

after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by labouring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

YOU MUST SUPPORT THE WEAK: IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE

It is to raise up their minds that he says all this, and to persuade them not only not to flee, but also to bear nobly. This is the reason he calls it a 'course' and a 'ministry' on the one hand, showing it to be glorious from its being a race, on the other, showing what was due from it, as being a ministry. I am a minister: nothing more. He had comforted them, so they would not grieve that he was treated in such a bad way ... For my anxiety is not that you should be saved through me as the means, but only that you should be saved: the person as the instrument is immaterial. You do not know the pangs of spiritual childbirth, how overpowering they are, how he who is in travail with this birth would rather be cut into ten thousand pieces, than see one of those to whom he has given birth perishing and undone.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XLIV on Acts XX. B#55, pp. 270-272.

TO SHEPHERD THE CHURCH OF GOD

There is no ministry in the Church other than Christ's ministry ... This identification of the Church's ministry with that of Christ has gone beyond the theology of the Fathers and entered the liturgical life of the ancient Church in a decisive way: in the Eucharist, Christ is not only the one who is offered and who receives but also the one who offers ...

The ministry of the Church ... exists as an expression of the totality of the Economy. We cannot, therefore, understand the nature of the ministry by seeing it simply in terms of the past (Christ's ministry in Palestine) or a present (ministry as service to the needs of today) but of the future as well, namely as sustaining for creation the hope of the eschata, of sharing God's very life ...

Just as the Church becomes through the ministry a relational entity both in itself and in its relation to the world, so also the ordained man becomes, through his ordination, a relational entity. In this context, looking at the ordained person as an individual defeats the very end of ordination. For ordination ... aims precisely at making man not an individual but a person, i.e. an ek-static being, that can be looked upon not from the angle of his "limits" but of his overcoming his "selfhood" and becoming a related being ... In the light of the koinonia of the Holy Spirit, ordination relates the ordained man so profoundly and so existentially to the community that in his new state after ordination he cannot be any longer, as a minister, conceived in himself ... Only in terms of love can one understand the mystery of charismatic life and therefore of ministry.

Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamos. Being as Communion, B#82, pp. 210, 211, 226, 227 (note).

GOSPEL: ST. JOHN 17:1-13

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

THE GREAT INTERCESSORY PRAYER OF CHRIST

'I have spoken these [words] to you,' the LORD says to His disciples, 'that in Me, you may have peace; because, in the world you will have tribulation.' It is, after all, ruled by 'the prince of the power of the air who is actively working in the sons of disobedience.' (Eph 2.2) 'But, you be of good cheer,' the LORD goes on to say. 'Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.' (Jn 14.27) 'For, I have overcome the world.' (Jn 16.33)

These are words the LORD says to His disciples in the 'hour' when His Holy Pascha begins. Coming to us this morning in their liturgical setting of the Seventh Sunday of Pascha, these words come to us from the LORD who has ascended. They are spoken to us here in this world where we suffer; but, they are spoken to us from the LORD who is no longer in the world. (Jn 17.11) He is sitting at the Right Hand of the Father in heaven. In heaven, He is, to be sure, up there; but, this 'up there' is not

outside of you. It is 'within you', in your hearts. Remember the LORD's WORD: 'The Kingdom of Heaven is *within* you' (Lk 17.21); and, St Paul says: the mystery of God hidden from the ages is 'Christ *in* you, the hope of glory.' (Col 1.27) So, even within this world of tribulation, we may have peace and joy by abiding in Christ who is in heaven; for, in heaven, Christ is not outside of us. He is within us.

If, in our heart, we are living in this world of tribulations, will not our inner man be in constant turmoil from being immersed in the troubles and scandals (Mt 18.7) that flood the world constantly from the dark spirit that is actively working in the sons of disobedience? Can one not feel the darkness of that spirit working in one's heart? Can one not feel one's soul being drawn down into ever darker waters of anxiety, fear, anger, confusion and despair? Are we not tossed about in dark, raging rapids flowing ever closer to a waterfall that pours into a dark abyss below?

But, if in our hearts, in our 'secret closet,' we are living in the LORD, then, even as we are surrounded by the tribulations of the world, we are living in the Peace of heaven. Even in that instant when in our hearts, even as we are in the world of tribulations, we turn to the LORD and receive Him, and resolve to abide in Him, does not the soul feel immediately a lifting up, an inner illumination, as though she has just been raised from out of the darkness of an inner grave and placed in a heavenly light of peace and joy? In that moment, the soul has found the unseen Path that ascends a mountain, in Light, ever drawing her upward to an even brighter Light at the top of the mystical mountain above her.

