

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee & Afterfeast of the Meeting of the Lord

4 / 17 February

Lenten Triodion Begins

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

Tropar of The Meeting of the Lord, First Tone: Rejoice thou who art full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos, for from thee hath risen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice, thou also, O righteous Elder, as thou receivest in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who also granteth unto us the Resurrection.

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

Kondak of The Meeting of the Lord, First Tone: Thou Who didst sanctify the Virgin's womb by Thy birth, and didst bless Simeon's hands as was meet, by anticipation didst even now save us, O Christ God. But grant peace in the midst of wars unto thy commonwealth and strengthen Orthodox Christians whom Thou hast loved, O only lover of mankind.

Kondak for the Publican and the Pharisee, Tone 4: Let us flee the bragging of the Pharisee, and learn the humility of the Publican, while crying out unto the Saviour with groanings: Be gracious unto us, O Thou Who alone dost readily forgive.



Matins Gospel V

After the Matins Gospel **Publican and the Pharisee, Troparion, Tone VIII** — Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-giver. For my spirit rises early to pray towards Thy holy temple, bearing the temple of my body all defiled. But in Thy compassion, purify me by the loving kindness of Thy mercy.

Theotokion: Make straight for me the paths of salvation, O Mother of God. For I have profaned my soul with shameful sins, and have wasted my whole life in easy-going indifference. But by thy intercessions deliver me from all uncleanness.

Tone VI — Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions, blot out my transgression. When I think of the multitude of ghastly things I have done, wretch that I am, I tremble at the fearful day of Judgment. But trusting in the mercy of Thy loving kindness; like David I cry to Thee: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.

(Note: These penitential songs are sung on Sundays during the Great Fast from the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee to the fifth week.)

Epistle: II Timothy 3: 10-15

10 But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. 13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

ALL WHO DESIRE TO LIVE GODLY IN JESUS CHRIST WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION

True faith will be persecuted in this world. The Saviour Himself said this to His apostles clearly and publicly (Jn. 16:32). And St. Apollinarius of Hierapolis, writing against the Montanist heretics, asserts: 'Let them tell us, before God, who of all their prophets, beginning with Montanus and his wives, has been persecuted by the Jews and killed by the ungodly. No-one. Who among them has been arrested for the name of Christ, and crucified? Again, no-one ...Heresies are usually closer to the

worldly and demonic spirit, and therefore the world and the demons do not persecute their own. To be constantly under persecution, with short breathing-spaces, is a distinguishing mark of the Faith and of the Orthodox Church. This persecution has existed throughout the whole of history, whether externally or internally; externally from unbelievers and internally from heretics.

The Lord Jesus both foretold this and showed it by His own example. And the apostles said it, and showed it by their own example. And all the God-bearing Fathers of the Church, and confessors and martyrs, said this, and showed it by their own example. Can we have any further doubt that it is by the narrow gate that one enters into the Kingdom of God? No; in this there is no foundation or justification for doubt. Can sheep live among wolves and not be molested by them? Can a candle burn among cross-draughts and not be bent to and fro? Can a fruit-tree grow on a high road and be left alone by passers-by? And so, can the Church of devout souls not be persecuted again and again - by pagans, by idol-worshippers, by heretics, by schismatics, by passions and vices, by sin and lawlessness, by the world and by demons? Thus, not one godly soul can remain without persecution, either external or internal, until it is parted from the body and from this world. Maybe someone will challenge this, and expound something different, according to his assessment and logic. But that would not help either the understanding or the logic of a single man. Thousands of those crucified have spoken otherwise; thousands of those burned by fire have cried otherwise; thousands of those beheaded have proved otherwise, and thousands of those drowned have testified otherwise. Oh, my brothers, the Christian faith is strong, not only when it is in accord with secular understanding and logic, but when (and even especially when) it is opposed to them. All who desire to live godly lives shall be persecuted. This the apostles foretold at the beginning of the Christian era, and twenty Christian centuries give a many-voiced echo, confirming the truth of this prophecy. O risen Lord, give us light that we may be godly to the end and strength that we may endure persecution likewise to the end. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic, The Prologue, 27th April

Gospel Luke 18: 10-14

10 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner! 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, for everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

“Great Lent is preceded by three preparatory Sundays. The first preparatory Sunday of Great Lent is termed the “Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee”. This Sunday’s Gospel parable of the Publican & the Pharisee is read in order to demonstrate that only prayer with heartfelt tears & humility, like that of the publican, & not with a recounting of one’s virtues, like that of the Pharisee, can call down upon us the mercy of God. Starting with this Sunday & continuing until the fifth Sunday of Great Lent, following the reading of the Gospel, during the All-night Vigil, the contrite prayer is chanted, “The doors of repentance open unto me, O Giver of Life...”

