

Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles

(Pentecost Sunday)

3 / 16 June

Tropar Of Pentecost, Tone 8: Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them, didst draw the world into Thy net. O Lover of mankind, glory be to Thee.

Kondak Of Pentecost, Tone 8: Once, when He descended and confounded the tongues, the Most High divided the nations; and when He divided the tongues of fire, He called all men into unity; and with one accord we glorify the All-Holy Spirit.



Vespers: Num. 11:16-17, 24-29; Joel 2:23-32; Ezek. 36:24-28

Matins Gospel John 20: 19-23

EPISTLE - ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - 2: 1-11

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, people from Crete and Arabs--we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

AND THERE APPEARED TO THEM DIVIDED TONGUES AS OF FIRE... AND THEY WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

So that by gradual increase ...and progress from glory to glory, the light of the Trinity might shine upon the more illuminated ...for this reason it was, I think, that He gradually came to dwell in the disciples. He measured Himself out to them according to their capacity to receive Him: at the beginning of the gospel, after the Passion, after the Ascension, making perfect their powers, being breathed upon them, and appearing in fiery tongues ...You see lights breaking upon us, gradually, and knowledge of such order of theology, as is better for us to maintain, neither proclaiming things too suddenly nor yet keeping them hidden to the end ...He said that all things should be taught us by the Spirit Himself, made clear at a later time, when such knowledge would be seasonable and capable of being received after our Saviour's restoration; when it would no longer be received with incredulity because of its marvellous character. For what greater thing than this did either He promise, or the Spirit teach ...If He is not to be worshiped, how can He deify me by baptism?... And indeed from the Spirit comes our new birth, and from the new birth our new creation, and from the new creation our deeper knowledge of the dignity of Him from whom it is derived ...Look at these facts: Christ is born; the Spirit is His forerunner. He leads Him up. He works miracles; the Spirit accompanies them. He ascends; the Spirit takes His place.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Fifth Theological Oration, 26, 27, 28, 29. B#7, pp. 210 -211.

GOSPEL - JOHN 7:37-52 & 8:12

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

IF ANYONE THIRSTS, LET HIM COME TO ME AND DRINK

Those who come to the divine preaching and give heed to the faith must manifest the desire of thirsty men for water, and kindle in themselves a similar longing; so they will be able, very carefully, to retain what is said...For to show that men ought ever to thirst and hunger, He said 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness' (Matt.5:6) ... Elsewhere He calls it, 'eternal life,' but here, 'living water.' He calls that 'living' which ever works: for the grace of the Spirit, when It has entered into the mind and has been established, springs up more than any fountain, does not fail, never becomes empty ...He has represented its abundance by the expression 'springing' ...Consider the wisdom of Stephen, the tongue of Peter, the vehemence of Paul: how nothing bore, nothing withstood them, not the anger of multitudes, not the risings up of tyrants, not the plots of the devils, not daily deaths, but as rivers borne along with a great rushing sound, so they went on their way hurrying all things with them ...When He was about to send them (after the crucifixion) He said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (c.20:22) ...and then they wrought miracles.

St. John Chrysostom, Homily LI on John VII, 1. 2. B#58, p. 184.

Today we celebrate the great feast of Pentecost. Our Lord, at the time of his Ascension into heaven which we celebrated just 10 days ago, instructed his disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were filled with power from on high – that is until the coming of the Holy Spirit. The disciples did not wait idly, but during this time devoted themselves to prayer, preparing themselves for this great gift which was about to be bestowed upon them by God. When the day came that the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and the other followers of Christ, they were gathered together in worship. They heard a sound like the rushing of wind and saw the Spirit descend upon the disciples as tongues of flame. At that moment the power of the Holy Spirit began to manifest itself in the disciples for they all began to glorify God in a multitude of languages showing us from the beginning that the Gospel was for all men and women regardless of nation and culture. This miracle also demonstrated that God would provide the apostles with all that was required – even the ability to speak other languages – in order to spread the Gospel to all nations. All they needed to do was to be willing to follow God and depend upon Him for all things.

