



Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, Seventh Sunday of Pascha, Sunday After Ascension

7 / 20 May

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 6: The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; / the guards became as dead men. / Mary stood by Thy grave, / seeking Thy most pure Body. / Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it. / Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. / O Lord who didst rise from the Dead, / Glory to Thee!

Tropar of The Ascension Of The Lord, Tone 4: Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, having gladdened Thy disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit; and they were assured by the blessing that Thou art the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Tropar of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council - Tone 8: Most glorified art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast established our holy fathers as stars upon the earth, and through them didst guide us all to the true Faith. O Most-merciful One, glory be to Thee.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 6: When Christ God the Giver of Life, / raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His Mighty Hand, / He bestowed resurrection on the human race. / He is the Saviour of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of All.

Kondak of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council - Tone 8: The preaching of the apostles and the doctrines of the fathers confirmed the one Faith of the Church. And wearing the garment of truth, woven from the theology on high, She rightly divideth and glorifieth the great mystery of piety.

Kondak of The Ascension Of The Lord, Tone 6: When Thou didst fulfill Thy dispensation for our sake, uniting things on earth with the heavens, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, departing not hence, but remaining inseparable from us, and crying unto them that love Thee: I am with you, and no one shall be against you.

Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council

The Commemoration and eulogy of the holy fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, which was held in Nicaea in 325 in the reign of Constantine the Great—held during the week before Pentecost, or the seventh week after Easter. It was summoned to remove the confusion which Arius, an Alexandrian priest, had created by his false teaching. He had been spreading the teaching that Christ was created from God in time, and that He is not the pre-eternal Son of God, equal in being with God the Father. Three hundred and eighteen holy fathers took part in this Council. It condemned the Arian teaching, and anathematized Arius when he would not repent. This Council also definitively confirmed the Symbol of Faith (the Creed) which was later amplified at the Second Ecumenical Council. Many bishops were present at the First Ecumenical Council, among whom the following stood out: St Nicolas of Myra in Lycia, St Spiridon, St Athanasius, St Acillius, St Paphnutius, St James of Nisibis, Macarius of Jerusalem, Alexander of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, Eusebius of Caesarea, Mitrophanes of Constantinople, John of Persia, Aristarchus of Armenia and many others from the East. And from the West: Hosius of Cordova, Theophilus the Goth, Cecilianus of Carthage, and others. The most important work of this Council was the confirmation of the Symbol of Faith. The Council also confirmed the time of the celebration of Easter, and prescribed twenty Canons. St. Nicolas in his zeal, struck Arius with his hand. For this act, he was removed from the Council and from his episcopal duties. That very night, several of the fathers had the selfsame vision: how the Lord stood on one side of Nicolas with the Gospels and the Mother of God on the other with a pallium, offering to the saint those marks of rank that had been stripped from him. Seeing this, the fathers were amazed, and quickly returned to Nicolas that which they had taken from him. They began from that time to respect him as a great man, and to interpret his action against Arius not as some senseless rage but as the expression of great zeal for God's truth.

Vespers: Gen. 14:14-20; Deut. 1:8-10, 1:15-17; Deut. 10:14-21

Matins Gospel X

EPISTLE: The Acts of St. Apostles 20: 16-18; 28-36

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that 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

'Seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us' (Heb.7:25). O how beautiful and mystical and kind! For to intercede ...is to plead for us by reason of his mediatorship, just as the Spirit also is said to make intercession for us. For 'there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus' (Rom.8:26, I Tim.2:5). He still pleads even now as man for my salvation; for He continues to wear the body which He assumed, until He shall make me god by the power of His incarnation ...Thus, too, we have an advocate, Jesus Christ, not indeed prostrating Himself for us before the Father ...but by what He suffered as man, He as the Word and the counsellor persuades Him to be patient. I think this is the meaning of His advocacy.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Fourth Theological Oration, 14. B#7, p. 187.

THE STATUS OF CHRIST

Many statements in the Scriptures imply, or even openly assert that the Father is greater than the Son; and men have erred because they have not been careful enough to examine the whole tenor of the Scriptures and thus have sought to transfer what is said of Christ Jesus as man to His mode of being before His incarnation, which was and is eternal. And they allege that the Son is inferior to the Father because the Lord Himself is quoted as saying, 'The Father is greater than I'. But it is demonstrable that in this respect the Son is also inferior to Himself. For if 'He emptied Himself, receiving the form of a servant,' He must surely have become inferior to Himself. For this taking of the form of a servant did not entail His losing the form of God ...In both forms He was the same Only-begotten Son of God the Father, in the form of God equal to the Father, in the form of a servant, 'the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus' (I Tim. 2:5) ...He is equal to the Father in nature, inferior to Him in condition ... Godhead is not changed into a creature, so as to cease to be godhead.

