



15th Sunday After Pentecost

Great Martyr Eustathius and those with him & Afterfeast of the Exaltation

20 September / 3 October

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 6: The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; / the guards became as dead men. / Mary stood by Thy grave, / seeking Thy most pure Body. / Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it. / Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. / O Lord who didst rise from the Dead, / Glory to Thee!

Troparion of the Feast tone 1: O Lord, save Thy people/ and bless Thine inheritance./ Grant victory over their enemies to Orthodox Christians,/ and protect Thy people with Thy Cross.

Troparion of St Eustathius tone 1: O glorious Eustathius, thou wast hunted from heaven and captured by Him Who appeared as a deer./ Together with thy wife and sons thou wast tempted and didst triumph in contests./ Thou dost gladden those who cry: Glory to Christ Who glorified thee;/ glory to Him Who crowned thee;/ glory to Him Who proved thee to be a second John.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 6: When Christ God the Giver of Life, / raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His Mighty Hand, / He bestowed resurrection on the human race. / He is the Saviour of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of All.

Kontakion of the Feast Tone 4 O Christ our God Who wast voluntarily lifted up on the Cross,/ grant Thy mercies to Thy new people named after Thee./ Gladden with Thy power Orthodox Christians/ and give them victory over their enemies./ May they have as an ally that invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace.

Kontakion of St Eustathius tone 2: Kontakion of St Eustathius tone 2: Thou didst follow Christ's Passion, Eustathius,/ and willingly drank His chalice./ Thou art also fellow-heir to His glory/ and hast received from Him heavenly power.

Matins Gospel IV

Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

This passage is extremely important to the Christian worldview, and is difficult to understand. The Epistle to the Galatians is itself often called an epistle of freedom. In it stands in greatest relief the New Testament's new [teaching] regarding the relationship between man and God.

To repeat, the principal concept in this passage is "justified by faith... and not by the works of the law." Let us examine two principal terms: "faith" and "works of the law." "Works of the law" may be understood either in the narrow, literal sense, or in a broader sense. Literally, it is the obeying of formal requirements of the *ustav*, the legal/liturgical requirements of the Law of Moses, the strict following of the Torah, of the Judaic law - and such an understanding of the meaning of the excerpt would be entirely correct. The Apostle Paul had as his immediate goal to proclaim that those who believed in Christ were freed from the prescriptions set down in the Old Testament.

However, we can understand the works of the Law in the broader sense of general demands of external, ritual piety, not only in the Jewish synagogue, but in the Christian Church as well. To take such an approach would be correct as well. In that instance, the message of the cited passage would be addressed directly to us: there are no religious rites or regulations that, divorced from faith, can guarantee us salvation.

Actually, the entire order of Christian life teaches that the main work of personal salvation rests not in external signs of piety, but in the inner recesses of our heart. However, here a great difficulty is presented. The passage is often cited by Protestants as a basic principle to justify their fundamental divergence from Orthodoxy. The matter has to do with the premises upon which soteriology (teachings on salvation) rests.

In brief, Protestant soteriology rests on the teaching that we are saved only by faith, that no works help in that work of salvation. Over the course of almost 2000 years, Orthodoxy has been saying something different. For our salvation, it is not only faith that is necessary, but also personal effort, i.e. "good works." The importance of this problem, this divergence, is obvious even on cursory examination. After all, it is not only Protestant theology, but mankind's general, most prevalent

religious self-determination today looks something like this: I believe, but God is in my soul. Why should I go to church, repent, and fast? I can pray internally and God will hear me. This would appear to be entirely consonant with the words of Apostle Paul just cited. However, it only appears to be so. Let us consider more attentively what such faith is, and whether it can even be called faith, or merely a declaration of faith. Here is the typical Protestant assertion: I believe, and therefore, I am already saved! Here, it becomes obvious that faith itself has been replaced with the manifestation "I believe." I.e. we are dealing not with faith, but with words about faith.

Is faith but a matter of words alone? Faith, like hope and love, is a person's internal state; it is essential that it be manifested in his behavior and works. The Lord Himself asks, "How can you say that you love God, but hate your brother?" How can we say that we have hope in the general resurrection, the mercy of God and eternal life, while we ourselves go around despondent and exhausted by temporary sorrows and misfortunes experienced in our vanity-filled lives? How will we be able to say, "I believe, O Lord, but for our salvation we do not need your providential activity, do not need repentance, do not need the Commandments. I believe in Thee, but just don't approach me, don't enter into me in the Eucharistic Mystery!" It was precisely this delusion that the Apostle James had in mind when he wrote his Epistle, whose meaning can be briefly summarized in the powerful phrase "faith without works is dead." Thus, if faith is alive in us, it must be manifested in our lives; the soul's striving toward God must be an actual striving, an activity and not just a declaration.