Archpriest Seraphim Slobodsky, The Law Of God

Many are the faults of the Pharisee: for first of all he is boastful, and without sense, for he praises himself, even though the sacred Scripture cries aloud, ‘Let a neighbour praise you, and not your own mouth: a stranger and not your own lips’ (Prov. 27:2) ...Our virtue, therefore, must not be contaminated with fault, but must be single-minded and blameless and free from all that can bring reproach. For what profit is there in fasting twice a week, if you so doing serve only as a pretext for ignorance and vanity, and if it makes you supercilious, haughty and selfish? You tithe your possessions and make a boast of it; but in another way you provoke God’s anger, by condemning men generally on this account and accusing others. And you yourself are puffed up, though not crowned by the divine decree for righteousness, but on the contrary, heap praises upon yourself. For I am not, he says, as the rest of mankind. Moderate yourself, O Pharisee: ‘Set a guard, O Lord, over your mouth, keep watch over the door of your lips’ (Ps. 140:3). You speak to God Who knows all things. Await the decree of the Judge. None of those skilled in the practice of wrestling ever crowns himself; nor does any man receive the crown of himself, but awaits the summons of the arbiter. Lower your pride, for arrogance is both accursed and hated by God. Although, therefore, you fast with puffed up mind, your so doing will not avail you; your labour will be unrewarded; for you have mingled dung with your perfume. Even according to the law of Moses a sacrifice that had a blemish was not capable of being offered to God; for it was said unto him, ‘Of sheep, and ox, that is offered for sacrifice, there must be no blemish therein’ (Lev. 22:21). Since, therefore, your fasting is accompanied by pride, you must expect to hear God saying, This is not the fast that I have chosen (Cf Isa. 58:5) ...You offer tithes, but you wrong in another way Him Who is honoured by you, in that you condemn men generally. This is an act foreign to the mind that fears God.

St. Cyril of Alexandria. Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke, Homily 120. B#42, pp. 480-481.

The Doors of Repentance

“Open to me the doors of repentance, O Giver of Life...” So sings the Church today at Matins of this first of four Sundays preparing us for Great Lent. This Sunday ought to be considered as a door by which we enter into the sacred time of year leading us to Pascha, a door giving us access to the life of repentance and conversion which Lent ought to bring each of

us. "Repentance" (Greek: *metanoia*) means "a change of mind," inner change. What Great Lent demands of us is radical change, renewal, conversion.

In the Church's calendar this first Preparation Sunday is called "The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee." In order to call us to real repentance, the Church puts before our eyes the image of two men who go up to the Temple to pray; one of them is put into a new relationship with God because of his humility and contrition. This Gospel Reading is the most dangerous of the parables. We so condemn the Pharisee that we actually say: "In spite of my sins, I at least am not a Pharisee, not a hypocrite." The Pharisee's prayer is not all bad. Most of what he says is true. He even recognizes that his good actions come from God.

The Pharisee sins in two ways. He lacks repentance and humility. He has no sense of his weaknesses, of the sins which he *does* commit, like all other men. He compares himself with the tax collector in pride, with a certain scorn. Have we the right to condemn the Pharisee, to think ourselves better than he, when we violate the commandments which he observes? Do we have the humility and repentance of the tax collector? If we condemn the Pharisee for pride, without actually becoming the Publican, we ourselves become Pharisees. The tax collector only asks for mercy. He sees his own need for forgiveness. "This man went to his house in a right relationship with God, but not the other."

