

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

### The Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God & Martyrs Adrian and Natalia

26 August / 8 September



**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 3:** Let the heavens rejoice / let the earth be glad / for the Lord has shown strength with His arm! / He has trampled down death by death! / He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell / and has granted the world great mercy.

**Tropar of the Icon tone 4:** Today the city of Moscow is radiant for it receives the sunbeam of thy wonderworking

icon, O Lady./ As we greet it we pray to thee and cry:/ O wonderful Mother of God, pray to Christ our God Who was incarnate of thee/ that this city and all cities and countries be kept safe from all enemy assaults/ and that our souls may be saved, for He is merciful.

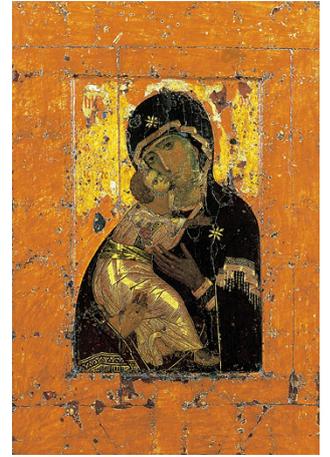
**Tropar of Ss Adrian and Natalie tone 3:** Thou didst value the Faith as imperishable wealth, O thrice blessed one,/ and didst abandon thy father's ungodliness./ Accepting thy spouse's word thou wast made radiant in contest./ O glorious Adrian, pray to Christ our God for us,/ together with godly-minded Natalie.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 3:** On this day thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, / leading us from the gates of death / On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices. / With the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

**Kondak of the Icon tone 8:** Queen of the heavenly hosts, defender of our souls,/ we joyfully celebrate the festival of thy meeting, O holy Mother of God;/ for by the coming of thy precious icon thou hast delivered us from harm,/ and as is meet we cry to thee: Rejoice, unwedded Bride.

**Kondak of Ss Adrian and Natalie tone 4:** Thou didst lay to heart the words of thy godly-minded spouse,/ O Adrian martyr of Christ./ Eagerly didst thou run to the tortures, and with thy wife receive a crown.

**Another Kondak of Ss Adrian and Natalie tone 4:** The memory of the Martyrs has dawned,/ and all the ends of the world are radiant./ They cry out with gladness: O Christ, Thou art the joy of the martyrs.



#### Matins Gospel I

#### Epistle: Corinthians 15: 1-11

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, By which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, And that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

#### HE WAS SEEN BY CEPHAS, THEN BY THE TWELVE...

Having finished the discourse on spiritual gifts, he passes on to the most necessary of all: the subject of the resurrection. For in this, too, they were very unsound. And as in men's bodies when the fever lays actual hold on their solid parts - I mean the nerves and the veins and the primary elements - the mischief becomes incurable unless it receives much attention, at that time something very similar was likely to happen. The mischief was proceeding to the very elements of godliness. This is why Paul also uses great earnestness. For his discourse was not of morals ...but about the very sum of all good things. They were at variance touching the resurrection itself. The devil was taking a vehement stand against the resurrection because this was our great hope ...Paul, writing to Timothy, called it gangrene ...saying, 'Of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some' (II Tim. 2:17,18). At one time then they spoke this way, but at another time they said that the body does not rise again but the resurrection is the purification of the soul. But these things that wicked demon persuaded them to say ...to show that all the things done for our sakes are a fable. For if they were persuaded that there is no resurrection of bodies, he would have gradually persuaded them that neither was Christ raised ...Paul puts this before us with much exactness, going over all of it...

for the Icon: Phil . 2:5-11

## **Gospel Matthew 19: 16-26**

Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'" The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

### **THE RICH YOUNG MAN**

See in the Epistle above what kind of reading from the Apostle Paul the Holy Church has selected for us today, in order to strengthen us in a definite state of mind. Along with the Sunday Gospel reading, which serves as a support, it strengthens in us the understanding that we live here temporarily. However, we fight against such an understanding; we don't even want to think about it. But it's a fact. Yes, our life is seventy years, and if by reason of strength, eighty years; but beyond this is hardship and disease. And how many tragic cases there are when God cuts off our earthly life in the years of youth, and even in childhood.

What have the Sunday Gospel readings been saying to us during the last few weeks? They have been saying that we must be perfect, that we must be Christians, because at any time the moment may come when Christ will call us and say: "Follow Me!" (Mt. 19:21). But how are we going to follow Him if we are spiritually paralysed, if we are spiritually blind and do not see His abodes on high?

Christ saves us from these dispositions. He gives us His Church. And the Orthodox Church is always reminding us of what the Bible says: how the world of God was created, how the first people lived, how the Fall occurred. Adam did not want to go from strength to strength, from grace to grace in communion with God, but wanted to have this strength within himself. And he went away, went away into the byways of human life, and therefore lost the Tree of Life. But God the Merciful One, God the Father gives us His Son Who was incarnate of the Most Holy Virgin, Who lived the Good News of the Gospel and showed us how to fulfill the commandment: Love for God and neighbour.