Our analyses lead to a conclusion: From today's reading, we should clarify for ourselves at least two important conditions: First of all, without personal faith of the heart, no formal rituals will, in and of themselves, open to us the path to the Kingdom. Second, faith that is not manifested in life, faith without actual union with Christ in the Holy Mysteries, without following Him according to His Commandments, is not faith, but empty words about faith. Thus, works without faith are nothing, and faith without works is dead. These are the two poles of human delusion; between them lies the Royal Path of Christian freedom.

Priest Nikolai Kim

Epistle: II Corinthians 4: 6-15

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed-- Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

WE HAVE THE SAME SPIRIT OF FAITH...KNOWING THAT HE WHO RAISED UP

THE LORD JESUS WILL ALSO RAISE US UP

And where did He command light to shine out of darkness? In the beginning and in prelude to the Creation ...Now He said nothing, but Himself became Light for us ...We do not see sensible objects by the shining of this Light, but God Himself through Christ. Do you see the invariableness in the Trinity?...

And what is the 'dying of the Lord Jesus,' which they bore about? Their daily deaths by which also the resurrection was shown ...Do you see how he has discovered yet another reason for the trials?... That His life may also be manifested in our body ...We bear about His dying so the power of His life may be made manifest, who did not permit mortal flesh - even undergoing such great suffering - to be overcome by the blizzard of these calamities ...And he says in another place, 'If we die with Him, we will also live with Him' (II Tim. 2:11). For as we endure His dying now, and choose while living to die for His sake: so also He will choose, when we are dead, to beget us then into life. For if we come from life into death, He will also lead us by the hand from death into life.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily VIII, 3, & IX, 1, on II Corinthians IV. B#56, pp. 319, 321-322

For the Martyr: Eph. 6:10-17

Gospel: Mark 8:34 - 9:1

34: And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. 36: For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37: Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38: Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. 9: 1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

Meditation

What is the most important investment you can make with your life? Jesus poses some probing questions to challenge our assumptions about what is most profitable and worthwhile. In every decision of life we are making ourselves a certain kind of person. The kind of person we are, our character, determines to a large extent the kind of future we will face and live. It is possible that some can gain all the things they set their heart on, only to wake up suddenly and discover that they missed the most important things of all. Of what value are material things if they don't help you gain what truly lasts in eternity.

Neither money nor possessions can buy heaven, mend a broken heart, or cheer a lonely person. Jesus asks the question: *What will a person give in exchange for his life?* Everything we have is an out-right gift from God. We owe him everything, including our very lives. A true disciple gladly gives up all that he has in exchange for an unending life of joy and happiness with God. God gives without measure. The joy he offers no sadness or loss can diminish. The cross of Christ leads to victory and freedom from sin and death.

Gospel for Sunday: Matthew 22: 35-46

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool?" "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT IN THE LAW

"Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Mt. 22:35).

If you were attentive to how the Holy Church, revealing to us the mystery of our salvation, gradually shows us in the Sunday Gospel readings the way of resurrection for the human soul, then you also noticed that starting from Easter until today there were several cycles. One of these cycles convinced us that the Lord is our Saviour, our Saviour from sin, and that He is All-powerful. And further we were shown the dispositions, the states of mind which should be in the soul of every Christian, in order to perceive that power which the Lord has given to us, establishing our salvation in the plan of eternal life. These Gospel readings opened to us the feeling of humility and devotion to God, in understanding the Word of God as acting in our life. And then these cycles changed into others, and we came to a cycle which revealed that all this which God gives us can be accomplished, but only within the limits of the Church. Like the boat in which the Apostles were sailing, it preserved the Apostles. And this boat was like the laws in which lived and lives the Church, which protects those who are in the boat from all the troubles that occur outside of it.

But this is possible only if, on our part, we are obedient to the Lord. And such obedience is connected with certain experiences, in the same way the Apostles experienced them: storm and fear. But if we presume upon the power of God, then we lose obedience and, instead of obedience, we receive boldness. And the same could happen to us which happened to the Apostle Peter, who in a transport of delight and daring, asked Christ for permission to walk to Him on the waves. And Christ in a way answered him: walk, if you want to. This was no longer obedience; this was not the will of Christ, but the will of Peter. And then Peter found himself alone in the water; the waves were so high that Christ was not even visible. Here Peter came to his senses: the law of nature took hold of him; he became frightened and started to drown. And only a strong faith in the Lord and the constant trust in the Almighty saved him (Mt. 14:24-31).