I was caught by yesterday's reading. Listen for the parallel between the *words* and the *works* of the LORD. That means they are synonyms: 'The words that I speak to you I do not speak from Myself; it is the Father who dwells in Me who does His works [in Me].' (Jn 14.10) That is, the words Jesus says are one with the works the Father is doing in Jesus. With this discovery, namely that words and works are synonymous, let's return to the biblical passage I quoted at the beginning of this sermon.

The prince of the power of the air, says St Paul, works actively in the sons of disobedience. Our discovery gives us to understand that he works in the words that sons of disobedience speak. Perhaps this is the theological basis for the biblical admonition, given many times throughout holy scripture, to guard our lips and the words of our mouth, to refrain from abusive, angry and vulgar speech. For these words of anger, hatred, darkness express and foster the works of darkness, the very works that are the cause of tribulation, suffering, ruin, misery, destruction, despair in the world. These angry, dark words make manifest the immaterial path of the prince of the power of the air that is ever descending into the darkness of the abyss. Perhaps, I should be more vigilant in guarding my lips? The words that come from my mouth, are they a sign of the spirit that my heart is living in?

The LORD, however, is the Son of obedience. The words He speaks make manifest, or rather, they *do* the works of the Father. Or rather, the words of Christ are not empty sounds giving shape to abstract, disembodied ideas that have no substance except in the imagination. His words are the audible form of a substantive 'work': the creation of heaven and earth, the fashioning of man from the earth and breathing into him the Breath of Life, the Holy Spirit, to raise him up from the dust of the ground as a living soul in the image and likeness of God. This 'work' of the Father is finished in His WORD, which is not an abstract, disembodied idea, but the substantive [hypostatic] Person, Jesus Christ. That work is the union of heaven and earth in the sanctuary of the human heart. This is the work that the WORD of God accomplished in His 'wordless' work of destroying death by His death on the Cross. It's a beautiful irony; it was a 'wordless' work accomplished by the WORD of God. From the Cross, He sent forth His Spirit and renewed the face of the earth. The rocks split, the earth quaked, and the graves were opened. The uncreated Light that He is, and the Life of the Holy Spirit who is carried in His Light, spills out into the darkness. Not even the sealed tomb can contain it. (Lk 23.54, epifosken) It spreads through the air, and the dark spirit of the prince of the air cannot extinguish it, as healing, fragrant, life-giving light shining on those who sit in the region and shadow of death.

That Light emanates from Christ's Body in whom the fullness of God dwells (Col 2.9). And, in that Light, the Resurrection and the Life comes forth bodily from the Tomb, now permeated with the sweet fragrance of His life-giving Light, and He ascends to Heaven *bodily* so that we can sing at Matins on Ascension morning; 'our nature, which once was fallen, has been taken up above the angels, seated ineffably forever on the divine throne.' (Ascension Matins, Ode 8).

The LORD says to His disciples: 'Believe in Me [believe the words I speak to you] because of the works [I do]. They are the very [works of creating, healing, even raising the dead to life that the Father does].' (Jn 14.11) The Father is doing those works through Me, the WORD of the Father, through My words; my words are but droplets of Me who am the WORD of God. To receive the *words* of Jesus, then, is to receive the *works* of God the Father that the LORD Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has 'finished.' (Jn 17.4) The WORD of God has been sown in our souls through our baptism. That means that there has been sown in our heart the works of God, and what is moving in our hearts, is His Glorious Ascension.

'I am no longer in the world,' the LORD says from His Throne in Heaven; 'but these are in the world. And I am coming to you, holy Father.' (Jn 17.11) Even while we are in this world of tribulation, if in our heart, we are living in the *words* of Jesus Christ, we are living in the *work* of His Holy Pascha and in the Glory of His Ascension. Even while we are in the world, we are living not in the world descending into the abyss but on the Path in whom we are 'coming to' our Father in Heaven. We are living in the Peace of Christ; for, His victory over death, His illumination of hell, His transformation of the tomb of our heart into a bridal chamber, the whole mystery of God, all the 'works' of God are 'in you' because the works of God are in you in the WORD of God who is in you. These are our 'hope of glory!' (Col 1.26-27)