St. Augustine of Hippo. On the Trinity 1.14. B#15, p. 214.

Today, between the Ascension and Pentecost, we remember the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. These "fathers" who made up the council were all bishops who gathered together at the request of the Byzantine Emperor to provide a definition of the Orthodox belief concerning the nature of Jesus Christ. These bishops, in response to the heretical ideas of Arius, confirmed that Jesus Christ is indeed the uncreated God incarnate and, as God, shares the same essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Who gave these bishops the right to make this decision? How could they know the truth of the nature of Jesus Christ? What made them wise? The answer, of course, is in the role of the bishop for the bishop is given the grace and indeed the duty by God, through ordination, to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" – that is, he is guided by the Holy Spirit to recognize the Truth and to explain it to his spiritual flock.

Now we are all sealed with the grace of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Chrismation, however, the bishop is endowed with a special grace to lead the flock of Christ and to care for the spiritual and physical needs of the various members of that flock. The bishops were originally ordained by the apostles and became their successors, ordaining others as needed by the Church. Each bishop was selected on the basis of his spiritual life as well as his faithfulness to the teaching of the apostles. Even today, a man selected for ordination to the episcopacy must confess his faith first in a formal manner by reciting the Nicene Creed (as we, or our sponsors on our behalf, all do at our baptism) but then he is also expected to confess his faith more in depth, explaining and describing in his own words the meaning of the creed, how he understands it, how he applies it and how he interprets it. Only then, when his explanation meets the approval of the bishops who will ordain him, is he accepted as a candidate for the episcopacy. The bishop is ordained during the course of the Divine Liturgy, just before the reading of the Gospel in order to emphasize his role as the one who "rightly divides the Word of Truth" and who is given the responsibility for teaching the people. No one else has the right to teach in the Church, only the bishop and those to whom he gives a blessing to teach on his behalf.

The bishop is the one appointed as the shepherd of the flock of Christ, but he does not perform this task alone. He has assistants who help him in this task, the priests, deacons and other members of the clergy. St Ignatius the God bearer speaks of the place of the members of the clergy thusly: "the bishop presides in the place of God, and ... presbyters (priests) in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with ... deacons, who are ... entrusted with the ministry..." It is necessary that all the clergy are in the closest harmony with one another, and the bishop is the key and origin of that harmony: "(the) presbytery, being worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp." He says again that we should "reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father and the presbyters as the Sanhedrin of God, and assembly of the apostles." If the bishop separates himself from the Body of Christ, that is, from the Church, then he is no longer a bishop and if a priest or deacon separates himself from his bishop, he is likewise no longer a priest or a deacon. The spiritual rank and gift of grace that is the essence of the sacrament of ordination is inextricably tied to Christ, to His Church, and cannot exist in any way in separation from it.

The bishop is the one who holds, by the grace of his ordination, all of the sacraments of the Church. Those who are ordained by him receive from him the grace to administer those sacraments as appropriate to his rank and situation. A priest, as the extension of the bishop to the local community, is generally given the blessing to administer all the sacraments, except that of ordination which is held solely by the bishop. The deacon does not generally administer any of the sacraments but functions as the right hand of the priest and the bishop. These three ranks: bishop, priest, and deacon all work together to provide for the needs of the members of the Body of Christ, that is, the Church.

The primary spiritual work of the bishop is to teach – to continue the work of the apostles to bear witness to the Truth revealed to them by Jesus Christ who as God revealed Himself to us. It is the bishop who instructs us and guides us in

the path of salvation as the shepherd of the flock who stands in the place of Christ. He bestows upon us the dogma, doctrine and teaching of the Church which is the expression of the Truth revealed by Christ. He bestows upon us as well the sacraments by which we receive the grace of the Holy Spirit which enlightens us.