And further: in the Gospel about the filling of five thousand people with five loaves of bread, again the Lord seemed to be talking in a mysterious way about the Church. "Give ye them to eat!" He said to the Apostles, declining their attempt to let the people go into the neighbouring villages to buy food (Mt. 14:16). Does this not mean that He entrusted them, the Apostles and their successors, with feeding people the true food, His Body and Blood, in the Sacrament of the Divine Eucharist? And when He ordered the people to sit in groups, does it not symbolise the organisation of the Church?

The Sunday Gospel readings were convincing us more and more that Christian life is possible only within the Church, under the definite laws of the Church, along with the Divine Eucharist, which is the Tree of Life of the New Testament. So after having brought us to this understanding, the Church begins to show us, explains to us what the life is which surrounds us.

If you will remember, the Gospel before last told us about a certain young man who approached Christ (Mt. 19:16-23). And this young man asked Christ: what shall I do to receive the Kingdom of Heaven? He was like a materialist. He fulfilled accurately everything prescribed by the Law. He himself said, I have fulfilled the commandments. But he fulfilled them as a tradition, as an obligation. And the Lord saw this and said: Then reject everything that you have. In other words, reject the hope you have put in your riches. The young man froze. He could not understand how it is possible to reject this power, the power of the world. Why, through riches we can have everything we want. In such a way the enemy of the human race tempted man and perverted our understanding.

Following that, the last Gospel reading spoke about the workers in the vineyard (Mt. 21:33-42). This vineyard represents in a parable our whole world. The Lord owns this vineyard. And the workers in the vineyard are only servants, who receive everything necessary for their maintenance. And in the end, everything which the vineyard produces must be given back to their Lord. But the vineyard workers saw the beauty of the vineyard, the comfort of life, and decided that in this consists the whole meaning of life, is life itself. They would live. And therefore, when the Heir came, they killed Him. They said to themselves: What do we need Him for? The vineyard is ours. This is ours.

This is exactly what we are doing now. We say of the world and worldly goods: This is ours. And we cannot conceive leaving here. How are we going to part with all our comforts of life? How are we going to reject all our houses, our airplanes, all the inventions which seek to know the world and its mysteries, technology, everything that we are using? How are we going to leave?

And now today the Holy Church points out: we have to fulfil the commandments, and we have to participate in the life around us. Why? Well, because God has sent us here so that through these circumstances, as a means, we would obtain that which is needed. But what is needed? At the creation of man, God gave him the commandments: love for God and neighbour. And these commandments we must fulfil. The Lord, Who came on earth, came to save man. But how? By fulfilling the commandments of love for God and neighbour, and by giving strength to fulfil these commandments. And in fulfilling these commandments, we receive blessedness.

During His whole evangelistic life Christ was tempted by Satan. In the beginning it was in the wilderness: the temptation was by bread, by miracle, and by kingdom. Rejecting all these temptations, Christ fulfilled the commandment of love for God. After that, the enemy did not approach Christ openly, but only through the hearts of men, hoping to stir up in Christ hatred towards neighbour. But Christ never became angry at a man, but only at the power of the enemy, by saying: "Get thee behind me, Satan" (Mk. 8 :33). In such a way the Lord Himself fulfilled this great commandment, and in His Sacraments gives even to us the forces to fulfil it.

So let us fulfil it! "Which is the great commandment?" asked the lawyer. And the Lord answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Mt. 22:36-40).

The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei.

