



13th Sunday After Pentecost

Afterfeast of Dormition & Apostle Thaddeus of the Seventy

21 August / 3 September

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 4: When the women disciples of the Lord / learned from the Angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection / they cast away the ancestral curse / and elatedly told the Apostles / death is overcome / Christ God is risen / granting the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Feast tone 1: In giving birth thou didst keep thy virginity, / and in thy dormition thou didst not forsake the world, O Mother of God. / Thou didst pass on to life, since thou art the Mother of Life, / and by thine intercessions thou redeemed our souls from death.

Troparion of the Apostle Thaddeus tone 4: O holy disciple and witness to God / who appeared in the flesh for our sakes, / thou didst bring the light of saving grace to those in darkness, / thou wast revealed as an excellent physician to the people of Edessa. / Wherefore shelter those who fervently seek thee.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 4: My Saviour and Redeemer / as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains / He has shattered the gates of hell, / and as Master, / He has risen on the third day.

Kontakion of the Apostle Thaddeus tone 4: The Church has acquired thee as a star, O Thaddeus, / and is ever enlightened by thy miracles. / Save those who faithfully venerate thy memory.

Matins Gospel II

Epistle: Corinthians 16:13-24

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love. I urge you, brethren--you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints-- That you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labours with us. I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men. The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The salutation with my own hand--Paul's. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE

'Let all be done in love:' since in fact all the things which have been mentioned arose from neglect of it. For if this had not been neglected, they would not have been puffed up; they would not have said, 'I am of Paul, and I of Apollos' ...In the beginning, too, he mentions this man, saying, 'I also baptized the house of Stephanas, and now he speaks of him as 'the first-fruits' not only of Corinth, but also of all Greece ...He implies that together with their faith, they also showed forth a most excellent life, in every way proving themselves worthy ...And not only from this, but from another topic he likewise indicates their piety: i.e., from their having filled their whole house with godliness ...And he did not say merely, 'by fellow-helpers,' but added, 'whatsoever direction they give, obey' ...If there is anyone like them, let him also have the same advantage.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XLIV on I Corinthians XVI, 2, 3. B#56, p. 264.

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-42

The Lord said this parable: "There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD'S doing, And it is marvellous in our eyes'?

PARABLE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER WHO PLANTED THE VINEYARD

"It will be hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven," said Christ to His disciples. If you recall, last Sunday these same words appeared at the end of the Gospel reading. A young man approached Christ and asked, What should I do in order to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven? Then the Lord answered him: Fulfill the commandments. And when the young man said that he had already done this, then the Lord, seeing his heart, said: Give away whatever you have. But the young man was rich, and for him his riches were the power that gave him status in society, and therefore he bent his head and walked away. Here Christ said to His disciples: "Truly I say unto you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 19:16-23).

How is this? Why? If you take today's Gospel reading, then you will see why. The parable for today tells us how the Lord planted a vineyard and sent his slaves to work in this vineyard (Mt. 21:33-42). And he gave them everything needed for their lives. But the slaves enjoyed living and labouring in this vineyard so much that they began to feel that the place belonged to them. More and more they began to consider as their own all the prosperity which they were able to get from the grapes which grew so abundantly in the vineyard that did not belong to them; and they gradually began to forget the owner of the vineyard. The Lord gave them everything necessary for their maintenance, for their life, but they began to take it for granted. They had a different understanding: they had the opportunity to use the vineyard and all the beauty of these earthly goods which God gives to man. This captivated them so much, that they completely forgot, or better to say, they did not give a thought to the fact that all this was temporary; and that years would pass, and the hour would come when they would have to leave; and everything in the vineyard would remain here, but they would depart. You see, something different was required of them: while cultivating the vineyard, they should have cultivated also that which was given to man.

And what was actually given to man? A human being has a body which requires food, drink, motion, rest—the things that we call the life of the body. But man also has a spirit which always strives for the ideal. And no matter how good our earthly life might be—and it can be so good that it couldn't be better, as if nothing else existed—in a human heart will always stir that which cannot be satisfied by things surrounding us. And sadness will appear, and the conscience will say that he did not do the right thing, because the image of God is in every human being, in his spirit; and the spirit also requires life.

