. Athanasius of Alexandria. On The Incarnation, 55. B#7, p. 109.

Through the incarnation of God the Logos, there entered into human nature the all- perfect Divine Wisdom, the all- perfect Divine Logic, and the all-perfect Divine Mind. 'The Word became flesh,' which means: all the transcendental Divine values became internal to human nature, for they are congenial to the essence of man's godlike soul. All the eternal Divine values, incarnated in man, ultimately merge into one immeasurable and insuperable value: the God-man Christ. Consequently, the God-man is the first, the greatest, the most basic, and the supreme value in the world of man. For nothing is more human than the Lord Christ, who personifies in Himself the most ideal perfection of all that is truly human, truly manlike. Furthermore, He, as the God-man, is the most perfect synthesis of the Divine and the human ...of the natural and the supernatural, of the physical and the metaphysical, of the real and the ideal. In Him, being the God-man, there was created and preserved in the most ideal way an equilibrium between the Divine and the human; and preserved together with this was the autonomy of what is of man and human, as well as the autonomy of what is of God and divine ...

What especially makes the God-man Christ the value above all values is the fact that He is the first and only one to solve completely the problem of life and death ...having actually demonstrated in His Divine-human person incarnate, humanised immortality and life eternal. He demonstrated and proved this powerfully indeed by His resurrection from the dead and ascension into the eternal life of the Godhead ...

'He came into His own.' Yet how are they His people unless by reason of their godlike soul? ...By acknowledging the God-man, we indirectly acknowledge the Christlikeness of man. the divine descent of man, the divine elevation of man ...The struggle for the God-man is the struggle for man. Not humanists, but men of divine-human faith and life are struggling for true man, godlike and Christlike man.

Archimandrite Justin Popovic. The Supreme Value and Infallible Criterion, B#80A, Vol. 4, pp. 114,116,138.

And He is called the Word, because He is related to the Father as word to mind ...Perhaps, too, this relation might be compared to that between the definition and the thing defined since this also is called logos. For, it says, he who has mental perception of the Son (for this is the meaning of 'has seen') has also perceived the Father; and the Son is a concise demonstration and easy setting forth of the Father's nature. For everything that is begotten is a silent word of Him who begat it ..He is also called Wisdom, as the knowledge of things divine and human...And Power, as the sustainer of all created things and the furnisher to them of power to keep themselves together. And Truth...and as the pure seal of the Father and His most unerring impress. And the Image, as of one substance with Him...For this is the nature of an image, to be the reproduction of its archetype.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Fourth Theological Oration, 20. B#7, p. 191.

Since the exile from paradise and the dispersion of Babel, human language has lost its transparency. Words have become void of truth ...But the Word of God was made flesh, has become human word. It was a becoming which was prepared step by step from the creation right up to the fiat of the Virgin, prepared through continuous and successive revelations ...The image of God has never been totally erased from mankind by the primal transgression and fall. In its incarnation, the Word of God - clothed in human flesh and in human language - possesses an efficacy which is both spiritual and sacramental...

The primary aim [of Christian language] is to express and describe the mystery of Christ: the mystery of His incarnation, of his redemptive Passover, and of His sacramental presence in the Church for the life of the world, until His second glorious coming...We may affirm quite clearly that the trinitarian revelation in its entirety proceeds from the coming and the presence of Christ, in whom and through whom and by whom we discover the love of the Father and the power of the Spirit. In the first place, all names, titles, attributes of God, all biblical types and figures pertain to Jesus, the divine Logos.

Archpriest Boris Bobrinskoy, Revelation of the Spirit, Language beyond Words. Sobornost, Vol. 8 No. 1,1986.

Saints of the Week

Bright Week – Fast Free Week

16 / 29 April — The Holy Martyrs Agapia, Chionia and Irene - They were sisters from the region of Aquileia. When the Emperor Diocletian was staying in Aquileia, he ordered that the famous spiritual guide, Chrysogonus, be executed. An old priest named Zoilus received a vision in which he was shown where the body of Chrysogonus lay unburied. The old man hurried off, found the body of the martyr, placed it in a coffin and carried it to his home. On the thirtieth day after that, St Chrysogonus appeared to him and told him that the three maidens would be martyred in the next nine days, and that he, Zoilus, would himself enter into rest during that time. Anastasia the Seer also received the same tidings in a vision sent by Chrysogonus, who had been her teacher. The elder Zoilus did indeed find his rest after nine days, and the three sisters were brought to trial before the Emperor. The Emperor urged the holy maidens to worship idols, but they all refused, confessing their firm faith in Christ. Irene told the Emperor that it was ridiculous to bow down to things made of wood and stone, made to order at an agreed price by the hands of a mortal man. The furious Emperor flung them into prison. Now, when the Emperor travelled to Macedonia, he took all his slaves and servants with him, including the three sisters. He gave them to