If the words of the LORD are the form of His mighty works of creation, of healing, and raising the dead, then does it not follow that we begin to live in the finished work of the LORD's Pascha through the words of the Church's prayers? Prayer now comes into view as an interior repentance that is 'without ceasing.' That is, it is a never-ceasing turning of our mind inward toward the Christ, the WORD of God who is in us and whose works are living in His *words* that are in us. Prayer is this

interior movement of the soul always making her way to the inner chamber of her heart. Prayer is like the myrrhbearers, or like Peter and John making their way to the empty Tomb of the Savior, empty because He isn't among the dead anymore. And so also, when we turn to Christ and begin to live in His words, we discover in the fullness of our hearts that our hearts have become *empty*; that is, we are not to be found among the dead anymore.

Here is the LORD's eternal salvation proclaimed by the 'holy and incorruptible preaching' of His holy apostles. Though we are in the world surrounded by tribulations, we can be living in the Peace of the LORD, because He's not 'out' or 'up' there. He is 'in here', in our heart. In our heart, we can live in the finished work of the LORD by living in His words that shape and govern our life. For in His words are the peace, the light and joy of His Resurrection, and the hope of the glory of His Ascension that is within us. Amen.

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Saints of the Week

23 May / 5 June — St Michael, Bishop of Synnada - from his childhood, this wise and holy hierarch consecrated himself to the service of Christ. He laboured in asceticism together with Saint Theophylact of Nicomedia. Once, in a time of drought, these two holy men caused an abundance of rain to fall on the earth by their prayers. Because of the life of asceticism and chastity that Michael had led from his early youth, he was chosen and consecrated by Patriarch Tarasius as Bishop of Synnada. He took part in the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787. At the wish of the Emperor, he visited Caliph Harun al-Rashid to conduct peace negotiations. In the time of the wicked Emperor Leo the Armenian, he was deposed from his episcopal throne for his veneration of the holy icons and sent into exile, where he died in want and poverty, faithful to Orthodoxy to the end. He entered into the Kingdom of Christ the King in 818.

Our Holy Father, the Martyr Michael - After the death of his parents, Michael distributed all of his goods to the poor and went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Following that, he entered the monastery of St. Sabas the Sanctified where he was tonsured a monk. Michael was quite young and of a handsome countenance but, from much fasting, he appeared withered and pale. At that time, the Arabs ruled Jerusalem. One day Michael was sent by his spiritual father to the city to sell his handiworks. He was met on the streets by the eunuch of the Arabian queen who brought him to her to display his handiworks. When the queen saw this handsome monk she became inflamed with unclean passion and proposed carnal sin to the monk as once did the wife of Potiphar to the chaste Joseph. When Michael rejected the impure offer and began to flee, the angry queen ordered that he be beaten with canes and after that brought him to the king with the charge that he blasphemed the faith of Muhammad. The king proposed that Michael embrace the Islamic faith, but he refused. He was then given a potent poison to drink. Michael drank the poison but nothing happened to him. Then the king ordered Michael to be beheaded in the centre of Jerusalem. Monks discovered his body and removed it to the monastery of St. Sabas where they honourably buried him. St. Michael suffered for Christ and was glorified in the ninth century;

Our Holy Mother Euphrosyne, Princess of Polotsk - the daughter of Prince Vseslav of Polotsk. When her parents wanted to betroth her, she fled to a convent and was tonsured a nun. An angel of the Lord appeared to her three times and revealed to her where she must establish a new convent for virgins. She even attracted her sister Eudocia to the monastic life and many other maidens from the ranks of the aristocracy. Her cousin, Zvenislava, by birth Princess Borisov, brought all of her riches, clothes and precious stones and said: "All the beauty of this world, I consider vanity and these adornments prepared for my marriage, I give to the Church of the Savior and I, myself, wish to be betrothed to Him in a spiritual marriage and place my head beneath His good and easy yoke." Euphrosyne also tonsured her a nun and gave her the name Eupraxia. In her old age, Euphrosyne desired to die in Jerusalem and for that she prayed to God. God heard her prayers and, indeed, when she visited Jerusalem she died there. Euphrosyne was buried in the monastery of St. Theodosius on May 23, 1173 A.D.