Bodily, the vineyard workers were all right, but the spiritual life they twisted and lived according to the flesh. And through this the conscience was suppressed. The conscience did exist but it was covered up. And here is proven what was said to the young man: it is hard for someone who trusts in riches to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Eyes are closed, conscience is darkened. Outwardly, he appears to be in a good state, but inwardly conscience is tormenting and tormenting. No hopes, no comfort. And so the human being tries everything. He says to himself: I will go to a resort, will go travelling, will create for myself all comforts. I will arrange my family life, will have children. I will enjoy myself. But here, at best, old age will come; but at worst—sickness. When these critical days come, nothing can appease. No matter how much earthly beauty or how many earthly goods we have — conscience will torment us. This is what today's parable expresses. The slaves even killed the heir so as not to give up the enjoyment of the vineyard. But banishment from the vineyard still occurred. How? This is what we call suffering of conscience which nothing can appease. Anguish—anguish with no way out.

So today's Gospel in a way supplements last week's Gospel and says to us: Brothers, take care that this doesn't happen to you, that the earthly beauty in which we live does not change into this vineyard of the parable! What do we need this vineyard for, these villas, automobiles, if our heart is being torn apart? Let us start to live according to the Beatitudes, and then our heart will be filled with peace, love, the breath of paradise. And with this fullness of heart, we will pass over into Eternal Life. But if we do not understand ourselves, we will be like the Jews. The Jews awaited the messiah who, according to the understanding of the Talmud, must be the ruler of the world and conquer everyone under the yoke of the Jews. And they waited for such a messiah. And when Christ appeared—Who had all the powers: He calmed the sea, He filled five thousand people with five loaves of bread, and healed sicknesses—in their understanding of that time it would have been impossible to find a better commander for the Jewish army. There would be no need for a commissary, food stocks, first aid stations, or hospitals. Christ could do everything. And they waited...to see what would happen next.

And Christ ascended a mountain and for the first time started to speak publicly: Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are those who weep, blessed are the meek, those who are persecuted (Mt. 5:3-11). The Jews expected power, might; but Christ spoke about poverty, meekness, sufferings. Of course, the Jews had to turn away. Christ was speaking about something quite different from what they were expecting—not about dominion. What if one followed in His footsteps? What would happen? They were bewildered.

What will happen will be exactly what we need: there will be peace of heart with which it is easy to go through this life and not fear to enter Eternal Life.

The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei

Saints of the Week

21 August / 3 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Apostle Thaddeus - One of the Seventy, he was not that Thaddaeus who was one of the Twelve. St Thaddaeus first saw and heard John the Baptist, and then saw the Lord Jesus and followed Him. The Lord included him among His seventy, lesser apostles, whom He sent two and two before His face (Luke 10:1). After His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, the Lord sent Thaddaeus to Edessa, Thaddaeus's birthplace, in fulfilment of His promise to Avgar, which He made when He sent him the napkin with the imprint of His face. By kissing this napkin, Avgar was healed of his leprosy, though not entirely; a little of the leprosy remained on his face. When St Thaddaeus visited Avgar, the latter received him with great joy. Christ's Apostle instructed him in the true Faith and then baptised him. When the baptised Avgar came up out of the water, the remaining leprosy fell from him and he was completely healed. Glorifying God, Prince Avgar desired that his people should come to the knowledge of the true God and glorify Him. The prince called together all the citizens of Edessa before the holy Apostle Thaddaeus, to hear him preach about Christ. Hearing the Apostle's words and seeing their miraculously-healed prince, the people cast away their idols and their unclean living, embraced the Christian faith and were baptised, and the city of Edessa became resplendent with the Christian faith. Prince Avgar brought much gold and offered it to the Apostle, but Thaddaeus said to him: 'Having abandoned my own, do I accept another's?' St Thaddaeus preached the Gospel throughout Syria and Phoenicia, and entered into rest in the Lord in the Phoenician city of Beirut.; The Holy Martyr Bassa and her children: Theognius, Agapius and Pistus; Our Holy Father Abraham of Smolensk; Our Holy Forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