This day is also called for us the “birthday of the Church” for it was with the coming of the Holy Spirit that the Apostles and the other believers were united to one another in spirit, becoming an icon of the Holy Trinity. The Godhead is a unity of persons – three persons united in one essence, undivided and yet unconfused. The Church is also a unity of persons – the whole host of believers united by the Holy Spirit into one single entity which is the Church, the Body of Christ. This unity is not merely figurative nor is it simply symbolic, but it is a real union brought about by the action of the Holy Spirit in us. The Head of the Body is our Lord Jesus Christ and we are united to Him as we are united to one another through the Holy Spirit. Through Christ we come into union and communion with God and through the action of the Holy Spirit in us we grow into union and communion with one another. We are not a group of separate individuals drawn together by some common cause or belief, but rather we are a group of persons mystically united to one another and yet remaining distinct and diverse. In this way we all together become the one Body of Christ, the One Church comprised of the choir of the saints and yet indivisible. We see this unity made manifest and actualized in the saints who have gone before us and we who are living now in the world are working to actualize that same unity in our lives through our cooperation with the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit in us.

Today we celebrate the “birthday of the Church” – today we celebrate our union with our Lord Jesus Christ and with one another, a union brought about by the descent of the Holy Spirit first upon the Apostles and through them upon the whole world. It is therefore apparent that we are not saved alone, but we are saved together – together with one another and together with the choir of the saints and of all those believers who have gone before us. For this reason we pray for one another and especially we ask the saints to pray for us – no longer does death separate us, but death is defeated and overcome by the Resurrection of the Lord and within the embrace of the Church we have come into a living unity with the whole choir of saints. Therefore do not delay to help one another for in helping your brother or sister to work out their salvation, you also work out your own salvation. In coming to the aid of one who is weak or ill or despondent, you come to the aid of yourself, for that person is joined to you and their weakness, their pain, their despair is yours. By strengthening them, you yourself are strengthened as well. When you are the one facing difficulty, do not hesitate to reach out to your brothers and sisters in Christ so that they might support you and lift you up. This is the nature of the Church that we work out our salvation together. No one is left alone, no one is abandoned, but we are all joined together in Jesus Christ by the work and transforming grace of the Holy Spirit. Today we celebrate our unity, our one-ness with each other. Today we have become the Church, the Body of Christ, through the descent of the Holy Spirit Who enters into our souls and empowers us to follow Christ as He leads us into His heavenly kingdom.

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**On this Sunday the Kneeling prayers are said at Vespers which follows immediately after the Liturgy -
the three long prayers are:**

The First Prayer: Priest: O Lord most pure, spotless, who art from everlasting, invisible, ineffable, unsearchable, unchanging, unsurpassable, immeasurable, longsuffering, who alone hast immortality; who dwellest in light unapproachable, who hast made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that therein is; who grantest unto all men their petitions before they ask: We pray thee, and beseech thee, O Master who lovest mankind, the Father of our Lord, and God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of Mary the ever-virgin and exceeding-glorious birth-giver of God; who first did teach in words and afterwards did manifest himself in deeds, when he suffered his redeeming Passion; who hast given unto us, thy humble, and sinful, and unworthy servants, a command that we should offer supplications unto thee with bending; of the neck and of the knees, both for our own iniquities and for the ignorances of the people: Do thou, the same all-merciful God who lovest mankind, hear us in that day when we shall call upon thee, and more especially upon this day of Pentecost, whereon, after that our Lord Jesus Christ has ascended up into heaven, and had sat down at the right hand of thee, who art both his God and his Father, he did send down the Holy Spirit upon his holy disciples and apostles: which also did rest upon each one of them, so that they were all filled with its inexhaustible grace, and did declare thy majesty in divers unknown tongues, and did prophesy. Wherefore hearken now to us who pray unto thee, and remember us humble and condemned as we are, and turn again the captivity of our souls, exercising thy loving kindness toward us who now offer up our petitions unto thee. Accept us who fall down before thee, and who cry aloud unto thee, We have sinned! We have cloven unto thee even from our mother's womb: thou art our God. But because we have passed our days in vanity, we have stripped ourselves of thine aid, we have deprived ourselves of every valid defence. But confidently trusting in thy bounties, we call unto thee. Remember not the sins of our youth and our ignorances; and cleanse thou us from our secret sins; and forsake us not in the days of our old age, when our strength faileth us. Even until we return again into the earth, abandon us not, vouchsafe us grace to have recourse unto thee; and receive us, because of thy favour and graciousness. Measure our wickedness according to the measure of thy bounties. Set over against the multitude of our transgressions the abyss of thy compassions. Look down from thy holiness on high, O Lord, upon thy people now present before thee, who await thy rich mercies. Visit us with thy loving-kindness: deliver us from the assaults of the Devil. Establish our life in thy holy and sacred commandments. Commit thy people unto an Angel, a faithful guardian. Gather us all into thy kingdom. Grant pardon unto those who put their trust in thee. Put away from them and from us all sins. Purify us by the operation of thy Holy Spirit; bring to naught the machinations of the enemy against us.

