



## 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

### Leavetaking of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

23 August / 5 September

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 2:** When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendour of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, Glory to Thee!

**Tropar of The Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, Tone 1:** In giving birth thou didst preserve thy virginity; and in thy dormition thou didst not abandon the world, O Theotokos. Thou passeth over unto life, in that thou art the Mother of Life; and by thy supplications dost thou deliver our souls from death.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 2:** Hell became afraid, O Almighty Saviour, seeing the miracle of Thy resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee! And the world, O My Saviour, praises Thee forever.

**Kondak of The Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, Tone 2:** The tomb and mortality could not hold the Theotokos, who is untiring in her supplications and our certain hope in her intercessions. For, as the Mother of Life she hath passed over to the Life Who dwelt within her ever-virgin womb.

#### Matins Gospel XI

#### Epistle: Corinthians 9: 2-12

For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defence to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who ploughs should plough in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

#### IF WE HAVE SOWN SPIRITUAL THINGS FOR YOU, IS IT A GREAT THING IF WE REAP YOUR MATERIAL THINGS?

'Are you not my work in the Lord?' For this is the great thing, and others avail nothing apart from this. Even Judas himself was 'an Apostle,' and 'free' and 'saw Christ,' but because he did not have 'the work of an Apostle,' all those things did not profit him. You see then why he adds this also, and calls them to be witnesses of it ...Upon this it follows that if from no other quarter, yet from you I have a right to receive. Nevertheless, from whom I had most right to receive, from you whose teacher I was, from those I did not receive ...The whole world had him for its Apostle ...'For I both exhibited miracles and taught by word, and underwent dangers, and showed forth a blameless life' ...And not only this does he establish by his illustrations, but he shows also what kind of man a priest ought to be. For he ought to possess both the courage of a soldier and the diligence of a husbandman and the carefulness of a shepherd, and after all these to seek nothing more than necessities ...For he did not say, What soldier serves and is not enriched? ...To prevent high thoughts in those who contribute to their teachers, he signified that they receive more than they give.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXI on I Corinthians IX, 2, 3, 4, 6. B#56, pp. 119-121.  
for the Theotokos: Phil. 2:5-11*

## Gospel Matthew 18: 23-35

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

### FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS

A terrible picture is drawn for us by this Sunday's Gospel. It begins with the following words: "Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants" (Mt. 18:23). Among those servants was one who was indebted to the lord for a great amount. This amount was so great that in spite of his desire, he could never repay it. There was only one way out: the lord could sell him, his wife, his children, and everything he had. "The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt" (Mt. 18:26-27). Listen, he did not postpone payment of the debt, he did not reduce the amount, but he forgave everything, completely, forever. It was as if nothing had happened, everything remained as before. A new, quiet life as before began. And even better: now this servant knew his master. He saw in him a loving father, and to work for such a father is bliss.

Suddenly something terrible happened: that servant walked out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him an utterly insignificant amount; and grabbing him, started to choke him, saying, Give back everything you owe me. Learning of this, his lord was angry and gave him over to the torturers until he had paid the whole debt.

And so it is with us. We have received everything from the Lord but have proved to be unpaid debtors. And we have asked for forgiveness and have received it. And God has accepted us into His family, the Church of Christ, and in her we can sail over this stormy sea of life as in a safe ship. A ship has everything necessary to protect those sailing in it from the water: it has a strong foundation, a bottom, sides, sails, oars, a rudder. In the same way, the Church of Christ has a rudder by which it is guided by her Godly Pilot, our Lord Jesus Christ; also has sails, oars—these are the godly sacraments; also has a strong foundation—the commandments of Christ of which the main one is love. And if we keep this His main commandment, love, then we will be in His family, that is in the Church, and will rejoice. How much the Lord spoke about it in His farewell talk with His disciples: "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn.15: 12). "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (Jn.15:17). Yes, it is impossible to be in the Church and not to abide in His love. To be in the Church of Christ is possible only by keeping His main commandment, that commandment which has become the foundation of His entire Church, which is the fragrance of Christ—and this commandment is LOVE!