In today's Epistle the Apostle Paul shows us the true Risen Christ, Who brings us to Eternal Life. Paul himself, while still Saul, was also wandering in search of truth. He too in the beginning was searching for the earthly Christ who would free the Jews from the power of Rome. But when he was on the way to persecute the Church of God, he met Christ Himself, already after the Ascension; and here Saul became Paul. And as we heard in today's reading, he became the preacher of the Risen Christ. He became a New Testament man, who (if one can say so) brought about a great revolution in the world and transformed the whole world into the search for Christ and the striving for Life in Christ. With the name of the Apostle Paul is connected all the preaching of Christ in the entire world.

So when the Holy Church has strengthened us in the understanding that we are going toward Eternal Existence through our earthly wandering to Christ, then the Holy Church addresses us and points out: do not be mistaken. A certain lawyer came to Christ and asked:

What shall I do in order to inherit the Kingdom of God? (Today's Gospel). And Christ said, Fulfill the commandments. And when this lawyer said, From my childhood I have fulfilled the commandments, Christ saw his lack of understanding of the truth and said: Then give away everything that you have and follow Me (Mt. 19:16-21). But this man had much and trusted in this "much." Everything around him was real to him, and this reality gave him security in life. And this, what Christ was saying about future life, was not real to him. Therefore, when Christ said to him, Follow me and give away everything; he thought: how do I give it away? What will I have then? And what did he want to have? Power, strength, to be a possessor of earthly things.

The Apostle says today: what is earth? Christ leads us into Eternal Life. He saves us in an earthly way. God gives people abilities and knowledge; these are the various ways in which people pass their earthly life. But laid before them as a foundation are the Beatitudes: blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who weep, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, blessed are the peacemakers, those who are persecuted (Mt. 5:3-11). See, these are all the heavenly ways. This is what the Holy Church sets before us. Speaking to us about life beyond the grave, about resurrection (not as an idea, but as real life), about the Apostle Paul and all our saints, she shows us the truth and shows us that mirage which appears to be real. But if we start to live for this reality in order to acquire earthly goods, we will find ourselves in an abyss, and everything we possess will remain here. There will be nothing that belongs to Christ.

So let us arise, brothers, answering the calls of the Holy Church today: do not abandon prayer, do not abandon fasting which gives us concentration and attention, do not neglect also your good heart which will obtain for you a revelation from God and the joy of spiritual spring which will strengthen you in Eternal Life.

*The One Thing Needful – Archbishop Andrei*

for the Icon: Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28

## Saints of the Week

**26 August / 8 September - 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 - 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.

**30 August / 12 September - Afterfeast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist** - Ss Alexander, John and Paul the New, Patriarchs of Constantinople - Alexander took part in the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, in place of the aged Patriarch Metrophanes, whom he then succeeded. When certain philosophers tried to dispute with him about faith, he said to one of them: 'In the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, I command you to remain silent!', and the philosopher became dumb from that moment. By his prayers, also, Arius's life was shortened. Alexander died at the age of ninety-eight, in the year 340. St John the Faster governed the Church in the days of the wicked Emperor Anastasius, an Acephalite heretic. He entered into rest in 595. St Paul IV governed the Church for five years and eight months and renounced the throne to receive the Great Habit secretly, to repent of his sins when he first supported the iconoclasts. He was the predecessor of the great Tarasius, and entered into rest in the time of Irene and Constantine, in 784; The Assembly of the Enlighteners and Teachers of Serbia; Our Holy Father

Christopher; St Eulalius, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia; At Todi in Umbria, Ss. Terence & Flaccus, martyrs; Translation of the relics of St. Alexander Nevsky.