And thereto is added the following Prayer: Blessed art thou, O Lord, Master Almighty, who hast illumined the day with the light of the sun, and hast made bright the night with the brilliant flashes of the lightning; who hast graciously enabled us to pass through the long day, and to draw near to the beginning of the night. Hear our petitions, and the petitions of all thy people, and granting pardon unto us for all our sins, both voluntary and involuntary, accept our evening prayers, and send down the multitude of thy mercy and thy bounties upon thine inheritance. Guard us with thy holy Angels. Arm us with the armour of thy righteousness. Encompass us round about with the ramparts of thy truth. Guard us by thy might. Deliver us from every assault, and from every treacherous plot of the adversary. And grant unto us that this present evening and the approaching night, and all the days of our life, may be perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless, without stumbling, untroubled of dreams; through the prayers of the holy Birth-giver of God, and of all the Saints, who, in all the ages, have been acceptable in thy sight.

The Second Prayer: Priest: O Lord Jesus Christ our God, who hast bestowed upon men thy peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit; who, while thou wast yet with us in the present life, didst give unto thy faithful people an inheritance which shall not be taken from them forever; who this day didst send down thy grace upon thy disciples and apostles, in manner most clear, and didst furnish their lips with fiery tongues; by whom now, we also, together with all mankind, having received, through the hearing of our own ears divine knowledge in our own tongues, have been illumined with the light of the Spirit, and have put away the delusion of darkness by the distribution of the material and visible tongues of fire, as also by the marvellous operation of the same, whereby we have been inspired with faith toward thee, and to glorify thee, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit in one Godhead and might, and have been enlightened with power: Do thou who art the Brightness of the Father, of his Essence and his Nature the Express and Immutable Image, the Fountain of Wisdom and of Grace, open the lips of me, a sinner and teach me in what manner and for what needs I ought to pray; for thou knowest the great multitude of my sins, but thy loving-kindness shall overcome the enormity thereof. For lo! I stand in awe before thee, and have cast into the great deep of thy mercy the despair of my soul. Govern my life, O thou who governest all creation by a word, with the unutterable might of thy wisdom, O tranquil Haven of the storm-tossed; and make known unto me the way in which I should walk. Grant unto my understanding the spirit of thy wisdom, bestowing upon my ignorance the spirit of thy understanding. Overshadow my deeds with the spirit of thy fear, and renew a right spirit within me; and by thy sovereign Spirit make stable the instability of my thoughts. That being daily guided by thy good Spirit in that which is profitable for me, I may be enabled to keep thy statutes, and ever bear in mind thy glorious Coming-again, and those things worthy of torment which I have committed. And give me not over to be led astray by the corrupt pleasures of this present world, but strengthen in me the desire to strive for the treasures to come. For thou hast said, O Master: whatsoever a man shall ask in thy Name, that shall be freely received from thy God and father, who is from everlasting. Wherefore, I, also, a sinner, at this descent of thy Holy Spirit, do entreat thy goodness, that thou wilt grant me whatsoever things I have asked which are unto salvation. Yea, O Lord, the bounteous Giver of every benefit; and the Distributor of blessings,—for its thou who givest most bountifully unto those who ask of thee,—thou art pitiful and gracious, and also wast made a partaker of our flesh, yet without sin, and doest incline thine ear with infinite loving-kindness unto those who bow the knee before thee; who, also, wast made the Propitiation of our sins. Wherefore, O Lord, grant thy bounties unto thy people. Harken unto us from thy holy heaven. Sanctify us by thy saving