Is the tax collector "justified" only because he confessed his sin and stood before God in humility? There is more. His prayer is an appeal to God's tenderness made in confidence. What Jesus demands of us as we repent is this abandonment, this absolute confidence in the Father's mercy and compassion. The Church hymns draw the conclusion and give us today's main thought: "Lord, You condemned the Pharisee when he justified himself and boasted about his actions; You justified the tax collector when he approached in humility, asking pardon of his sins; for You reject arrogant thoughts, but You do not turn away from contrite hearts. Before You we also fall down in adoration. Grant us Your pardon and Your great mercy!"

The Living Word

Anon.

Saints of the week

Fast Free Week

4 / 17 February — Afterfeast of the Meeting of Our Lord — Our Holy Father Isidore of Pelusium - He was an Egyptian, the son of eminent parents and a kinsman of the Patriarchs of Alexandria Theophilus and Cyril. Completing his secular studies, he renounced his riches and worldly standing and gave himself wholly to the spiritual life for the love of Christ. He was a great and ardent interpreter and defender of the Orthodox faith. The historian Nicephorus states that St Isidore wrote more than 10,000 letters to various people, in which he reprimanded one, advised another, consoled a third, instructed a fourth. 'It is more important to be proficient in good works than in golden-tongued preaching', he writes in one letter. In another, he says: 'If a man wishes his virtues to appear great, let him regard them as small and then they will be truly shown to be great.' The first and fundamental rule for Isidore was first do and then teach, after the example of the Lord Jesus. At a time when St John Chrysostom was undergoing persecution and the whole world was divided into two camps, one for and one against this great pillar of Orthodoxy, St Isidore stood on the side of Chrysostom. He wrote to Patriarch Theophilus, saying what a great light Chrysostom was in the Church and begging that the hatred of him should cease. He lived long and laboured greatly, glorifying Christ the Lord in his life and his writings, and entered into the Kingdom of Christ in about 450; Our Holy Father Nicolas the Confessor; The Holy New Martyr Joseph; St. Aldate, hieromartyr of Gloucester, England (6th c), ; in Scotland, St. Modan, ab of Melrose.

5 / 18 February — Afterfeast of the Meeting of Our Lord — The Holy Martyr Agatha - This glorious virgin and martyr for Christ was born in the Sicilian town of Palermo of noble and prosperous parents. When the Emperor Decius launched a persecution of Christians, St Agatha was arrested and brought to judgement before Quintian the judge. He saw Agatha's beauty and desired her for his wife. When he suggested this to her, she replied that she was the bride of Christ and could not be faithless to her Betrothed. The judge condemned her to cruel torture: Agatha was flogged, mocked, bound to a tree and beaten till the blood flowed. After that, the judge again urged her to deny Christ and so escape further torture, to which Christ's bride replied: 'These tortures are of great help to me. As wheat cannot come to the granary until it is cleansed of its chaff, so my soul cannot enter Paradise unless my body has first been broken by torture.' Then the torturer ordered that her breasts be cut off and then she be thrown into prison. The holy Apostle Peter appeared to her in the prison and restored her to physical wholeness and health. She was once again taken out for torture and again cast back into prison, where she gave her soul to God in the town of Catania in the year 251. After her death, her torturer Quintian set out to appropriate her lands, but on the way the horses became maddened under him and his soldiers. They were savaged on the face, thrown onto the ground and trampled to death. Thus God's punishment came swiftly upon him for his ferocious crime against St Agatha; The Holy Martyr Theodula; St Polyeuctus, Patriarch of Constantinople; in England at Glastonbury, St. Indractus, hermit, his sister Dominica and 9 others, Martyrs.

6 / 19 February — Afterfeast of the Meeting of Our Lord — St Bucolus, Bishop of Smyrna - He was a disciple of St John the Theologian, who consecrated him bishop of the city of Smyrna. There were few baptised Christians in Smyrna, and St Bucolus shone like a lamp in the pagan darkness. He was adorned with all the virtues, especially gentleness and meekness. Before his death, Bucolus named the famous Polycarp as his successor in the episcopate, then he peacefully departed this life and went to the Lord.

Tropar of St. Bucolus, Tone 4: Thou didst shine with the rays of virtue/ received from him who leaned on the Master's breast./ Resplendent, God-inspired Hierarchy,/ thou didst lead thy flock to the pastures of Truth./ O Father Bucolus, entreat Christ our God for those who honour thee.