24 May / 6 June — Our Holy Father Simeon Stylites of the Wonderful Mountain - This wonderful and holy man was born in Antioch in 522, in the reign of the Emperor Justin I the Elder. His father perished in an earthquake and he was left alone with his mother, Martha. When he was six years old, he went away into the desert to John, a spiritual teacher there and, under his guidance, gave himself to a strict asceticism of fasting and prayer, to the wonderment of all who saw him. Whilst enduring fearful demonic trials, he received great comfort and grace from the Lord and His angels. Christ the Lord appeared to him in the form of a handsome youth, and, after this vision, Simeon's heart was inflamed with great love for Christ. He spent many years on a pillar, praying and singing psalms. Led by God, he took himself off to the mountain called 'Wonderful' by the Lord Himself, and is known as 'of the Wonderful Mountain' because of this. The measure of his love for God was such that rare grace was given him, by the help of which he was able to heal every sort of illness, tame wild beasts and perceive the most distant regions of the earth and the hearts of men. He was taken out of the body and saw the heavens, conversed with angels, harried the demons, prophesied, spent thirty days at a time without sleep and even longer without food, receiving nourishment at the hands of angels. The words of the Saviour: 'He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do' (Jn 14:12), were completely fulfilled in him. In the year 596, at the age of seventy-five, Simeon went to the Lord, to the eternal enjoyment of the vision of the face of God in the company of the angels.

The Holy Martyr Meletius Stratelates along with 1218 Soldiers and their wives and children - Meletius was accused of demolishing a pagan temple during the reign of Emperor Antoninus. Nailed to a tree, Meletius gave up his holy soul. Many soldiers under his the command, who refused to deny Christ their Lord, suffered with him. They all honourably suffered in the eleventh century and took up habitation in the kingdom of Christ the God;

Our Holy Father Nikita Stylites - As a youth, Nicetas lived an unrestrained and sinful life. Entering into church by chance, he heard the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "*Wash yourselves (from sin) and you will be clean*" (Isaiah 1:16). These words entered

deeply into his heart and caused a complete turnabout in his life. Nicetas left his home, wife, property and entered a monastery near Pereyaslavl, where he lived an ascetical life of difficult mortifications until his death. He wrapped chains around himself and enclosed himself in a pillar for which reason he was called a Stylite. God endowed him with abundant grace so that he healed men of various tribulations. He cured Prince Michael Chernigov of palsy. Certain evil doers spotted the chains on him and, because of their brightness, thought they were made of silver. They killed him one night, removed the chains and carried them away. This occurred on May 16, 1186 A.D. After his death, he appeared to the Elder Simeon and ordered that his discovered chains be placed next to his body in the tombs;

St. Vincent of Lerins - + c 445. Perhaps of a noble family in Gaul, in early life he followed a military career but abandoned it to become a monk at Lérins in southern France. He is best known as the writer of the *Commonitorium*, where he formulates the Orthodox principle that the only true teachings are those which have been held 'everywhere, always and by all the faithful' (*Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*). It is the Church which interprets the Scriptures and is the source of the Faith.

25 May / 7 June — The Third Finding of the Head of St John the Baptist - in the eighth century, during a period of fierce iconoclasm, the head of St John the Baptist was taken to Comana, the place of St John Chrysostom's exile. When the iconoclast persecution ended in 850, in the time of the Emperor Michael and Patriarch Ignatius, the honoured head of St John was taken to Constantinople and placed in the church at the imperial court.

The Hieromartyr Therapon, Bishop of Cyprus - Therapontus was a monk and an ascetic on the island of Cyprus. He was found worthy of the episcopal rank, but during the time of the persecution of Christians, he was found worthy of an even greater wreath, the crown of martyrdom. His body reposed in a church on Cyprus. When, during the reign of Emperor Nicephorus in the year 806 A.D., the island of Cyprus was attacked by the Hagarenes, the saint appeared to the sexton of that church and told him that the infidels will attack Cyprus and ordered him to remove his relics to Constantinople. The sexton did this immediately. While the boat was travelling on the sea with the reliquary, a great storm arose but the sea was calm around the boat and a sweet-smelling fragrance emitted around the entire boat in all directions. The sexton opened the reliquary and everyone witnessed that it was filled with myrrh [oil] which flowed from the saint's relics. By rubbing themselves with this oil, many of the sick were healed. A church was built in Constantinople over the relics of this miracle-worker, who continued to grant healing to all those who with faith touched them. By the Grace of God, the gravest illness of possession, of cancer, of haemorrhaging, of insanity, of blindness, of barrenness and of various other maladies were cured by the relics of St. Therapontus;