The primary task of the priest is to take all the the bishop provides and apply it to each member of his own flock in the manner that will be most effective and helpful. The priest then is the one who is given the responsibility to care for the spiritual lives of the flock and so not only administers the sacraments, but also teaches with the voice and authority of the bishop. The priest is the one who lifts up each of his spiritual children before the throne of God and it is his duty (a duty joyfully undertaken) to pray for each and every one in the parish. We see this clearly in the services of the Church when the priest stands either before the Holy Table in the Altar or directly before the Royal doors when outside the Altar and lifts up his prayer for us.

The role of the deacon is that of a servant. The apostles appointed deacons to care for the needs of the widows and orphans in the Church and to distribute the charity of the Church to all who were in need. It is the deacon, even now, who is the one who is nearest the people. His ministry is to know who in the flock is in need and to bring that need to the attention of the priest. Again, we see this in the service, for while the priest stands within the Altar, symbolically before the throne of God, to offer his prayers, the deacon stands outside the Altar in the midst of the people where he symbolically, through the litanies, gathers the prayers of the people and offers them to the priest who then lifts them up before the throne of God.

There are many other lesser orders of clergy that have roles in the work of the Church. The “sub-deacon” is a kind of “manager” tasked with making the services all run smoothly and so allowing the bishop, priest and the deacon to focus on their prayers. The most common rank of the lesser clergy that is seen in the parish is that of “reader”. The reader is tasked with chanting and singing the service. He is the one who has the responsibility to learn the structure of the services and to make sure that the proper hymns are sung in a beautiful and worshipful manner and to chant the proper sections of the scripture appointed for each service. The rank of “reader” was at one time called a “taper bearer” for he would also carry the candles in the service, however, this duty has largely been given to the laymen who serve in the altar. It is obvious that these “lesser” clergy have a large responsibility and are key to the external beauty and spirituality of the services.

Other lesser clergy which are not seen as much (or at all) in modern times are the ranks of deaconess and bell ringer. Their duties are fulfilled mostly now by laymen and women. The deaconess would see to the personal needs of the women in the parish and assist in the baptism of women. The bell ringer, quite obviously, was responsible for ringing the Church bells at the proper time and in the proper fashion. These duties have not disappeared but are apportioned out among the laity of the Church according to the interest and skill of each person.

All of the clergy, from the bishop on down to the reader, are in the end the servants of the people (recall the words of our Lord Who said that whoever would be greatest in the Kingdom of God must be the servant of all) The loving care of the people in the Church is the primary focus of the ministry of every member of the clergy. While the bishop or priest is necessary to serve the liturgy or to celebrate any of the sacraments, he cannot do any of these things without also the people present. It is necessary for the clergy to function within the whole parish and Church community and outside that community it is impossible for any clergyman to function properly. In the hierarchal service, the bishop stands in the middle of the temple – in the midst of the whole congregation. He is accompanied by his other clergy who also stand with the people. All together we stand in unity before the throne of God and the bishop speaks with the voice of all the people, offering up all our prayer to God our Creator, our Lord and Master, and our Beloved Father.

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

Saints of the Week

7 / 20 May — Commemoration of the Appearing of the Precious Cross over Jerusalem - In the time of the Emperor Constantius, St Constantine's son, and Patriarch Cyril of Jerusalem, the Precious Cross appeared one day at nine o'clock in the morning above Golgotha, and spread as far as the Mount of Olives. This Cross was brighter than the sun and more beautiful than the loveliest rainbow. The whole people—believers and unbelievers—left their work and watched this heavenly sign in fear and wonder. Many unbelievers were converted to faith in Christ, and also many Arians abandoned their wicked heresy and returned to Orthodoxy. Patriarch Cyril wrote a letter to the Emperor Constantius about this sign, the Emperor himself being inclined towards Arianism. This took place on May 7th, 357. Thus was it demonstrated by this means that the Christian faith does not lie in the worldly theorising of the sensual understanding of men, but in the power of God, shown forth through wonders and signs without number; The Holy Martyr Acacius; Our Holy Fathers of Georgia;