Kondak of St. Bucolus, Tone 2: He who was beloved of Christ/ saw the purity of thy life and made thee a shepherd of the Church/ and a radiant lamp of godliness;/ holy Father Bucolus,/ thou didst emulate his virtues. The Holy Martyr Fausta; The Holy Martyr Dorothea; St Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople; Our Holy Fathers Barsanuphius and John ; The Holy Martyrs Martha and Mary and their brother Lycarion;

Rest of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava (1940) - In the world Basil Dimitryevich Bystrov, Archbishop Theophan was born on 1 January 1872 in Podmosh, St Petersburg province. He was the son of a village priest. A outstanding student, Basil Dimitryevich was tonsured in 1898, and ordained a hieromonk soon after. He was raised to the rank of Archimandrite in 1901 and became the Inspector of the St Petersburg Theological Academy. In 1909 he became the Director of the same institution and then, on February 22, he was consecrated Bishop of Yamburg, fourth vicar-bishop of St Petersburg & Ladoga. During his tenure at the Academy, he was responsible for a great revival in the religious & moral atmosphere. This was all the more remarkable as liberal & revolutionary ideas were widespread at the time. Throughout his service and life as an archpastor, right up to his (regrettably) relatively early repose, Vladika Theophan was a decisive & uncompromising opponent of every kind of modernism, liberalism, and free-thinking, the things which undermine genuine Orthodox teachings about faith and piety and which shake the foundations of the Christian philosophy. An archpastor and an ascetic - that is what Vladika Theophan was in his life! His labours in prayer were astounding. Not only did he unfailingly perform his daily monastic rule and often spend the night in prayer, but he always attended all the services which were held in the nearby church and, if he were unable to do so, he read all of the services for the entire day in his cell, standing at the lectern in front of the icons using the service books in his possession. He did this even when he was travelling. He always had his priest's prayer book with him, from which in such circumstances he always read all the services of the day. This devotion to prayer shone brightly in his face, one glance at which inspired reverence in the faithful, and it raised him to great spiritual heights, endowing him with amazing spiritual foreknowledge. While Vladika Theophan was still a young Archimandrite, all Petersburg knew of his lofty intellectual and spiritual abilities, and all considered him a true man of prayer and an ascetic, one who had completely renounced worldly life and who lived only in God and for God. The Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna herself took notice of him, for she constantly sought men of God, both for herself and for her family, and for the spiritual guidance of the Russian nation. Bishop Theophan soon became her secret confessor and consultant in matters of religion, morality, & philosophy. One would expect, in view of his outstanding abilities, and given his position at the Imperial Palace, that Vladika Theophan would soon become one of the leading figures in the Russian Church. When he was abroad later on, Vladika Theophan often recalled with great compunction how he as archimandrite used to perform the Divine Liturgy in the Palace church on weekdays and how the Empress and her four daughters, the Grand Princesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria, & Anastasia always stood in the kliros and sang the entire Liturgy. "They always confessed with tears", he said with compunction. Later, these memories caused Vladika Theophan to suffer all the more due to the events which befell the Royal Family and Russia as a whole. In 1912, Vladika was transferred to Astrakhan and then, in 1913, to Poltava. It was here that he was raised to the rank of Archbishop. Following the revolution, he left Russia for Constantinople in 1920, participating in the first council of Russian Bishops Outside Russia in Sremski-Karlovtsi in 1921. He was later to sit on the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, substituting on occasions for Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), the chief hierarchy at that time. We have every reason to consider Vladika Theophan as one of the most important, consistent, and strongly principled ideologues the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia. His ideology was based on strict & uncompromising preservation of the Holy Orthodox Faith; unconditional rejection not only of obvious heresies, but also of every type of modernism, free-thinking and liberalism which undermine our Holy Faith and which strive to make of it "salt which has lost its savour"; and refusal to accept the God-hating regime which enslaved the Russian land and which endeavoured to uproot Christian Faith and morality from Orthodox Russians. Vladika Theophan made a deep impression as a man of genuinely saintly life on all foreigners who came into contact with him. The enemy, however, takes up arms against such saintly people and makes a special effort to pour out on them all his diabolical malice with the help of malevolent and depraved individuals who are devoted to his service. Thus, due to various unfortunate events in the local Russian Church, Vladika Theophan had to suffer much grief simply because he was such a strict ascetic and an uncompromising Archpastor. Consequently, he withdrew more and more from the world and its raging passions and began to retire into himself, leading what was already virtually the life of a recluse. Soon, though, it became clear that he could not remain "in the world" and that he would have to follow the example of the great ascetic and pastor whose name he had received in tonsure, His Grace Theophan the Recluse of Vishenki. In 1931 Vladika moved to France. He began to live as a complete recluse, having utterly severed all ties with the outside world. He served the Liturgy each day in a house church built for him by his spiritual children. Those who cared for him died before him and so little is known of the last years of his life. He reposed on February 6/19 1940 and was buried in a cemetery close by. He had lived in chalk caves high amongst the hills overlooking the Loire river. In one cave was his cell & church; others had been used as storerooms. His cell contained a Bible with dried flowers gathered at the ditch surrounding Diveyevo and other sacred things between the pages; a box with relics in little gold vessels; and many other holy things. His memory is eternal in the hearts of all true Orthodox Russian believers who knew & honoured him; in Ireland, Saints Mel of Armagh Melchus & Munis of Lough Ree, Bishops & Rioch, abbot nephews of St. Patrick; and St. Finian, abbot; St. Ina, king of West Saxons.