The Holy Martyrs Pasicrates, Valentian, Julius and others - They were all Roman soldiers. They all suffered for Christ in Macedonian Dorostol about the year 302 A.D. When Pasicrates' brother Papias, who apostatized from Christ because of fear, began to persuade him to deny Christ and remain alive, St. Pasicrates answered him: "Depart from me, you are not my brother!" Pasicrates and Valentian were beheaded together. At the trial, St. Julius said: "I am a veteran; for twenty-six years I have faithfully served the emperor and since I was faithful to a lesser one, how can I not be faithful to a greater one?" i.e., to the Heavenly King. After that, Nicander was brought before Maximus the Perfect. Nicander's wife encouraged her husband to die for Christ. "Foolish old woman" Maximus said to her angrily, "You just want a better husband." The woman answered him: "If you think that of me, give the order and let them kill me now before my husband!" Marcian was also slain with Nicander. Marcian's wife approached the scaffold carrying her son in her arms. Marcian kissed his son and prayed to God: "O All-powerful Lord, You take care of him!" Following that, they were beheaded and were translated into the kingdom of Christ;

St. Aldhelm, bishop of Sherbourne. - 639-709. Born in Wessex in England, he became a monk at Malmesbury and taught there. In 675 he became abbot and in 705 first Bishop of Sherbourne. Aldhelm was the first Englishman to attain distinction as a scholar

May 26 / June 8 — Fast Day - Holy Apostle Carpus - One of the Seventy, he was a follower and companion of the Apostle Paul, who installed him as Bishop of Varna in Thrace. But he also preached the Gospel in Crete, where he was host to St Dionysius the Areopagite. St Dionysius testifies that he was a man with an exceptionally pure mind, of great humility and guilelessness. He further relates how the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to Carpus in a vision with His angels, and how he never began the Liturgy without first receiving a heavenly vision. He endured many assaults for the name of Christ, and finally suffered at the hands of the faithless Jews and was murdered. His soul entered into the Kingdom of God, to delight forever in the vision of the Lord in glory; The Holy Apostle Alphaeus - the father of two of the Twelve Apostles: James the son of Alphaeus and Matthew the Evangelist. He entered peacefully into rest; Our Holy Father John of Psychaita ; The Holy New Martyr Alexander of Salonica;

St. Augustine of Canterbury, evangeliser of England (c.605) — a native of Italy and a disciple of Felix, Bishop of Messina. He became prior of the Monastery of St Andrew on the Celian Hill in Rome, and was chosen by Saint Gregory the Great to lead a mission of forty monks to evangelise the Anglo-Saxon peoples of Britain. He arrived in 597 A.D., landing at Ebbsfleet in Kent. He was given a guarded welcome by King Ethelbert, being allowed to centre his mission on the ancient church of St Martin in Canterbury. Subsequently he brought the pagan king to the Christian Faith, baptising him and many thousands of his people. He was consecrated Bishop by St Virgilius of Arles, built the first cathedral in Canterbury and founded the Monastery of Sts Peter and Paul there, which, now in ruins, is more commonly called St Augustine's. He was instrumental in founding the English dioceses at Rochester and London, consecrating Sts Justus and Mellitus as their bishops. He also helped the king draft the earliest Anglo-Saxon written laws and founded a school in Canterbury. He was known as a miracleworker in his lifetime, and he reposed in the Lord in the year 604 on 26th May. He was laid to rest near the as yet unfinished monastery Church of Sts Peter and Paul, and in 613 A.D., when it was dedicated, his sacred relics were placed within the church. Along with his Elder, the Pope St Gregory, he is rightly called the Apostle of the English. He was the founder of the English Church and hierarchy which remained Orthodox in faith and an integral part of the One Church founded by our Saviour for four and a half centuries. The many saints of that period are his spiritual children. Through his prayers may the Lord grant that those people of England who are now returning to the Apostolic and Orthodox faith receiving the one Baptism of the Church, might in this life and in

the next be counted among that company of saints, the flock of St Augustine; Queen Bertha, apostle to the Anglo-Saxons at Kent.