Dulcitus, a general, for torture. Inflamed with a dark passion, he desired to defile the maidens, but, when he tried to go into the prison, he lost his mind and fell upon the pots and cauldrons in front of the gate, embracing and kissing them, and was completely blackened with soot. When the Emperor heard of this happening, he ordered another general to undertake the trial of the sisters. After terrible torture, the judge condemned the first two sisters to death by fire, but kept Irene for a time, hoping to defile her. But, when he sent Irene to the brothel along with some soldiers, an angel of God turned the soldiers back and led her out onto a high hill. The next day the general went out to the hill with his soldiers and, being unable to climb it, ordered that Irene be shot at with arrows. St Anastasia gathered all three bodies together in one place and gave them burial. They suffered for Christ their King and Lord in about 304; The Holy Martyr

17 / 30 April — The Hieromartyr Simeon, Bishop in Persia - In the time of the wicked King Savori, or Sapor, Simeon was tortured for Christ together with two of his priests, Audel and Ananias. The King's eunuch, Ustazan, who had first denied Christ but then, moved by the reprimand of St Simeon, again confessed the true Faith before the King, was executed before they were. A thousand other Christians were also led to execution with St Simeon, who purposely stood a little back so that he should be the last to die, and so be able to encourage the other Christians right to the end and keep them from wavering through fear of death. When the priest Ananias laid his head on the block, he was trembling all over. But the King's clerk, Fusik, who was himself secretly a Christian, began to encourage him, saying: 'Don't be frightened, old man. Shut your eyes and be a man, and you'll see the divine light.' As soon as he had said this, it was seen that he was a Christian and he was denounced to the King. The King wore him down with harsh tortures, and also his daughter, the maiden Askitria. St Simeon was eventually beheaded, after having seen his flock into the other world. The following year, on Great Friday, the King's beloved eunuch, Azat, was slain for Christ, along with another thousand of the faithful. Then the King grieved for his eunuch and gave up killing any more Christians. They all suffered with honour for Christ their King and Lord in about 341.

St Acacius, Bishop of Melitene - lived the ascetical life in the place where he was born, i.e., in Melitene, Armenia. Blessed Otreius, bishop of that city, who participated at the Second Ecumenical Council [Constantinople 381 A.D.], ordained him a presbyter. Following the death of Otreius, Acacius became a bishop. He participated at the Third Ecumenical Council [Ephesus 431 A.D.], which condemned the evil blasphemy of Nestorius against the Mother of God. Here, together with St. Cyril of Alexandria, Acacius zealously fought for the purity of the Orthodox Faith. St. Acacius possessed much Grace from God and worked many miracles. After long and zealous service to God, Acacius died peacefully in the year 435 A.D.; St Agapetus, Pope of Rome; Our Holy Fathers Sabbatius and Zossima.

Holy Martyr Donan, an Irish monk of Iona under Columba & 52 monks with him at his monastery on the Isle of Eigg - Inner Hebrides, Scotland - while the monks were celebrating Liturgy on Easter night 618 a gang of robbers, possibly Vikings, arrived on the island and herded the monks into the refectory and set fire to it. Those who tried to escape were killed by the sword. At least eleven Scottish churches bear his name.

18 April / 1 May — Our Holy Father John - He was a disciple of St Gregory of Decapolis. In the time of the iconoclast heresy, the Emperor Leo the Armenian put John to torture, together with his teacher, Gregory, and Joseph the Hymnographer. When Gregory finished his earthly course, John became abbot of the Decapolite monastery in Constantinople. Becoming abbot, he intensified his asceticism for the sake of the Kingdom of God. He died peacefully in about 820. After his death, St Joseph buried him near the grave of St Gregory.