And so that unfortunate servant lost everything: the forgiveness of God, release from the whole debt, and the return to freedom of himself, his wife and his children. Everything that he had received, he lost in one moment, in that terrible moment when he did not forgive his debtor. And so we too can lose everything: forgiveness which we have received in the Sacrament of Confession, and the Grace which we have received in the Sacrament of Holy Communion—in one moment—in that moment when we will not forgive our debtors.

God grant that such a moment never come to us. And therefore, for the sake of our own salvation, our own well-being and the well-being of those close to us, let us wholeheartedly forgive our debtors. And let us rejoice that we have such debtors, because only by forgiving them their debts, can we prove to the Lord how much we value His forgiveness. And let us also rejoice, because our Lord forgives us enormous things, and all that we can forgive is so small and insignificant. Let us rejoice every time when we say in the Lord's Prayer: "and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

*The One Thing Needful – Archbishop Andrei*

For the Theotokos: Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28

### Saints of the Week

#### Dormition Fast Continues

**23 August / 5 September - Apodosis of the Dormition - The Holy Martyr Lupus** - this holy man was a servant of St Dimitrios of Salonica. When St Dimitrios was beheaded by the Emperor Maximian, Lupus dipped the hem of his garment and his ring in the martyr's blood. Lupus worked many miracles in Salonica with this garment and ring, healing people of every pain and infirmity. The Emperor Maximian, who was still staying in Salonica, discovered this, and commanded that Lupus be tortured and killed. But the soldiers who drew their weapons on Lupus turned one on the other and wounded one another. As Lupus was not yet baptised, although he was a Christian, he prayed to God that He would somehow bring about his baptism

before his death. On this, water suddenly poured down on the holy martyr from a cloud, and he thus received baptism. After harsh torture, he was beheaded and entered into the heavenly Kingdom; The Hieromartyr Pothinus, Bishop of Lyons; The Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons - He was in his youth a pupil of St Polycarp, the disciple of the apostles, who sent him to preach in Gaul. After St Pothinus's death by martyrdom, Irenaeus was made bishop. In his numerous writings, Irenaeus both expounded the Orthodox faith and defended it against heretics. He suffered for Christ in the time of the Emperor Severus, in 202, along with nineteen thousand Christians; St Victor;

**Holy Martyr Ebba the Younger, abbess of Coldingham, sister of King Oswy and her companions (870)** - Abbess at Coldingham, Berwickshire, Scotland, a double monastery that had been founded by Saint Ebbe the Elder, and which was the largest in the country at the time. When the monastery was attacked by Scandinavian pirates, Ebbe gathered her nuns and exhorted them to save themselves from falling into the hands of the pirates by voluntary disfiguring themselves. She then set an example by cutting off her own nose and upper lip; the other nuns did the same. When the Vikings broke into the convent, they were so horrified and angry by what the women had done to escape being raped, they locked them all in, set fire to the house, and burned them all to death.

**24 August / 6 September - The Hieromartyr Eutyches** - one of the lesser apostles, born in Sebastopol, he was a disciple and friend of the Apostles John the Theologian and Paul. Although he was not included in the Seventy, he was called an apostle by virtue of having been a disciple of the great apostles, and because he showed true apostolic zeal in the service of the Gospel. Consecrated as a missionary bishop, St Eutyches travelled widely, having an angel as a companion, and he also received heavenly bread from an angel while in prison. When his body was flayed with serrated iron rods, his blood ran down mingled with a sweet myrrh. He was thrown into the flames and before wild beasts, and was finally beheaded with the sword in Sebastopol; The Holy Martyr Tation; The Holy Martyr Syra; Our Holy Father Arsenius of Komel; St George Limniotes.