For the Martyr: Luke 21:12-19

Saints of the week

20 September / 3 October - Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy and great Martyr Eustace (Placidus). He was a great Roman military leader in the time of the Emperors Titus and Trajan. Although a pagan, Placidus (for that was his pagan name) was a righteous and merciful man, like the centurion Cornelius, who was baptised by the Apostle Peter (Acts 10). Going hunting one day, he found a stag. By the providence of God, a shining Cross appeared among the stag's antlers and the voice of God came to Placidus, telling him to go to a Christian priest and be baptised. Placidus was baptised, along with his wife and two sons. At his baptism, he received the name Eustace, his wife the name Theopiste and their sons the names Agapius and Theopistus. After his baptism, Eustace went back to the very place where the revelation through the stag had occurred, and thanked God on his knees that he had brought him to the truth. At that, the voice of God came to him again, foretelling suffering for His name and strengthening him. Then Eustace secretly left Rome with his family, with the intention of hiding among simple people and serving God in an unknown and humble way. Arriving in Egypt, he was immediately beset by trials. Some wicked barbarian carried off his wife, and his two sons were seized by wild beasts. But the barbarian quickly came to a bad end, and a herdsman saved the boys from the wild beasts. Eustace settled in the Egyptian village of Vadisis, and there lived as a village hireling for fifteen years. After this, the barbarians descended on the Roman Empire, and the Emperor Trajan was sorry that his brave commander Placidus, who had been victorious wherever he had fought, was not with him. The Emperor sent two of his officers to seek the great general throughout the Empire. By God's providence, these officers, who had been friends of Eustace, came to this village of Vadisis, found him and took him to the Emperor. Eustace gathered the army together and defeated the barbarians. On the way back to Rome, Eustace went and found his wife and sons. When he arrived in Rome, the Emperor Trajan had died and the Emperor Hadrian was on the throne. When Hadrian summoned Eustace to offer sacrifice to idols, Eustace told him that he was a Christian. The Emperor put him to torture, together with his wife and sons. When the wild beasts did them no harm, he threw them into a white-hot metal ox. On the third day, they took out their bodies, dead but untouched by the fire. Thus this glorious general gave to Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God that which is God's, and entered into the eternal Kingdom of Christ our God. The Holy Prince Michael and his Counsellor Theodore; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Hilarion.

21 September / 4 October - Apodosis of the Exaltation of the Cross - The Holy Apostle Codratus. One of the Seventy, he was a disciple of the Great Apostles. He preached the Gospel in Athens, and was at first bishop in Athens after St Publius, and then in the city of Magnesia. He was very learned in the secular disciplines and rich with the grace of the Holy Spirit. His biographer says of him: 'He was as a morning star among clouds', the clouds being the darkness of Hellenic paganism, lacking the light of devotion, and the holy Apostle Codratus shone to them—the Hellenes—as a great light, illumining the darkness, casting down the foul sacrifices and destroying demonic temples by his prayers. But darkness always hates the light, and the pagans hated holy Codratus. They first stoned him, as the Jews had earlier stoned St Stephen, and then imprisoned him,

leaving him without bread until his holy soul left his body and entered into the Kingdom of Christ his God. St Codratus wrote a defence of Christianity and gave it to the Emperor Hadrian. This defence acted so strongly upon the pagan Emperor that he decreed that Christians should not be persecuted without special cause. Holy Codratus suffered in about 130. He was buried in Magnesia, the place of his passion. The Hieromartyr Hypatius, Bishop of Ephesus, and Andrew the Priest; St Dimitri, Bishop of Rostov; Martyr Metropolitan Theophan (Tuliakov) of Nizhni- Novgorod (1937).

22 September / 5 October – The Hieromartyr Phocas, Bishop of Sinope. He exercised himself from his youth in all the Christian virtues. As bishop in his birthplace, the town of Sinope on the shore of the Black Sea, he strengthened the devout in their faith by his divine example and words, and brought many idol-worshippers to the true Faith. The stony-hearted pagans were filled with wrath against holy Phocas, and the Lord foreshowed to him in a vision his death by martyrdom. Phocas saw a shining dove fly down from heaven, carrying in its beak a beautiful wreath of flowers which it laid on his head, and a voice came from the dove: 'My cup is full, and it is for thee to drink it!' From this vision, the man of God learned that he must very soon suffer for Christ. He was not afraid, but, with thanksgiving to God, prepared himself for torture. Soon after this, the Governor, Africanus, took Phocas for interrogation and inflicted harsh tortures upon him: his whole body was beaten black and blue and torn with wounds, and, after imprisonment, he was thrown into boiling water, in which this courageous soldier of Christ finished his earthly course and entered into the joy of his Lord. He suffered in the time of the Emperor Trajan (98-117); The Holy Prophet Jonah; The Holy Martyr Phocas the Gardener; Our Holy Father Cosmas of Zographou; St Peter the Merciful; The Holy Priest Jonah; The 26 Martyrs of Zographou Monastery on Mt. Athos, martyred by the Latins.