might of thy right hand. Cover us with the shelter of thy wings; and despite thou not the work of thy hands. Unto thee alone have we sinned, but thee alone so we serve. We know not to adore a strange god, neither have we stretched out our hands, O Lord, unto any other god. Pardon our iniquities, and accept this our prayer, which we make unto thee on bended knees. Extend unto us all the hand of thine aid. Receive our petitions of all men, as it were incense well-pleasing, acceptable before thine all-blessed kingdom. O Lord, Lord, who deliverest us from all the arrows that fly by day, deliver thou us, also, from all things that infest the darkness. Accept our evening sacrifice, even the lifting-up of our hands. Grant that we may pass through the course of the night without sin, untempted of evil things; and deliver us from every alarm and cowardice that cometh to us from the Devil. Grant unto our souls contrition, and unto our minds anxiety concerning that strict searching out of the thoughts which shall come in the dread and just Day of Judgment. Nail our flesh to the fear of thee, and mortify our earthly members: that, in the quietness of sleep, we may be illuminated by the vision of thy judgments. Remove from us, also, every unseemly imagination and hurtful carnal passion. Raise us up again at the hour of prayer, fortified in the faith, and advancing in thy commandments.

The Third Prayer: Priest: O Fountain, ever-flowing, living, illumining; Power creative, coeternal with the Father, O Christ our God, who hast most excellently fulfilled all the plans for the salvation of mankind; who didst shatter the bonds indestructible of Death, and the bolts of Hell, and didst trample under foot a host of evil spirits; who didst offer thyself a blameless victim for us, giving thine all-holy Body for a sacrifice inviolate, and unassailed of every sin, and who, through that terrible and ineffable act of sacrifice, didst bestow upon us life eternal; who didst descend into Hell, and break the everlasting bars, and show a way up unto those who abode in the lower world; and having enticed, by divinely wise allurements, the origin of mischief and the serpent of the abyss, and bound him with cords of nethermost gloom and fire unquenchable in Tartarus, and confined him in outer darkness, by thine infinite and fettering might, O Wisdom greatly glorified by the Father, thou didst manifest thyself as a mighty helper of the assailed; and didst enlighten those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, Do thou, O Lord of the everlasting glory and Son beloved of the Father most high, Light Eternal of Light Eternal, the Sun of Righteousness, hear us, who now make our fervent supplications unto thee, and give rest to the souls of thy servants our fathers and brethren, and other kinsmen after the flesh, and of all of the household of faith, who have fallen asleep, and whom we now call to remembrance. For thou hast power over all things, and in thy hand thou upholdest all the ends of the earth. O Master Almighty, the God of our fathers and Lord of mercy, Creator of the race of mortals and immortals, and of every nature of man; of that which is brought together and is again put asunder; of life and death; of sojourn in the world that now is, and of translation to the world which is to come; thou meetest out the years of life, and appointest the time of death; thou bringest down to Hell, and again raisest up; thou bindest unto impotency and loosest unto power, ordering things present according to their necessity, and appointing things to come as is expedient, quickening with the hope of Resurrection those who were smitten with the sting of death. For thou art, of a truth, the Master of all men, O God our Saviour, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those who are afar off upon the sea; Who, on this last, and great, and redeeming day of the Pentecost feast, didst reveal unto us the mystery of the Holy Trinity, one in Essence, coeternal, undivided and unmingled; and didst pour out