St. John of Beverley, bishop of York (721) - Born in Harpham (Humberside), Yorkshire, England; died at Beverley, England, May 7, 721; canonized in 1037; feast of translation, October 25. Saint John trained for the priesthood and monastic life in Kent under the direction of SS. Adrian and Theodore, but returned to Yorkshire upon completing his studies to become a monk at Whitby Abbey, which was then under the rule of Saint Hilda. John founded a monastery in Humberside, England, on the site of a small church dedicated to Saint John the Evangelist, where he asked to be buried. In 687, after the death of Saint Eata, John he was consecrated bishop of Hexham. He is said to have shown special care for the poor and the handicapped. Whatever time he could spare from his episcopal duties he spent in contemplation. At regular seasons, especially during Lent, he retired to

pray in a cell by the church of Saint Michael beyond the Tyne, near Hexham. He would take with him some poor person, whom he would serve during his retirement. He was transferred York as archbishop upon the death of Saint Bosa in 705, and Saint Wilfrid succeeded him at Hexham as part of the final settlement of the latter's long dispute with the Northumbrian kings. He continued his practice of periodic retirement for spiritual refreshment. His chosen retreat was an abbey that he had built at Beverley, then a forest. Not until old age had worn him out did he resign his office to Saint Wilfrid the Younger in order to spend the last four years of his life in the peace of his beloved abbey at Beverley.

8 / 21 May — The Holy Apostle and Evangelist John - The main commemoration of this great Apostle and Evangelist is on September 26th, but on May 8th is commemorated a wonderful revelation about his grave. When St John was more than a hundred years old, he took seven of his disciples, went outside the city of Ephesus and told the disciples to dig a grave in the form of a cross. Then the old man went down alive into the grave and was buried. When the faithful later opened John's grave, they did not find the body in it. And on May 8th each year a dust arose from the grave, from which those suffering from many diseases were healed;

Our Holy Father Arsenius the Great - This glorious saint was born of a patrician family in Rome and was well educated in the secular sciences and philosophy as well as in spiritual wisdom. Abandoning all the vanity of the world, he dedicated himself to the service of the Church and was a deacon of the great church in Rome. Unmarried, withdrawn, quiet and devout, Arsenius thought to live that way his entire life. But the Providence of God directed his path in life otherwise. Emperor Theodosius took him as a tutor and teacher of his sons Arcadius and Honorius, and installed him as a senator surrounding him with great wealth, honours and luxury. But all of this burdened Arsenius' heart rather than pleasing him. It happened that Arcadius committed a wrong and for that Arsenius punished him. The offended Arcadius conceived a terrible revenge against his teacher and when Arsenius found out he changed into the clothes of a beggar, left for the seashore, boarded a boat and sailed to Egypt. When he arrived at the renowned Scete, he became a disciple of the glorious John Colobus [The Short] and dedicated himself to a life of asceticism. He considered himself dead and when someone informed him that a wealthy relative died and willed his entire estate to him, Arsenius replied: "But I died before him, how is it therefore that I could be his heir?" Withdrawn in a hermit's cell as in a tomb, throughout the entire day, he wove baskets of palm leaves, and at night, he prayed to God. He avoided men and all conversations with them. Only on feast days did he leave his cell and attend church to receive Holy Communion. In order not to become lazy, he often asked himself the question: "Arsenius, why did you come to the wilderness?" He remained in the wilderness for fifty-five years as a "desert dweller" and for that entire time was a model to the monks and a glory to monastics in general. In all, Arsenius lived one hundred years and died peacefully in the year 448 A.D. after prolonged labour and voluntarily imposing hardships upon himself and took up habitation in the kingdom of Christ the Lord, Whom he loved with all his heart, all his mind and all his soul;

St Emilia - the mother of Saint Basil the Great. In her youth she desired to remain a virgin for life but was forced into marriage. Emilia gave birth to nine children and so inspired them with the Spirit of Christ that five of them became Christian saints: Basil the Great, Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, Macrina and Theosevia. In her old age Emilia established a convent where she lived with Macrina her daughter and where she died in the Lord on May 8, 375 A.D.; Our Holy Father Arsenius the Lover of Labour; St. Wiro, monk-missionary of the Netherlands (c.753).

9 / 22 May — St Nicolas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia - on this day is commemorated the translation of his relics. In the time of the Emperor Alexius I Comnenus and Patriarch Nicolas Grammaticus, in 1087, the body of this saint was taken from Myra in Lycia to the town of Bari in Italy. This came to pass because of a Moslem attack on Lycia. The saint appeared to a priest in Bari and commanded that his relics be taken there. At that time, the town of Bari was Orthodox and under the administration of an Orthodox patriarch. At the translation of the saint's relics, many miracles were wrought on those who touched them, and a healing myrrh flowed in abundance from them. Also on this day is commemorated the miracle worked by St Nicolas on Stefan of Decani, King of Serbia. This was when the saint restored the sight of the blind King Stefan.