7 / 20 February — Afterfeast of the Meeting of Our Lord — St Parthenius, Bishop of Lampsacus - He was the son of a deacon from the city of Melitopolis. He knew the words of the Gospel by heart from his early youth, and strove to fulfil them. Settling beside a lake, he caught fish, sold them and shared the proceeds with the poor. By God's providence, he was chosen as bishop of Lampsacus. He cleansed the city of paganism, closed the temples dedicated to idol-worship, built many churches and strengthened the faithful. He healed all manner of sickness through prayer, and was especially powerful over spirits. At one

time when he was about to drive the evil spirit out of a madman, the evil spirit begged him not to. 'I will give you another man, into whom you can enter and in whom you can dwell', Parthenius told him. 'And who is that man?' 'I am he', replied the saint, 'come and make your abode in me'. Hearing this, the evil spirit fled as though burned by fire, crying out: 'How can I enter into the house of God?' St Parthenius lived long and showed in his deeds the greatness of his love for God and man. He entered into the eternal peace of Christ in the 4th century; Our Holy Father Luke of Hellas; Our Holy Mother Mastridia; The Thousand and Three Martyrs of Nicomedia; at London, St. Augulus, bishop, martyr; at Lucca, St. Ricgard of Wessex, confessor.

8 / 21 February — Afterfeast of the Meeting of Our Lord — The Holy and Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates - There are martyrdoms that are more than costly. The costliness of a martyrdom depends on the greatness of the good things of this world that a Christian gives up, receiving suffering in its place; and it depends also on the greatness of the suffering which he endures for the sake of Christ. St Theodore, a Roman commander in the army of the Emperor Licinius and governor of the city of Heraclea, scorned his youth, his good looks, his military status and the goodwill of the Emperor, and in place of all this received terrible tortures for the sake of Christ. Firstly Theodore was flogged, receiving 600 lashes on the back and 500 on the stomach; then he was crucified and pierced through with arrows. Finally he was slain with the sword. Why all this? Because St Theodore loved Christ more than anything else in the world. He scorned the foolish idol-worship of the superstitious Emperor, shattered the silver and gold idols, giving the pieces to the poor, brought many to the Christian faith and urged the Emperor himself to reject idolatry and believe in the one God. During the whole of his torture, Theodore repeated unceasingly: 'Glory to Thee, my God, glory to Thee!' He suffered on February 8th, 319, at three o'clock in the afternoon, and entered into the Kingdom of Christ. He is regarded as the protector of soldiers, who turn to him for help. His wonderworking relics were taken from Euchaïta to Constantinople and buried in the Church at Blachernae; The Holy Prophet Zechariah; St Sava the Second, Archbishop of Serbia; in Sussex, at Steyning, St. Cuthman, hermit; in Monmouthshire, St. Kigwe, virgin; at Clonmore Monastery, St. Oncho, pilgrim; St. Elflada, abbess of Whitby after St. Hilda.