the indwelling and descent of thy holy and life-giving Spirit, in the form of tongues of fire, upon thy holy apostles; and didst appoint the same to be the heralds of the glad tidings of our holy faith; and didst make them confessors and teachers of the true divine knowledge; who, also, on this all-perfect and saving Feast, art graciously pleased to accept propitiatory prayers for those who are imprisoned in Hell, promising unto us who are held in bondage great hope of release from the vileness that doth hinder us and did hinder them; and that thou will send down thy consolation. Hear us, thy humble ones, who make our supplications unto thee, and give rest to the souls of thy servants who have fallen asleep, in a place of light, a place of verdure, a place of refreshment whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away: and establish thou their souls in the mansions of the Just; and graciously vouchsafe unto them peace and pardon; for the dead shall not praise thee, O Lord, neither shall they who are in Hell make bold to offer unto thee confession. But we who are living will bless thee, and will pray, and offer unto thee propitiatory prayers and sacrifices for their souls. O God great and eternal, who art holy and lovest mankind; who hast vouchsafed unto us at this present hour to stand before thine ineffable glory, and to sing and to praise thy wonders: Purify us, thine unworthy servants, and grant us grace that, with a contrite heart, and without presumption, we may offer unto thee the Thrice-Holy hymn of praise and thanksgiving for thy great gifts, which thou hast bestowed and always dost bestow upon us. Remember, O Lord, our weakness, and destroy us not in our iniquity, but show great mercy upon our humility; that, fleeing from the darkness of sin, we may walk in the daylight of righteousness; and that, putting on the armour of light, we may remain unassailed by any despiteful attack of the Evil One, and with boldness may glorify in all things thee, the only true God, who also lovest mankind. For thine, O Lord and Creator of all men, is that great and veritable mystery, the dissolution of thy creatures for a season, and thereafter their restoration to wholeness and their rest forever. We acknowledge thy grace in all things; for our coming into this world and our going out of it; for our hopes of resurrection and of the life immortal faithfully pledged unto us through thine unfailing promises, the which we shall receive hereafter in thy Second Coming. For thou art the Chieftain of our Resurrection, and the Judge impartial and gracious to the dead, and the Master and Lord of recompense, who didst become a partaker, on equal terms, of our flesh and blood, because of thine exceeding great condescension; and when, of thine own will, that thou mightest place thyself under temptation, thou didst accept our congenital passions, because of thy compassion, and didst suffer through them, being thyself tempted thereby, thou didst become for us who are tempted the helper which thou thyself hadst promised; and thereby hast thou led us to thy passionlessness. Wherefore, O Master, receive thou our prayers and supplications, and give rest unto the fathers, mothers, children, brothers, and sisters, blood-relations and kinsfolk of each and all of us, and unto all souls which have fallen asleep before us; and establish their spirits in the hope of Resurrection unto life eternal, and inscribe their names in the Book of Life, in the bosom of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and in the land of the living, in the kingdom of heaven, in the Paradise of sweetness; by thy radiant Angels guiding all into thy holy mansions; raising up with thee, also, our bodies, in that day which thou hast appointed by thy holy and faithful promise. Because there is no death, O Lord, for thy servants when we depart from the body and come unto thee, our God, but a change from things very sorrowful unto things most salutary and most sweet, and unto repose and gladness. If, therefore, we