22 August / 4 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Martyrs Agathonicus, Zoticus and others - St Agathonicus was a citizen of Nicomedia and a Christian. He turned the Greeks from idolatry with great fervour, and instructed them in the true Faith. The imperial governor, on orders from the Emperor Maximian, was persecuting Christians with great harshness. In this persecution, he seized St Zoticus in a place called Carpe, crucified his disciples and took him off to Nicomedia, where he also seized and bound Agathonicus, Princeps, Theoprepus, Acyndinus, Severian, Zeno and many others. They were taken, securely bound, to Byzantium. On the way, Zoticus, Theoprepus and Acyndinus died from exhaustion and of their wounds. Severian was killed near Chalcedon and Agathonicus and the others were taken to Thrace, to a place called Silybria, where, after torture before the Emperor himself, they were beheaded with the sword and entered into eternal life and the joy of their Lord. The Holy Martyr Eulalia; The Holy Martyr Anthusa;

St. Sigfrid, abbot of Wearmouth (688) - Nothing is known about the early life of Saint Sigfrid, a disciple of Saint Benedict Biscop. He was known for his knowledge of Scripture, his temperance, and obedience. During Benedict's absence on his fifth visit to Rome, Saint Esterwine died. Saint Ceolfrid and the other monks elected the deacon-monk Sigfrid to take Esterwine's place as coadjutor abbot of Jarrow and abbot of Wearmouth in 686. Both saints fell deathly ill upon Benedict's return to Jarrow. Knowing that their earthly lives were about to end and wanting a final meeting to inquire about the welfare of each other and their monks, Sigfrid, suffering from a lung disease, was carried on a stretcher to Benedict's cell. They were both too weak to even embrace one another unaided. After consulting Sigfrid, Benedict sent for Ceolfrid and appointed him abbot over both monasteries. Benedict and Sigfrid, of one heart in life, died the same year. Sigfrid was buried by Saint Ceolfrid in the abbey-church of Saint Peter next to his master, Saint Benedict, and his predecessor, Saint Esterwine;

St. Symphorian (c.2nd-3rd c.) - he lived in Gaul in the Roman city of Autun, where the pagan goddess Cybele was particularly revered. On her feast day the image of this goddess was wheeled through the streets of Autun on a chariot, while the mob bowed and worshipped. Taking part in the ceremonies was the provincial governor, Heraclius. Heraclius commanded Symphorian to worship Cybele as the mother of all the gods. Declaring that he worshipped the one true God, Symphorian asked for a hammer to smash the pagan idol. Learning that Symphorian came from a noble family, the governor decided to give him another chance. When the saint persisted in his faith, he was flogged. The governor then tried to bribe him, offering him an army commission if he would recant. But all this was in vain, and he eventually condemned the saint to be killed by the sword. Soldiers led him to the place of execution outside the city wall. As they went he saw his mother standing on the walls. She shouted to her son, 'Do not be afraid, Symphorian. Your death will lead straight to eternal life.' Then swordsman cut off his head and he was buried in a tomb. 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!

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 - Fast Day - 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).

REFLECTION

Magnanimous forgiveness of slanderers and prayer for them is a characteristic of Christian saints who do not ascribe all the slanders against themselves to men but rather to demons, the main instigators of every slander as well as every sin in general. St. Abraham of Smolensk was slandered by envious priests to the prince and the bishop as a deceiver, magician and hypocrite. The slanders sought nothing less than to have him burned. The prince and the bishop believed the slanderers and Abraham was banished from Smolensk and was forbidden to exercise his priestly functions. During the entire time of his investigation and trial, Abraham repeated the prayer of St. Stephen, the first martyr: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts of the Apostles 7:60). Later it was established that all of the accusers against Abraham lied and slandered. The infuriated prince wanted to severely punish the slanderers and the bishop wanted to excommunicate them from the Church but the holy Abraham fell on his knees before the bishop and, with tears, begged him to forgive them. Abraham did not want to return to his monastery nor to begin again to exercise his priestly functions until his slanderers were shown mercy and released.

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