**31 August / 13 September - Fast Day - The Feast of the Girdle of the Most Holy Mother of God** - At her Dormition, the most holy Mother of God left her girdle to the holy Apostle Thomas. This girdle was later taken to Constantinople and kept there in a sealed casket in the church of the Mother of God at Blachernae, founded by the Empress Pulcheria. This casket was never opened until the time of the Emperor Leo the Wise (886-912). Leo's wife, the Empress Zoe, was taken sick in soul and, as the result of a mysterious vision, desired that the girdle of the holy Mother of God be placed upon her. The Emperor asked the Patriarch, and the casket was opened. The girdle was taken out and placed upon the sick Empress, who immediately recovered. This feast was instituted as a memorial of this wonder. One part of this girdle is to be found in Georgia, in Zugdid. This came about as follows: The daughter of the Emperor Romanus was healed by the aid of this girdle and, later, when her father gave her to King Abuchaz of Georgia, she took a part of this girdle with her. By order of the Russian Tsar Alexander I, a special church was built in Mingrelia in Zugdid, where this piece of the wonderworking raiment of the holy Mother of God is kept; St Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople; The Hieromartyr Cyprian' St John, Metropolitan of Kiev; at Glastonbury, **St. Aidan, bishop of Lindisfarne, apostle of N. England who taught the Wednesday and Friday fasts (651)** - An Irish monk who had studied under St. Senan, at Iniscathay (Scattery Island). He is placed as Bishop of Clogher by Ware and Lynch, but he resigned that see and became a monk at Iona about 630. His virtues, however, shone so resplendently that he was selected (635) as first Bishop of Lindisfarne, and in time became apostle of Northumbria. St. Bede is lavish in praise of the episcopal rule of St. Aidan, and of his Irish co-workers in the ministry. Oswald, king of Northumbria, who had studied in Ireland, was a firm friend of St. Aidan, and did all he could for the Irish missionaries until his sad death at Maserfield near Oswestry, 5 August, 642. St. Aidan died at Bamborough on the last day of August, 651, and his remains were borne to Lindisfarne. Bede tells us that "he was a pontiff inspired with a passionate love of virtue, but at the same time full of a surpassing mildness and gentleness."

**St. Eanswythe, abbess of Folkestone, grand-daughter of king St. Ethelbert of England, (c.640)** - is remembered for the simple life in which she gave up all the pleasures of the World. Once, the King of Northumbria asked to marry Eanswythe. At that time her father was building an oratory for her and one of the beams to be used was three feet too short. Eanswythe set the King a task to complete in order to win her hand in marriage. If the King's gods could, by his prayers, lengthen the beam then she would marry him. The King failed and went away filled with shame. Eanswythe however, approached the beam, made a prayer, and the beam lengthened to the required size. This was the first miracle. The nearest water to the oratory was a good distance away and had to be brought by hand. Eanswythe therefore went to the spring a mile or so away in the village of Sweeten. Using a stick she made the water follow her, up and down over cliffs and rocky summits, to her Oratory, where it delivered abundant water for men and animals. In the third miracle the young virgin placed an interdict that the birds should stop settling on the nearby fields and consuming the produce. So it was - the birds obeyed. She performed still further miracles. She restored a blind woman's sight, made a mad man sane and restored health in others from various diseases. King Eadbald consented to allowing her to found a monastery where she served as its abbess. Hers was the first convent in England. The Abbey was destroyed by the Danes; the church built in its place became an "alien" Priory of Lonlay l' Abbaye (Orne) in 1095; then about 1838 the Monks were moved by William de Avaranches to the site of the present church. Less than a century later a great rebuilding took place. It was finally rebuilt as we see it today between 1856 and 1874. In art, Saint Eanswythe is portrayed as a crowned abbess with a book and two fish.

**1 / 14 September - The Beginning of the Church's Year** - The First Ecumenical Council decreed that the Church's year should begin on September 1st. The month of September was, for the Jews, the beginning of the civil year (see Exodus 12:2), the month of the gathering of fruits and the bringing to God of sacrifices of thanksgiving. It was at the time of this feast that the Lord Jesus went into the synagogue in Nazareth, opened the Book of the Prophet Isaiah and read the words: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance' (Is. 61:1-2; cf. Luke 4:16-21). This month of September is also noted in the history of Christianity because it was during September that Constantine the Great was victorious over Maxentius, the enemy of the Christian faith, a victory followed by the granting of freedom of confession of the Christian faith throughout the whole Roman Empire. For a long time, the civil year in the Christian world was reckoned in the same way as the Church's year, from September 1st, but it was later changed to January 1st, first in western Europe and then also in Russia in the time of Peter the Great;

**Our Holy Father Simeon Stylites (the Elder) and his mother St. Martha** - born in Syria of peasant parents, he fled from them at the age of eighteen and became a monk. He gave himself to the strictest asceticism, sometimes fasting for forty days. After that, he followed a particular ascesis, until then unknown: standing day and night on a pillar in unceasing prayer. His pillar was at first three metres high, then one of six metres was built for him, then eleven, eighteen and finally twenty. His mother, Martha, came to see him twice, but he would not receive her, saying to her from his pillar: 'Don't disturb me now, Mother dear, if we are to be worthy to meet in the next world.' St Simeon endured innumerable assaults from demons, overcoming them all by prayer. He worked great miracles, healing the sick by his prayers and his words. People from all sides gathered around his pillar: rich and poor, kings and slaves. He helped them all, restoring bodily health to some, giving comfort and instruction to others and denouncing some for their heretical faith. The Empress Eudocia was thus turned from the Eutychian heresy back to Orthodoxy. Simeon lived in asceticism during the reigns of the Emperors Theodosius the Younger, Marcian and Leo the Great. This first Christian stylite and great wonderworker, St Simeon, lived for seventy years, and entered into rest in the Lord on September 1st, 459. His relics were taken to Antioch, to the church dedicated to his name; St. Joshua the Son of Nun.