May 27 / June 9 — The Hieromartyr Therapon, Bishop of Sardis - he brought many Greeks to the Christian faith and was cruelly persecuted by the pagans, being starved, imprisoned and flogged. They stripped him and threw him to the ground, bound him to four posts and beat him mercilessly, until they had stripped the flesh from his bones. However, the martyr still remained alive and the four dry posts became green and grew into tall trees from which many of the sick received healing. Finally St Therapon was slain like a lamb and entered into the Kingdom, to behold the glory of God in eternity. He suffered with honour in the time of Valerian, m about 259; The Holy Martyrs Theodora and Didymus; St David of Garesjei;

St. Bede the Venerable - 673-735. Born in Wearmouth in the north of England, as a child he entered the monastery of Sts Peter and Paul at Wearmouth-Jarrow, and spent his whole life there, 'always praying, always writing, always reading, always teaching'. He wrote many commentaries on the Scriptures. His work The History of the English Church and People earned him the title of the Father of English History. He reposed on Ascension Eve and his dying words were Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

May 28 / June 10 — Fast Day - St Nicetas the Confessor, Bishop of Chalcedon - he renounced the world in his youth and withdrew to follow the path of monastic asceticism. He shone like the sun with virtue and came to the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities, being raised to the episcopal throne of Chalcedon. He was, as a hierarch, particularly compassionate to the poor and cared for many orphans, widows and beggars. When the wicked Emperor Leo the Armenian made his stand against the icons, St Nicetas came courageously to their defence, denouncing the Emperor and expounding their meaning. He was finally driven into exile for his confession of the Faith, and, after much hardship and suffering, went to the Lord to receive a wreath of glory in the Kingdom of God;

The Holy Martyr Heliconis - born in Thessalonica and was educated in Christian piety. During the reign of Gordian and Philip, she moved to Corinth where she openly denounced all those who offered sacrifices to the idols. When Perinus the mayor counselled her to offer a sacrifice to the idol Aesculapius, this martyr of Christ said to him: "Hear me, I am a handmaiden of Christ and who Aesculapius is, I do not know. Do with me what you will." For this, she was brought to trial and endured terrible tortures. She was cast into fire and much blood poured from her body which extinguished the fire and she remained alive. She was cast before lions but the lions did not touch her but fawned around her. Admitted into the temple, allegedly to offer sacrifices to the idols, she destroyed the idols, and by this, embittered the torturer even more. Lying wounded in prison, the Lord Himself appeared to her with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. He healed her wounds, comforted and strengthened her. After that she was led to the scaffold to be beheaded. Before her beheading, Heliconis raised her arms high and prayed that God receive her and unite her with His lambs in the heavenly enclosure. When she completed her prayer, a voice was heard from heaven: "Come daughter, a wreath and a throne is prepared for you!" Finally, she was beheaded and received the wreath of glory from God to Whom, out of love, she sacrificed herself as an innocent and pure lamb;

St Ignatius, Bishop of Rostov - As a hierarch, he governed the flock of Christ for twenty-six years with great love and compassion. When he died and as his body was being placed in church, some of those who were present witnessed as his body rose from the coffin into the air above the church and from the heights, he blessed the people and the to the Lord on May 28, 1288 A.D.; St. Germanus, bishop of Paris, St. William of Toulouse.

May 29 / June 11 — Saturday before Pentecost & Commemoration of the Departed - The Holy Martyr Theodosia of Tyre - One day during the reign of the Emperor Maximian, many Christians were standing bound before the Praetor in Palestinian Caesarea. The pious virgin Theodosia came to comfort them and encourage them in their death by martyrdom. The soldiers heard her words and brought her also before the judge. The enraged judge ordered that a stone be tied round her neck and that she be cast into the deep. But angels carried her up onto the shore alive. When she appeared before the judge again, he gave orders to have her beheaded. The following night, Theodosia appeared to her parents in the brightest heavenly light, surrounded by many other virgins, and said: 'Do you see how great is the glory and grace of my Christ, of which you wished to deprive me?' She spoke thus to her parents because they had turned back from confessing Christ and from martyrdom. She suffered with honour and was glorified in the year 308;

Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Theodosia - born as the result of the prayers of her mother to the holy martyr Anastasia who appeared to her and said that she will give birth. Her parents dedicated her to God and at an early age presented her to a convent. After the death of her parents, Theodosia inherited a vast estate, and from that estate, she ordered three icons from a goldsmith: The Savior, The Mother of God [The Theotokos] and St. Anastasia. The rest she distributed to the poor. She suffered in the year 730 A.D. during the reign of the evil Emperor Leo the Isaurian, the iconoclast, and received a two-fold wreath: virginity and martyrdom; St Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria; St John the Fool for Christ of Ustiug; The Holy Martyr Nannus (John) of Salonica; The Holy Martyr Andrew of Chios; The Fall-of Constantinople.