The Holy Prophet Isaiah - This great prophet was of royal birth. He was born in Jerusalem of Amoz the brother of Amaziah, King of the Jews. By the great grace of God that was within him, Isaiah was made worthy to see the Lord of Sabaoth on His heavenly throne, surrounded by six-winged seraphim which cried unceasingly: 'Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth' (Is. 6). Isaiah prophesied many things, both to individuals and to nations. Once he walked for three days naked through the streets of Jerusalem, prophesying the imminent fall of the city to the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, and warning the King and the leaders of the people not to seek help from Egypt and Ethiopia, because they too would shortly be over-run by the same Sennacherib, but to seek the aid of the all-seeing God. And this prophecy, like all the rest, was literally fulfilled (37:31-35). But his most important prophecies were on the incarnation of God, on the conception of the most pure Mother of God, on John the Baptist and on many events in the life of Christ. This seer, because of his pure heart and zeal for God, also received the gift of working miracles. Thus, when the besieged city of Jerusalem was suffering from thirst, he prayed to God and water flowed out from beneath the hill of Sion. This water was named Siloam (Sent), and it was to that water that, later, the Lord sent the man born blind, to wash himself and receive his sight (Is. 8:6; Jn 9:7). In the time of King Manasseh, when Isaiah thundered against the pagan practices of the king and the leaders of the people, comparing that generation with Sodom and Gomorrah, the anger of the leaders and the people was lifted up against this great prophet, and he was seized, taken out of Jerusalem and sawn in half. He lived and prophesied seven hundred years before Christ;

The Holy Martyr Christopher - Third century martyr in the persecutions of Decius. His fame derives from the pious legend of him being a "Christ-bearer" (= Christopher). He was a powerfully built man who wandered the world in search of novelty and adventure. He came upon a hermit who lived beside a dangerous stream and served others by guiding them to safe places to cross. He gave Offero instruction in the truth of God. Offero took the hermit's place, but instead of guiding travellers, he carried them safely across the stream. One day he carried a small child across the stream; the child's weight nearly crushed him. When they arrived on the other side, the child revealed himself as Christ, and he was so heavy because he bore the weight of

the world on himself. He then baptised Offero with water from the stream. Christopher's service at the stream led to his patronage of things related to travel and travellers, people who carry things.

10 / 23 May — The Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot - One of the twelve Great Apostles, he was born in Cana of Galilee. The Lord Jesus came to his wedding with His Mother and His disciples, and, when the wine ran out, the Lord changed water into wine. Seeing this wonder, the newly-married Simon left his home and parents and bride, to go after Christ. Simon was called the Zealot because of his great and burning zeal for the Saviour and His Gospel. After receiving the Holy Spirit, he went off to preach the Gospel in Mauretania in Africa. As a result of his success in bringing many to the Faith of Christ, he was tortured and finally crucified like his Lord, who had prepared a crown of glory for him in His immortal Kingdom. The Holy Martyrs Alphaeus, Philadelphus and Cyprinus;

Our Holy Mother Isidora the Fool for Christ - Isidora lived in the fourth century and was a nun in a convent in Tabennisi. She pretended insanity in order to conceal her virtues and her mortification. Isidora performed the most menial tasks, fed on the leftovers on the dishes, served all and everyone and was despised by all and everyone. At that time, an angel of God revealed to the great ascetic Pitirim about Isidora's secret. Pitirim came to the convent and when he saw Isidora he bowed down to the ground before her. And so, she to him. Then the sisters informed Pitirim that she was insane. "All of you are insane" replied Pitirim, "and this one is greater before the Lord than I and all of you; I only pray that God will render to me that which is intended for her at the Dreadful Judgment!" Then the sisters became ashamed and begged both Pitirim and Isidora for forgiveness. From then on, everyone began to show respect for Isidora. And she, to escape the honours of men, fled the convent to a place unknown and died about the year 365 A.D.; Blessed Thais;

St. Conleth, hermit and bishop of Kildare (c.520) - Skilled worker in gold and silver, and manuscript illuminator. Hermit in a cell in Old Connell, Ireland near the Liffey river. His reputation for holiness attracted would-be disciples. Friend and co-worker with Saint Brigid; they ran first double monastery together. First bishop of Kildare, Ireland c.490. Baptised Saint Tigernach of Clogher Died while on pilgrimage to Rome.