**25 August / 7 September - The Holy Apostle Titus** - One of the Seventy, he was born in Crete and educated in Greek philosophy and poetry. Led by a dream, he read the Prophet Isaiah and came to doubt all Hellenic learning. Hearing of Christ the Lord, he went to Jerusalem with some other Cretans, and himself heard the words of the Saviour and saw His mighty works. His youthful heart clave utterly to Christ. He was later baptised by the Apostle Paul, whom he served in the works of the Gospel as a son serves his father. Paul loved Titus so greatly that he sometimes called him his son (Titus 1:4), and sometimes his brother (II Cor. 12:18). Titus travelled widely with the great Apostle of the people, and was by him made Bishop of Crete. At the time of Paul's suffering in Rome, Titus was there, and buried the body of his teacher and spiritual father. He then returned to Crete, where he had great success in baptising the pagans, and wisely governed the Church to great old age. He entered into rest at the age of ninety-four; .The Holy Apostle Bartholomew - Today is the commemoration of the translation of St. Bartholomew's relics, while his main feast falls on June 11th. When this great Apostle was crucified in Ourbanopolis in Armenia, Christians took his body and buried it in a leaden coffin. When numerous miracles had been wrought over the Apostle's grave, especially healings of the sick—which led to an increase in the number of Christians—the pagans took the coffin containing Bartholomew's relics and cast it into the sea. At the same time, they threw in four other coffins with the relics of four martyrs: Papias, Lucian, Gregory and Acacius. By God's providence, the coffins did not sink, but floated, carried by the waves, to various places: Acacius's to the city of Askalon, Gregory's to Calabria, Lucian's to Messina, Papias's to another place in Sicily and Bartholomew's to the island of Lipara. By some mysterious revelation, the Bishop of Lipara, Agathon, learned of the approach to Lipara of the relics of St Bartholomew. Agathon, with his clergy and people, went out to the shore and awaited the coffin with great joy. On that occasion, many of the sick were healed by the holy Apostle's relics. They were placed in the church of St Bartholomew and lay there until the time of Theophilus the Iconoclast (about 839), then, when the Moslems threatened the Liparites, the Apostle's relics were taken to the town of Benevento. Thus God glorified His apostle by miracles, both during his lifetime and after his death; the Holy Confessors of Edessa; St. Menas, Patriarch of Constantinople; at York the translation of the relics of St. Hilda of Whitby (680).

**26 August / 8 September - Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Adrian and his wife Natalia** - Husband and wife, they were both of noble and wealthy families in Nicomedia. Adrian was the governor of the Praetorium and a pagan, and Natalia was a secret Christian. They were both young, and had lived in wedlock for thirteen months in all before their martyrdom. When the wicked Emperor Maximian visited Nicomedia, he ordered that the Christians be seized and put to torture. There were twenty-three Christians hidden in a cave near the city. Someone handed them over to the authorities and they were cruelly flogged with leather whips and staves, and thrown into prison. They were then taken from prison and brought before the Praetor for their names to be noted. Adrian looked at these people, tortured but unbowed, peaceful and meek, and he put them under oath to say what they hoped for from their God, that they should undergo such tortures. They spoke to him of the blessedness of the righteous in the Kingdom of God. Hearing this, and again looking at these people, Adrian suddenly turned to the scribe and said: 'Write my name along with those of these saints; I also am a Christian.' When the Emperor heard this, he asked him: 'Have you lost your mind?' Adrian replied: 'I haven't lost it, but found it!' Hearing this, Natalia rejoiced greatly, and, when Adrian sat chained with the others in prison, came and ministered to them all. When they flogged her husband and put him to various tortures, she encouraged him to endure to the end. After long torture and imprisonment, the Emperor ordered that they be taken to the prison anvil, for their arms and legs to be broken by hammers. This was done and Adrian, along with the twenty-three others, breathed his last under the vicious tortures. Natalia took their relics to Constantinople and there buried them. After several days, Adrian appeared to her, bathed in light and beauty and calling her to come to God, and she peacefully gave her soul into her Lord's hands.