9 / 22 February — Apodosis of the Meeting of Our Lord — The Holy Martyr Nicephorus: The Hieromartyr Peter Damascene; in Wales, St. Teilo of Llandaff, bishop, (6th c) and St. Eingan of Llanengan, hermit; at Iona, St. Cuaran the Wise, bishop; ; in Ireland, St. Taraghta, virgin and St. Cronan the Wise, canonist.

10 / 23 February — The Hieromartyr Charalampus - This great saint was bishop in Magnesia, and suffered for Christ at the age of 113. When a violent persecution broke out under the Emperor Septimus Severus, the aged Charalampus did not hide from his persecutors, but freely and openly preached the Christian faith. He endured all tortures as though not in the body, and when they flayed the living flesh from him, the godly saint said to the Emperor's soldiers: 'Thank you, my brethren, for scraping off the old body and renewing my soul for new and eternal life.' He performed many wonders and brought many to the Faith. Even the Emperor's daughter, Gallina, repudiated the paganism of her father and became a Christian. Condemned to death and led to the place of execution, St Charalampus raised his arms to heaven and prayed for all men, that God would give them bodily health and salvation of soul, and that He would grant them the fruits of the earth in abundance: 'Lord, Thou knowest that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour out Thy blessing on all.' After praying thus, the saintly elder gave his soul to God before the executioner had laid his sword to his neck. He suffered in 202. Gallina took his body and buried it; Our Holy Father Prochorus the Orach-eater (1107);

Russian New Martyr Anatole, metropolitan of Odessa (1938) should be especially glorified for his spiritual courage in the grievous years of 1928-1937. He lived in the South of Russia and was respected for his spiritual deeds and his fearless professing of the true Russian Faith. Metropolitan Anatole suffered a slow martyrdom from the hands of the communists, who cruelly persecuted and humiliated him. Even before entering high school he dedicated his life to the service of God. After high school he was accepted by the Academy of Kiev, and while studying there, took the vows of monkhood. Soon after graduating from the Academy, the Rev. Anatole was ordained bishop. Bishop Anatole, young and inspired, won the hearts of his spiritual children. His ever increasing popularity was noted, of course, by the usurpers of power of the Russian government. Bishop Anatole was one of the first to be arrested by the communists. For a long time he languished in the prisons of the GPU (pre-KGB). During the hours of questioning the mild prelate was outrageously beaten by magistrates, to the point that his jaw was permanently injured, so that his speech at times was not quite distinct. Two of his ribs were also injured. Bishop Anatole spent a long time in the prison hospital. His wounds had hardly healed when he was exiled to Solovky to the harsh conditions of a labour camp for the most dangerous political "criminals", especially for the clergy. Severe frosts, lack of satisfactory nourishment, and very heavy labour broke the health of the already not too robust bishop. He suffered this oppressive life for seven years. He owed his survival there only to the most unselfish care of his younger sister, whom he had raised as a daughter. She had left everything to follow her brother into exile. Upon release from exile, Bishop Anatole was promoted to the rank of Archbishop of Saratov and Samara. Shortly after this, he was taken ill with an ulcer of the stomach—the result of hardships suffered while at the labour camp. Upon recovery, he was appointed head of the Odessa-Kherson diocese in the South. He arrived in Odessa in the darkest hour of its existence. All religious affairs were in the hands of the NKVD inspector-of-the-cults, Vishnegorodsky at first, and later Baranovich. Both of them fully enjoyed using their power to inconvenience and humiliate the head of the local churches. The Archbishop was frequently ordered to get out of bed in the middle of the night and report to the NKVD headquarters. Sometimes the inspectors would appear in church during solemn services on an important holiday, and issue the same order. In such instances, the otherwise meek and humble Archbishop Anatole would curtly tell them that under no circumstances would he stop the church ritual; that he would come only after officiating in the church. His refusals were so positive that even the NKVD messengers gave up, inwardly furious. At the end of four or five hours of Church service, the Archbishop would hurry to the NKVD, without time to rest or eat. There he was kept waiting for one or two hours more, just to repay him for the delay. When he was finally received, Baranovich would stamp his feet and shout at the Archbishop, just as if he were a disobedient slave. Such were the conditions under which this highly respected