have in aught transgressed against thee, be merciful unto us and unto them; because there is no one pure from stain in thy sight, even for a single day of his life, save thou alone, who didst manifest thyself sinless upon earth, O our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we all trust to receive mercy and the remission of our sins. Wherefore, in that thou art a gracious God and lovest mankind, do thou, both to them and to us, pardon, remit, forgive our sins, both voluntary and involuntary, which we have committed whether wilfully or through ignorance; whether those which are manifest or those which have escaped our notice; whether of deed, or of thought, or of word, whatsoever they may be, in all our acts and lives. And unto the departed also grant thou release and pardon; and bless us who are here present, granting unto us, and to all thy people, a good and peaceful ending, and opening unto us the tenderness of thy mercy and love toward mankind at thy dread and terrible Coming-again; and make us worthy of thy kingdom. O great and most high God, who alone hast immortality, and dwellest in light unapproachable; who hast made all creation in wisdom; who hast divided the light from the darkness, and hast appointed the sun to rule the day, the moon and stars also to rule the night; who hast vouchsafed unto us sinners at this present hour also to come before thy presence with confession, and to offer unto thee our evening sacrifice of praise: Do thou thyself, who lovest mankind, direct our prayer as a censer before thee, and accept it for a savour of sweet incense; and grant that we may pass this present evening and the coming night in peace. Endue us with the armour of light. Deliver us from the terror of the night, and from everything that walketh in darkness; and grant that the sleep, which thou hast appointed for the repose of our weakness, may be free from every imagination of the Devil. Yea, O Master, Bestower of all good things, may we, being moved to compunction upon our beds, call to remembrance thy holy Name in the night season: that, enlightened by meditation on thy statutes, we may rise up in joyfulness of soul to glorify thy goodness, offering up prayers and supplications unto thy tender love for our own sins and for those of all thy people: whom do thou visit in mercy, through the intercessions of the holy Birth-giver of God. For thou art a gracious God, and lovest mankind, and unto thee do we ascribe glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The Holy Spirit provides every gift: He inspires prophecy, perfects the priesthood, grants wisdom to the illiterate, makes simple fishermen to become wise theologians, and establishes perfect order in the organisation of the Church. Wherefore, O Comforter, equal in nature and majesty with the Father and the Son, glory to You...

In the days of old, pride brought confusion of tongues to the builders of the tower of Babel, but now the diversity of tongues enlightened the minds and gave knowledge for the glory of God. There, God punished infidels for their sin, while here Christ enlightened fishermen through the Spirit; there the confusion of tongues was for the sake of vengeance, while here there was variety so that voices could be joined in unison for the salvation of our souls.

Stichera of Pentecost for Vespers, B#10, pp. 891, 894.

Saints of the Week

Fast Free Week

3 / 16 June — Holy Martyr Lucillian and those with him: Claudius, Hypatius, Paul, Dionysius and the Virgin Paula -

Lucillian grew to old age as a pagan priest. Only as a grizzled old man did he learn the truth of Christianity and receive baptism. His conversion to Christianity caused great excitement among the pagans of Nicomedia, and he was brought to trial for refusing to deny his new faith. He was harshly whipped and, all black and blue, thrown into prison. In the prison were four young men: Claudius, Hypatius, Paul and Dionysius, who had likewise been imprisoned for the Faith. The old man rejoiced in the company of these young men, and they in his, and they spent their time together in spiritual converse, prayer and the singing of psalms. When they were taken from the prison, they were tortured in various ways and then taken to Byzantium, where the young men were beheaded with the sword by the soldiers, and Lucillian crucified by the Jews. The wicked Jews pierced his body all over with nails. A maiden, Paula, openly took the martyrs' bodies and gave them burial. She was denounced for this and, after torture, was beheaded, receiving a twofold wreath: of virginity and of martyrdom. Their martyrdom took place in the time of the Emperor Aurelian, between 270 and 275. The Hieromartyr Lucian; The Holy Martyr Dimitri, Tsarevitch of Russia;

St. Kevin - Abbot of Glendalough, Ireland, b. about 498, the date being very obscure; d. 3 June, 618; son of Coemlog and Coemell. His name signifies fair-begotten. He was baptized by St. Cronan and educated by St. Petroc, a Briton. From his twelfth year he studied under monks, and eventually embraced the monastic state. Subsequently he founded the famous monastery of Glendalough (the Valley of the Two Lakes), the parent of several other monastic foundations. After visiting Sts. Columba, Comgall, and Cannich at Usneach (Usny Hill) in Westmeath, he proceeded to Clonmacnoise, where St. Cieran had died three days before, in 544. Having firmly established his community, he retired into solitude for four years, and only returned to Glendalough at the earnest entreaty of his monks. He belonged to the second order of Irish saints and probably was never a bishop. So numerous were his followers that Glendalough became a veritable city in the desert. His festival is kept throughout Ireland. St. Kevin's house and St. Kevin's bed of rock are still to be seen: and the Seven Churches of Glendalough have for centuries been visited by pilgrims.