Born c.450 in Ireland Died attacked by wolves on 3 May 519 in the forests of Leinster, Ireland; buried nearby; relics translated to the Kildare cathedral in 799; relics taken to Connell in 835 to protect them from Danish invaders.

11 / 24 May — Ss Cyril and Methodius, Equal to the Apostles - brothers from Salonica, of eminent and wealthy parents, Leo and Maria. The elder brother, Methodius, spent ten years as an officer among the Slavs in Macedonia, and thus learned the Slavic language. After that, Methodius went off to Olympus and gave himself to monastic asceticism, and Cyril (Constantine) later joined him there. When the Khazarite king, Kagan, sought preachers of the Christian faith from the Emperor Michael, the Emperor commanded that these two brothers be found and sent to the Khazars. They converted Kagan to the Christian faith and baptised him, together with a great number of his nobles and an even greater number of the people. After some time, they returned to Constantinople, where they compiled a Slavic alphabet of 38 letters and began to translate the service books from Greek into Slavonic. At the invitation of Prince Rastislav, they went to Moravia, where, with great devotion, they spread and confirmed the Faith, made more copies of the books, brought them priests and taught the young. They went to Rome at the invitation of the Pope, and Cyril fell ill and died there, on February 14th, 869. Then Methodius returned to Moravia and laboured at the confirming of the Faith among the Slavs until his death. After his death—he entered into rest in the Lord on April 6th, 885 —his disciples, the Five Followers, with St Clement as bishop at the beginning, crossed the Danube and moved towards the south, to Macedonia, where, from Ochrid, they continued the work among the Slavs that Cyril and Methodius had begun in the north; The Hieromartyr Mocius;

St Nicodemus, Archbishop of Pec - This great hierarch was a Serb by birth. He lived a life of asceticism on Holy Mt. Athos and was abbot of Hilendar Monastery. Following the death of Sava III, he was elected as the Archbishop of "All the Serbs and the Coastal Lands" in the year 1317 A.D. Nicodemus crowned King Milutin in the year 1321 A.D. He translated the Jerusalem Typikon into Serbian. [The Typikon is a book containing the rubrics (directions) for the celebration of the Divine Mysteries and other offices of the Orthodox Church.] In the introduction of this book, Nicodemus says: "Almighty God, Who knows our weaknesses, will give us spiritual strength, but only if we first display effort." He sincerely loved the ascetical life and laboured to strengthen it throughout the Serbian land. He laboured relentlessly to uproot the Bogomil heresy and to strengthen the Orthodox Faith. He died in the Lord in the year 1325 A.D. His miracle-working relics repose in the monastery in Pec.; St. Comgall, founder and abbot of Bangor (c.601); St. Mayeul, abbot of Cluny (994).

12 / 25 May — St Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus - born a Jew, but, seeing the power of the Christian faith, was baptised together with his sister, Callithrope. He became a monk at the age of twenty-six, in the monastery of St Hilarion. He later founded a monastery of his own, and became famed throughout Palestine and Egypt for his asceticism, his spiritual wisdom and the wonders he worked. Fleeing the praise of men, he went off to Egypt. On the way, he met Paphnutius the Great, who prophesied that he would be a hierarch on the island of Cyprus. And indeed, many years later, by God's providence, Epiphanius came to Cyprus, where he was unexpectedly chosen as bishop. He became bishop of the town of Salamis at the age of fifty, and governed the Church of God for thirty-six years. In all, he lived nearly ninety years on this earth, and entered into rest from this life to live eternally in the Kingdom of Christ. Before his death, he was invited to Constantinople by the Emperor Arcadius and his wife, Eudoxia, for the Council of Bishops which was forced, at the desire of the Emperor and Empress, to condemn St John Chrysostom. Arriving in Constantinople, he came to the Emperor's court, where the Emperor and Empress talked with him at great length, endeavouring to make him declare against Chrysostom. The citizens and Chrysostom heard that Epiphanius had agreed with the Emperor against him. Chrysostom therefore wrote him a letter: 'My brother Epiphanius, I hear that you have advised the Emperor that I should be banished: know that you will never again see your episcopal throne.' To this, Epiphanius wrote in return: 'John, my suffering brother, withstand insults, but know that you will not reach the place to which you are exiled.' And these two prophecies of the two saints soon came about. Refusing to agree with the Emperor on the exile of Chrysostom, Epiphanius took ship and set off for Cyprus, but died on the voyage. The Emperor sent Chrysostom

into exile in Armenia, but the saint died on the road. Saint Epiphanius entered into rest in the year 403. Of his many writings the best-known is his 'Medicine Chest', in Greek, in which he explains and refutes eight heresies;

St Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople - Germanus was the son of the head imperial senator who was killed by Emperor Constantine Pogonatus. This same evil emperor castrated the senator's son, Germanus, and forcibly banished him to a monastery. As a monk, Germanus shone like a star by his life and good works. Because of that, he was chosen as the first bishop of Cyzicus and, when Anastatius II was crowned emperor, Germanus was elected as patriarch of Constantinople. As patriarch he baptized the ill-reputed Copronymos who, during the time of his baptism, soiled the water with his uncleanness. Then the patriarch prophesied that this child, when he becomes emperor, will introduce into the Holy Church some impure heresy. And this happened. When Copronymos became emperor, he restored the heresy of the iconoclasts. Leo Isaurian, the father of Copronymos, initiated the persecution of icons and when Patriarch Germanus protested, the arrogant Leo cried out: "I am emperor and priest!" He removed Germanus from the patriarchal throne and banished him to a monastery where this saint lived for ten more years until the Lord called him to Himself and to the heavenly kingdom in the year 740 A.D.; The Holy Martyr Pancras.

13 / 26 May — The Holy Martyr Glykeria - daughter of a governor of Rome, she became poor after her father's death and went to live in Trajanopolis in Thrace. In the time of the wicked Emperor Antoninus, Glykeria was brought to offer sacrifice to the idol of Zeus. She traced the Cross on her forehead and, when the governor asked her where was her lamp (for they all carried lamps in their hands), Glykeria indicated the Cross on her forehead and said: 'This is my lamp!' At her prayers, the idol was struck by lightning and broken into pieces. The governor was furious with her and commanded that she be thrown into prison. He sealed the door of the prison, intending to starve the maiden to death, but an angel of God appeared to Glykeria and gave her heavenly food. After a certain time, when the governor reckoned that the maiden must have died of hunger, he opened the prison and was astounded to see her in good health, bright and merry. The warder, Laodicius, seeing this marvel, himself confessed Christ the Lord and was at once beheaded. After that Glykeria was thrown into a burning furnace, but she remained untouched by the flames. Standing in the midst of the fire, she praised the Lord, commemorating the wonder with the Three Children in the burning fiery furnace in Babylon. Finally, she was thrown to the lions and, praying to God, this holy maiden gave her soul into the hands of the Lord for whom she had heroically suffered much torture. She suffered with honour in the year 141. A healing myrrh flowed from her relics, which healed the sick of the gravest illnesses;

The Holy Martyr Alexander - a Slav. As an eighteen year old soldier in the army of Emperor Maximilian, he refused the order of the emperor to give honor to the Roman idols and for that which he was handed over to Captain Tiberian, to either counsel Alexander to deny Christ or else torture and kill him. Since all the counselling was in vain, Tiberian took Alexander with him across Macedonia to Constantinople where he traveled for duty. In every town along the way, the young Alexander was cruelly tortured but, in every town, Christians came out before him and begged him for a blessing and they encouraged him in his mortification. Pimonia, his mother, followed after him. During the course of this travel, an angel of God appeared many times to Alexander soothing his pains and encouraging him. In one place, Carasura, the martyr performed a miracle through prayer: when thirst overcame him and the soldiers who escorted him, he brought forth a well of cold water from an arid place. On the shore of the Ergina river, Tiberian ordered the executioner to behead Alexander and to toss his body into the water. When the executioner swung at the martyr's head, he saw radiant angels of God around Alexander and became frightened and his hand dropped. Alexander asked him why his hand dropped and the executioner replied that he sees some radiant young men around him. Yearning death and union with the Lord, Alexander prayed to God to withdraw the angels from him so that the executioner would not be frightened. And thus, the executioner carried out his work in the year 298 A.D. Pimonia removed the body of her son and honourably buried him. Many healings occurred at the grave of the martyr. After death, the martyr appeared to his mother and informed her of her imminent translation to the other world.; Our Holy Fathers John, Euthymius, George and Gabriel of Iviron.