priest carried on his spiritual work. The hardest trial for him was the arrest of almost all the clergy and the best preachers of Odessa in 1931. All of them (more than 20), were exiled during the same year, when the sacrilegious closing and destroying of the churches started. The majestic Cathedral of the Transfiguration was blown up before the eyes of the Archbishop, as was the beautiful Church of the Archangel Michael in the Devichy Monastery; the military Cathedral of St. Serge, and the churches of the port and many others. The repressions and persecutions of the clergy increased, leaving clergymen without food and lodgings. They found refuge in the Archbishop's home, while he himself went about to different government organisations pleading humbly for assistance and mercy for his unfortunate colleagues. But he was met only with mockery and insults. In 1932, Archbishop Anatole was promoted to the rank of Metropolitan. He remained head of the Odessa-Kherson diocese until his arrest in August, 1936. Before his arrest, Metropolitan Anatole had to suffer the humiliation of being dismissed by Baranovich and forbidden to perform church services. Upon his arrest, Metropolitan Anatole was removed to Kiev where he was kept under severe conditions for about six months. He again suffered from ulcer of the stomach with complications which affected his legs. Metropolitan Constantine, Exarch of the Ukraine, succeeded in obtaining permission for him to see his sister before he left for exile. The poor woman later told, with sobs, how Metropolitan Anatole was led into the room of their meeting supported on both sides—having nearly lost the complete use of his legs. In spite of his condition, Metropolitan Anatole was taken into exile by "etape". He was purposely placed among the gangs of the worst criminals, who systematically robbed him on the way. The sick prelate was actually forced by gun-butts to walk from one stop to another, farther and farther to the North, with no time to rest. When he collapsed in a dead faint, he was lifted onto a truck; but as soon as he regained consciousness he was forced again to walk. Men who witnessed the tortures of the saintly man, later declared with tears, that it would have been more merciful to have shot him on the spot. On the way, Metropolitan Anatole caught croupous pneumonia, but even this did not stop his tragic march. By winter he had reached his place of exile and, in the Far North, dying he pleaded for permission to see his sister, who had managed to reach his place of exile. The sister had received only postcards from him on which he had written: "I beg you to do everything you can. Plead, pray, implore, but obtain the permission for our meeting. I yearn before my death to see your dear face and bless you." But the meeting was not to be; the permission was refused. When Metropolitan Anatole was on the point of dying, the communists came to him and demanded his Gospel and his priest's cross. The Gospel was snatched from out of his weakened hands, but he clung to his cross. Protecting it on his chest with numbed hands, he fell back and died (1938). His body was thrown into a common grave in the frozen earth of the far North.

REFLECTION

Impose upon yourself some form of penance [Epitimija] for the sins of others. If you have judged someone or punished someone, impose upon yourself a form of penance. You should also suffer voluntarily for the sins of sinners. This is pleasing to God. This mystery was known by the saints who condemned themselves for the sins of others. Even non-Christian peoples perceived this mystery. There exists this custom in China: when an executioner beheads a criminal who is sentenced to death, he then approaches the judge and informs him that the verdict was carried out. The judge then reimburses him with a silver coin because he killed the criminal and orders that the executioner be whipped forty lashes because he killed a man. Christian saints profoundly understood the mystery of sin and human injustice. For the saints, all human sin has as long a history, as there is distance from us to Adam.

REFLECTION

Many of the weighty difficulties which befall man have their cause, known or unknown, in his past. However, the causes of these weighty difficulties, let us say mental disorder, are nothing else than the transgression of the moral law of God.

When St. Haralambos was being tortured, the persecuting emperor found out about his miracle-working power and ordered an insane man to be brought to Haralambos so that the emperor could be convinced that Haralambos could heal him. The devil tormented this man for thirty-five years driving him into the wilderness and hills and hurling him into mud or into gorges. When this deranged person approached Haralambos, the demon sensed a sweet-smelling fragrance emanating from this holy man and shouted: "I beg you, O servant of God, do not torment me before my time, rather command me and I will depart and, if you wish, I will tell you how it came about that I entered into this man." The saint commanded the demon to relate the story. The demon said: "This man wanted to steal from his neighbor and thought to himself: 'If I don't kill the man first, I will not be able to seize his goods.' He proceeded and killed his neighbor. Having caught him in the act, I entered him and behold for thirty-four years I dwelt in him." Upon hearing this, the saint of God commanded the demon to depart from the man immediately and to leave him in peace. The demon departed and the demented man was restored to health and became tranquil.