Prayer to the Holy Martyrs of Christ - Adrian and Natalia: O sacred couple, holy martyrs of Christ Adrian and Natalia, blessed spouses and valiant athletes! Harken unto us who beseech you with tears, and send down upon us all that is profitable for our souls and bodies; and entreat Christ God, that He have mercy upon us and deal with us according to His mercy, that we not perish in our sins. Yea, O holy martyrs, accept ye our cry of supplication, and by your intercessions deliver us from famine,

pestilence, earthquake, flood, fire, hail, the sword, invasion of aliens and civil strife, from sudden death and from all misfortune, grief and pain, that ever strengthened by your supplication and mediation, we may glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is due all glory, honour and worship, with his unoriginate Father and His all-holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Holy Father Tithoes: St Zer-Jacob; The Miracle of the Most Holy Mother of God in

**The miraculous renewals of icons** was first witnessed in the Convent in Harbin on the first Tuesday of Great Lent in 1925. A dark Icon of the Mother of God "of the Akathist" suddenly became light. A priest was asked to serve a Moleben before the renewed Icon, but when he expressed doubts as to whether the Icon had in fact been dark, it quickly became dark again. Abbess Moscow in 1395 Rufina commented that the Icon darkened again due to the "soot of unbelief," but she prophesied that before the renewal of Russia the Icon would once again be renewed. Another miracle of God's Mercy was manifested in the Convent on August 26, 1925 (o.s.), the Feast of the Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God. An Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God was miraculously renewed in Abbess Rufina's hands. In 1924 a pious and elderly lady gave the old and damaged Icon to the Convent, remarking to the novice who accepted it that she couldn't throw it away in spite of its condition. Abbess Rufina accepted the Icon and placed it in a prominent place in the Church, which at that time had few icons. Because of its condition many people complained, and so the Icon was moved to a corner of the Altar. Even there, however, the presence of the Icon was criticized by the clergy. On the Feast day of the Icon, when several people were to be released from prison, Abbess Rufina decided to bless them with the Icon. She requested that the Icon be brought from the Altar and when Mother Ariadna handed it to her, it quickly began to lighten, the way that fog scatters in the sunlight, and became cleaned of the dust and dirt that time had settled upon it. Holding the Holy Icon in her hands, Abbess Rufina exclaimed, "Look, look, a miracle is taking place. The Icon is being restored!" After only a few minutes the Icon looked as though it had just been painted. The face of the Mother of God was lightened, the tin covering was brightened, and the halo above the face of the Virgin radiated a flowing light. This miracle occurred at 2 p.m. An hour later a Moleben was served by one of the hieromonks of the Convent, who only a few days earlier, had recommended that the Icon be burned and the ashes thrown into the river. With tears he begged forgiveness from the Mother of God. This miracle strengthened the Sisters in their faith that the Mother of God was Herself directing their lives invisibly, and was watching over their spiritual progress. Seeing in this miracle an indication from the Mother of God as to what the Convent should be called, Metropolitan Meletius blessed the changing of the name of the Convent to the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God. On April 26, 1926 there was a fire at the Convent and one Icon, that of God the Sabaoth, was miraculously preserved and renewed. A flow of miraculous healings began to occur from that Icon as well as from the Icon of the Vladimir Mother of God. The apparition of these obvious signs of God's Mercy, began to be widely known, not only among the Russian population, but among the Chinese as well, not only in the city of Harbin, but along the whole territory of the Chinese Eastern Railroad.