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

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

New Martyr Basil of Chernigov, and those with them (1918) - Archbishop Basil (Bogoyavlensky) was born on February 1, 1867, into the family of a priest in Tambov diocese. Brought up in strict church piety, Basil was filled from early childhood with love for the Church and his earthly homeland, and for that reason, on attaining adulthood, he never had any hesitation in following in the steps of his father and devoting himself to the service of the Church. In 1888 he finished his studies at Tambov seminary, and in the same year was ordained to the diaconate. Two years later, on March 11, he was ordained to the priesthood and appointed to serve in the church of the village of Ovsyanki, Kirsanvosky uyezd, Tambov province. The incurable illness of his wife forced Fr. Basil to think of other conditions of service to the Holy Church. In 1896 he entered the Kazan Theological Academy, where he became friendly with the rector, Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky). In 1900 Fr. Basil graduated from the academy, and accepted the suggestion of his abba that he stay on to serve as a teacher there. After the death of his wife, Fr. Basil took the advice of Bishop Anthony and entered the Holy Trinity Alexander Nevsky Lavra, where on August 14, 1908 he was tonsured into monasticism. On October 15 of the same year he was appointed rector of the Chernigov theological seminary with promotion to the rank of archimandrite. On July 26, 1909 (May 12, 1911, according to another source), he was consecrated Bishop of Sumsk, a vicariate of the Kharkov diocese, in St. Petersburg. On March 4, 1911, he was transferred to the see of Novgorod-Seversk, a vicariate of the Chernigov diocese, and on May 12 - to the see of Chernigov and Nezhin. Bishop Basil's period of service in Chernigov was marked by the successful completion of many projects: the construction of two large houses for pilgrims coming to venerate the relics of St. Theodosius, and a sanatorium for the students at the seminary; the opening of the second women's school in the diocese with funds given from the state treasury by Tsar Nicholas; a large increase in the sphere of activity of the Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Michael, Prince of Chernigov; the publication of the journal Faith and Life by the same Brotherhood (in 1912); the creation in Chernigov of a yedinovertsy deanery in whose administration were numbered twelve churches. Vladyka also devoted much attention to charitable work, supporting the existing charitable institutions and organizing the collection of alms for the starving peasants of the eastern provinces during years of bad harvests. On July 6, 1916 he was appointed president of the Publishing Council attached to the Holy Synod. On October 5, 1916, in recognition of his services to the diocese, Vladyka was raised to the rank of Archbishop of Chernigov and Nezhin. On May 6/19, 1917 he was retired, and was appointed administrator of the Nikolayevsky Terebensky Desert in Tver diocese. From August 11 (or 14), 1917 he was placed in charge of the Moscow Zaikonospassky monastery. In 1917 Vladyka Basil was called to Moscow to participate in the Preconciliar Commission which was preparing for the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. When Archbishop Andronicus of Perm was killed by the Bolsheviks in 1918, the Moscow Church Council sent a special commission, headed by Archbishop Basil, who had a high reputation as an administrator, to investigate the circumstances of the murder. The Soviet government consented to an investigation and even provided a private coach for the use of the commission. (During the early days of the Soviet government, the Church Assembly addressed it several times with requests, declarations and protests). But the activity of the investigating committee in Perm aroused the indignation of the communists, especially those who were guilty of the crime, and they took measures to conceal information from the Moscow Assembly. After concluding its investigation, the commission was on its way back when a band of Red soldiers broke into the coach, between the towns of Perm and Viatka. On May 6, 1919, according to one account, Archbishop Basil, Archimandrite Matthew, rector of the Perm seminary (who is called a bishop in one account) and a layman, all the members of the commission, were killed, and their bodies thrown out of the moving train into the water from the Kama bridge. They were buried by local peasants, but as their graves began to attract pilgrims, and miracles were recorded, the communists dug up the bodies and burned them. According to another version, Archbishop Basil was arrested and after a short imprisonment was shot together with other members of the commission.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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