The Holy Martyr John the New of Ioannina - born in Ioannina, once the capitol city of the Emperor Pyrrhus. When his impoverished parents died, the young John moved to Constantinople and there continued his occupation, for he was a craftsman. Not long before that, the Turks surrounded Constantinople and many Christians, out of fear, denied Christ and embraced the Islamic faith. St. John had his workshop in the midst of these converts to Islam. The more the young John burned with love for Christ the Lord, the more openly he exposed himself as a Christian before these traitors of Christ. He began to argue with them about faith and, finally, rebuked them for their betrayal of Christ. They dragged him before the judge and falsely accused John, alleging that he had earlier embraced Islam, and that he again reverted to Christianity. After he was tortured and beaten with rods and iron ramrods, they cast him into prison. The next day was the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ and, again, they brought him out for further torture and John emerged singing: "Christ is risen from the dead!" To his torturers, he bravely said: " Do what you want in order to send me as soon as possible from this transient life to eternal life. I am Christ's slave, I follow Christ, for Christ I die that I may live with Him!" After that, John was bound in chains and brought to the place of burning. Upon seeing a large fire prepared for him, John ran and leaped into the flames. His torturers seeing how he loved death in the fire removed him from the fire and sentenced him to be beheaded. After they beheaded him, they threw his head and body into the fire. Later on, Christians leafed through the ashes and gathered some of the remains of his honourable and wonder-working relics and interred them in the Great Church [Agia Sophia - Church of the Holy Wisdom] in Constantinople. Thus, St. John of Ioannina died a martyr's death and received the glorious martyr's wreath on April 18, 1526 A. D.; The Holy Martyrs Victor, Zoticus, Zeno, Acyndinus and Severian; New Martyr Priests Nicholas (1937) and Basil (Derzhavin) (1930) and lay people of the city of Gorodets, Nizhni-Novgorod.

19 April / 2 May — Our Holy Father John of the Ancient Caves - lived a life of asceticism in the so-called "old caves," the "old Lavra" of Chariton the Great in Palestine. Having loved Christ the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul and with all his mind, John, at an early age, began to travel to the holy places and to listen to the instructions and counsels of the holy men. Finally, he settled in the Caves of Chariton, where he gave himself to rigorous asceticism spending days and years in fasting, prayer, vigils, continuously meditating on death, and teaching himself humility. As a good ripened fruit, he was plucked by death and took up habitation in Paradise. He lived and died in the eighth century;

The Holy Martyrs Christopher, Theonas and Antoninus - young officers serving under Emperor Diocletian. When St. George the Great Martyr was being tortured, they witnessed his sufferings as well as the miracles which occurred at that time. Seeing all of this, they came before the emperor, laid down their arms, removed their military belts and bravely confessed the

Name of the Lord Jesus. For that, they were subjected to great torture and finally were tossed into the fire, where their bodies were consumed while their souls went to God into eternal joy. They honourably suffered in Nicomedia in the year 303 A.D.;

St Tryphun, Patriarch of Constantinople - The Emperor Romanus, who reigned over Byzantium at the beginning of the tenth century had a son, Theophylact, who was sixteen years old when Patriarch Stephen died. The emperor wanted his son to be elevated as patriarch for he had promised him [his son] this spiritual calling from his youth. Because his son was a minor, the emperor was ashamed to do this. The patriarchal throne was assumed by Tryphun a simple but chaste and pious old man. Tryphun remained on the throne for three years. When the son of the emperor reached his twentieth year, the emperor thought, to remove Tryphun at any price and to install his son as patriarch. The saint of God, Tryphun, did not want to relinquish his throne voluntarily, for no other reason, because he considered it to be a great scandal that such a young man be elevated to such a responsible and burdensome position as that of being patriarch. Through the intrigue of a nefarious bishop, the signature of the innocent Tryphun was extracted on a blank sheet of paper. Later on, in the imperial court, above that signature, the alleged resignation of the patriarch was written which the emperor decreed. As a result of this, there arose a great confusion in the Church, for the laity and the clergy stood by Tryphun, the godly man. The emperor then forcibly removed the aged patriarch and sent him to a monastery and, his son, Theophylact, was elevated as patriarch. St. Tryphun lived as an ascetic in this monastery for two years and five months and presented himself before the Lord in the year 933 A.D.. Our Holy Father, the Martyr Agathangelos; Our Holy Father Simeon the Barefoot;