**27 August / 9 September – Our Holy Father Pimen the Great** - an Egyptian by birth and a great Egyptian ascetic. As a boy, he visited various spiritual teachers and gathered proven experience as a bee gathers honey from flowers. Pimen once begged the elder Paul to take him to St Paisius. Seeing him, Paisius said: 'This child will save many; the hand of God is on him.' In time, Pimen became a monk and drew two of his brothers to monasticism. Their mother once came to see her sons, but Pimen would not allow her in, asking through the door: 'Which do you want more: to see us here and now, or in the other world in eternity?' Their mother went away joyfully, saying: 'If I will see you for certain there, I don't need to see you here.' In the monastery of these three brothers, governed by the eldest, Abba Anoub, the rule was as follows: at night, four hours were passed in manual work, four hours in sleep and four in reading the Psalter. The day was passed, from morning to noon, in alternate work and prayer, from mid-day to Vespers in reading and after Vespers they prepared their meal, the only one in the twenty-four hours, and this usually of some sort of cabbage. Pimen himself said about their life: 'We ate what was to hand. No-one ever said: "Give me something else", or "I won't eat that". In that way, we spent our whole life in silence and peace.' He lived in the fifth century, and entered peacefully into rest in great old age. The Holy Martyr Phanurius - who he was and when he lived is not known, but he is much venerated in Rhodes and Crete. In 1500, he appeared to some people on the island of Rhodes, where he also showed wonders of healing. There is found there an old icon of him, in which he is depicted as a young soldier holding a cross in his right hand and a burning candle in his left. St Phanurius is also much venerated in Egypt. There is a tradition that his mother was a great sinner, whom not even he could convert. But his filial love for his mother was great beyond measure, and he prayed more for his mother's salvation than his own. When the pagans stoned him to death for Christ, St Phanurius prayed to God: 'For the sake of these my sufferings, Lord, help all those who will pray to Thee for the salvation of Phanurius's sinful mother.' In Egypt, many Christians pray thus: 'O Lord, save Phanurius's mother and help me, a sinner' —and many receive help through this prayer. Our Holy Father Pimen of Palestine: St Hosius of Cordova: The Hieromartyr Kuksha, and Pimen the Faster; St. Caesarius, bishop of Arles (543).

**28 August / 10 September - Fast Day - Our Holy Father Moses the Negro** - An Ethiopian, he was at first a robber and the leader of a robber band, but he then became a penitent and a great ascetic. As a slave, Moses escaped from his owner and became a robber. Because of his great physical strength and recklessness, the robbers chose him as their leader. Suddenly his conscience was filled with remorse and repentance for the crimes he had committed. He left the band, went to a monastery and gave himself entirely to obedience to his spiritual father and to the rule of the monastery. He made great use of the teaching of Saints Macarius, Arsenius and Isidore. Later, he withdrew to solitude in a cell, where he gave himself utterly to physical labour, prayer, vigils and pondering on God. Tormented by the demon of lust, he confessed to his spiritual father, Isidore, and received from him the advice to fast as much as possible, and never to eat his fill. When this proved to be of no help, he, at the elder's advice, began to keep night-vigils and to pray standing; he then got into the way of carrying water from a distant well for the older monks. After six years of terrible striving, St Isidore finally healed him miraculously of the lustful thoughts, imaginings and dreams visited on him by the demon. He was ordained priest in old age. He founded a monastery of his own, and had seventy-five disciples, himself living to the age of seventy-five. He foresaw his own death, and one day told

his disciples to flee, as barbarians were coming to attack the monastery. When his disciples urged him to flee as well, he told them that he must perish in the attack, for he had himself at one time done violence, according to the words: 'all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword' (Matt. 26:52). So he stayed, with six of his brethren. The barbarians came and ran them through. One of the brethren, hiding nearby, saw seven shining wreaths descend upon the seven martyrs. Abba Moses used to say, "Secret withdrawal (from work) maketh dark the mind, but or a man to endure and to persevere in his works maketh light the mind in our Lord, and it strengtheneth and fortifieth the soul." and " These four things lead to fornication: eating and drinking, oversleeping, negligence and decoration of clothes." "If you want to repent to God, beware of living in luxury, for this stimulates all passions and dispels the fear of God from the heart." The uncovering of the relics of St. Job of Pochaev; Our Holy Father Sava of Pskov and Krypetsk; The Assembly of all the Men of God of the Kiev Caves.