Hieromartyr Alphege, archbishop of Canterbury (1012) - he became a monk at Deerhurst but after some years retired to be a hermit in Somerset. In 984 he became bishop of Winchester and he became known for his personal austerity and lavish almsgiving. In 994 King Ethelred sent him to parley with the Danes Anlaf and Swein, who had raided both London and Wessex. The Anglo-Saxons paid tribute but Anlaf became a Christian and promised he would never again come to England 'with warlike intent.' This promise was kept. In 1006 he succeeded Aelfric as archbishop of Canterbury. Meanwhile the Danes continued to overrun southern England. They besieged Canterbury and imprisoned Alphege and others and demanded a ransom of 3000 pounds. Alphege refused to pay and forbade his people to do so. The Danes were so infuriated that, after a feast at which they got drunk, and killed him with the bones of oxen: an axeman delivered the final blow. His was originally buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, London however in 1023 his body was translated to Canterbury Cathedral. In 1105 his body was found to be incorrupt.

20 April / 3 May — Our Holy Father Theodore Trichinas - A citizen of Constantinople, he was the son of wealthy parents. He left parents, home and riches while still a young man and settled in a remote monastery in Thrace, where he undertook the most rigorous ascetic life. He slept on a stone so that he might have less sleep; he was always bareheaded and dressed in a hair-shirt, from which he was called 'Trichinas' or 'hairy'. Because of his great and self-inflicted sufferings for the sake of his soul's salvation, God granted him the gift of working miracles, both in his lifetime and after his death, and he died peacefully in about 400. Healing myrrh flowed from his relics.

The Holy Apostle Zacchaeus - At first, Zacchaeus was a tax collector and a sinner. When our Lord saw him in Jericho in a tree and entered his home, Zacchaeus was brought to repentance. Later on, Zacchaeus followed the Apostle Peter who appointed him bishop of Caesarea in Palestine where he faithfully served the Gospel and died peacefully; Blessed Anastasius the Sinaite, Patriarch of Antioch; Blessed Gregory, Patriarch of Antioch; Our Holy Father Anastasius of Sinai; Our Holy Father Athanasius of Meteora;

St. Caedwalla, king of the West Saxons (689) - he became king by conquest being notoriously violent but then abdicated and went to Rome to become a Christian. He was baptised on Holy Saturday 689 being given the name Peter by Pope Sergius. Soon afterwards he was taken ill and died, still wearing his white baptismal robes. He was aged 30.

April 21 / May 4 — The Hieromartyr Januarius and those with him - This saint was Bishop of Benevento in Italy. In the time of a persecution under Maximian, he was brought before the judge and tormented with various tortures, which he endured patiently. When they threw him into the flames, they were cooled by an invisible dew and the martyr stood uninjured in it and sang the praises of God. Then they flayed his body with iron flails until the bones showed white, but the martyr patiently endured all. His deacon, Faustus, and his reader, Desiderius, were watching the torture and wept for their spiritual father. Then they too were bound and taken with their bishop to the town of Pozzuoli, and cast into prison. There were in the same prison for the sake of Christ the Puetolian deacons Proclus and Sossus and two simple, Christian men, Eutychius and Acutius. All seven were thrown next day to the wild beasts, but the beasts would not touch them. They were all then beheaded, and the Christians of the city of Naples secretly took the body of St Januarius to their city and buried it in the church. To this present day innumerable wonders are worked at this saint's grave. One among many remembered is this: a poor widow, whose only son had died, took the icon of St Januarius out of the church and laid it on her dead son, weeping and imploring the saint's aid, and her son was restored to life. St Januarius suffered with honour in 305; The Holy Martyr Theodore;

St. Beuno, abbot of Clynnog Fawr, England (c.640) - born and educated in Herefordshire before founding his main monastery. When he died a stone oratory was built over his tomb; later his relics were translated to a new church (Eglwys y Bedd) where miracles were reported. He is considered to be the most important local saint of North Wales. Remains of the primitive oratory were excavated in 1914.

St. Maelrubba (642-722) Apostle of the Picts - born in Ireland he became a monk at Bangor; later founded a monastery at Applecross on the west coast of Scotland. From there he evangelised Skye and penetrated as far north as Loch Broom. He also build a church on an island in Loch Maree, where his spring was famous for its healing properties.

St. Ethilwald, hermit of Farne (d. 699) - he was a monk and a priest of Ripon, who succeeded Cuthbert in the Inner Farne hermitage in 687. Almost nothing is known of him. Once Guthrid, the future abbot, with two monks of Lindisfarne, visited him by boat; on the return journey they were saved from shipwreck in a sudden storm by his prayers. Many miracles have been reported due to his intercession.