**29 August / 11 September – Fast Day - The Beheading of the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John** - Herod Antipas, son of the Herod who slew the young children in Bethlehem at the time of the birth of the Lord Jesus, was ruler of Galilee when John the Baptist was preaching. This Herod was married to the daughter of Aretas, an Arabian prince. But Herod, an evil branch of evil stock, put away his lawful wife and took Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, to live with him while Philip was still alive. John the Baptist stood up against this lawlessness and strongly denounced Herod, at which Herod threw him into prison. At the time of some feast at his court in Sebastia in Galilee, Salome, the daughter of Herodias and Philip, danced for the guests. Herod, in his cups and carried away by her dancing, promised her whatever she asked, even to the half of his kingdom. Instructed by her mother, she asked for the head of John the Baptist. Herod commanded that John be beheaded in the prison and his head brought on a platter. John's disciples took the body of their teacher by night and buried it, but Herod tore out John's tongue with a needle and then buried his head in an unclean place. What later happened to John's head is recorded and can be read the Prologue under February 24th. God's punishment was quickly visited upon this group of evildoers. Prince Aretas, to avenge his daughter's honour, attacked Herod with his army and brought him to his knees. The defeated Herod was condemned by the Roman Caesar, Caligula, to exile first in Gaul and then in Spain. As exiles, Herod and Herodias lived in need and debasement until the earth opened and swallowed them up. Salome, Herodias's daughter, came to a bad end in the river Sikaris (Sula). The death of John took place before the Passover, but its commemoration on August 29th was instituted because it was on this day that a church, that had been built over his grave in Sebastia by the Emperor Constantine and the Empress Helena, was consecrated. In this church were also placed the relics of John's disciples, Eliseus and Audius. Our Holy Mother Theodora of Salonica; The Holy Martyr Vassilia; The Holy Martyr Anastasius;

**St. Sebbi, king of the East Saxons (c.694), monk** - he became the king of Essex (or the East Saxons) following the conversion of the kingdom by St. Cedd in 664. He ruled at a time when there was relative peace and the realm was under the domination of Mercia, a nearby kingdom. Sebbi abdicated after ruling thirty years and became a monk in London. He died there and was buried in the old St. Paul's.

### *HYMN OF PRAISE*

#### *SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST*

O Saint John, wonderful Baptizer, Of the Savior, you were the glorious Forerunner, You, with your purity, touched human souls And, as an awesome trumpet, from the Jordan resounded From sleep and idle vices, awakening men, When the axe was near to the root. To you I bow, to you I pray: Every temptation, help me to resist. Prophet most powerful, to you I bow, And before you kneel and before you I weep: From your heart, grant me the strength of a lion, From your spirit, grant me angelic whiteness. Grant me your strength that by practice to attain To God be submissive and to rule over myself, To baptize by fasting, to purify by all-night vigils, To sweeten by prayer and heavenly vision, And to every martyrdom, walk without fear With your courage and with a strong faith. O Saint John, God's chosen one, And glorious martyr for supreme justice, You, of whom the godless armies are afraid To my prayers, do not turn a deaf ear, But, strengthen me by your prayers, That as a true candle before the Lord, I stand.

### *REFLECTION*

If you observe how men die, you would see that the death of a man usually resembles his sin. As it is written: "For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (St. Matthew 26:52). Every sin is a knife and men usually are slain by that sin which they most readily committed. An example of this is given to us by Salome, the foul daughter of Herodias who asked for and received from Herod the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Living in Spain in the town of Lerida [Loredo] with the exiled Herod and Herodias, Salome set out one day across the frozen river Sikaris. The ice broke and she fell into the water up to her neck. Icebergs squeezed around her neck and she wiggled, dancing with her feet in the water as she once danced at the court of Herod. However, she was unable either to raise herself up or to drown until a sharp piece of ice severed her head. The water carried her body away and her head was brought to Herodias on a platter as was the head of John the Baptist at one time. Behold how terrible a death resembles the sin committed.