23 September / 6 October - Fast Day - The Conception of the Honourable, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John — On this day are celebrated God's mercy, His wondrous act and His wisdom: His mercy towards the devout and righteous parents of St John, the aged Zacharias and Elisabeth, who had all their lives begged a child of God; the wonder of the conception of John in Elisabeth's more-than-aged womb; and the wisdom of the dispensation of man's salvation. For John, God had a specially great plan: that he should be a prophet and the forerunner of Christ the Lord, the Saviour of the world. Through His angels, God revealed the birth of Isaac to the childless Sarah, and of Samson to the childless Manoah and his wife, and of John the Baptist to the childless Zacharias and Elisabeth. Through His angels, God revealed the birth of those for whom He had a special plan. How could children be born of aged parents? If someone is curious to find out, let him not ask men, for men do not know, nor does natural law (it being beyond natural law), but let him turn his gaze to the power of almighty God, who made the whole world from nothing and who, for the creation of Adam, the first man, used no parents, either young or old. Instead of being curious, let us thank God that He often reveals to us His power and mercy and wisdom beyond the natural law, by which we would otherwise be fettered and, without these special wonders of God, would fall into despair and forgetfulness of Him. The Holy Martyr Iraida; The Holy New Martyr Nicolas Pantopoles (The Grocer); The Holy New Martyr John;

St. Adamnan, abbot of Iona and biographer of St. Columba (627-704) - he was born in Co. Donegal and became a monk in one of St. Columba's monasteries in Ireland. He was a biblical scholar and teacher. who moved to Iona under abbot Segene, whom he succeeded in 679. He became famous both as a writer and as a leading protagonist in Northern Ireland of the Roman system of calculating Easter. In 686 he came to Northumbria to obtain from his former pupil King Aldfrith the release of sixty Irish prisoners. captured during the reign of Egfrith (670-85). In 688 St Adamnan visited St. Ceolfrith of Wearmouth, who converted him from the Iona tradition of Easter calculation and other practices. In 692 he took part in Irish synods and conventions as the ruler of Iona's monasteries in Northern Ireland. Then and in 697 he met with considerable success, pleading for the acceptance of the Easter dates which were kept by Rome and virtually all the Church in the West. At the Synod of Birr (697) he persuaded leading clerics and laymen to adopt the Law of Adamnan (Cain Adamnan) which protected women by exempting them from going to battle and insisting that they be treated by all as non-combatants. Boys and clerics were similarly protected and provision was made for effective sanctuary. These rules the first example of their kind came to be accepted all over Ireland. St. Adamnan's principal work was the Life of his relative Columba, founder of Iona. This influential portrait of a charismatic pioneer is one of the most vivid Lives to be produced in its time. He also wrote a work on the Holy Places of Palestine, compiled from information provided by the French bishop Arculfus. who had been shipwrecked in western Britain. After Adamnan's death, Iona accepted the Roman Easter in 716.

24 September / 7 October – The Holy Protomartyr Thecla, Equal to the Apostles — Thecla was born in Iconium of eminent pagan parents. She was betrothed at the age of eighteen to a young man, at the time that the Apostle Paul came to Iconium with Barnabas to preach the Gospel. Listening to Paul for three days and nights, Thecla turned utterly to the Christian faith and vowed to live in virginity. Her mother, seeing that she shunned her betrothed and thought no more of marriage, first talked to her and then beat her and starved her. Finally, she gave her over to the judges and demanded, wicked mother that she was, that Thecla be burned. The judge threw her into the flames, but God preserved her unharmed. Thecla then became a follower of the Apostle Paul, and went with him to Antioch. Attracted by Thecla's beauty, an elder of the city attempted to take her by force, but Thecla tore herself out of his grasp . The elder denounced her to the governor as a Christian who was averse to marriage. The governor condemned her to death and threw her to the wild beasts, but the animals would not touch the body of this holy virgin. Amazed at this, the governor asked: 'Who are you, and what is the power that you have in you, that nothing can do you harm?' Thecla replied: 'I am a servant of the living God.' Then the governor let her go free, and she began to preach the Gospel and succeeded in bringing many to the true Faith, among whom was an eminent and honoured widow, Tryphena. After this, St Thecla, with the blessing of the Apostle Paul, withdrew to a solitary place near Seleucia. She lived a long time there in asceticism, healing the sick with miraculous power and in this way bringing many to Christianity. The doctors in Seleucia were jealous of her and sent some young men to assault her, hoping that, in losing her virginity, she would lose also her miraculous power. Thecla fled from these insolent young men and, when she saw that they would catch her,

prayed to God for help in front of a rock, and the rock opened and hid the holy maiden and bride of Christ. This rock was her hiding-place and her tomb. St Chrysostom says of this wonderful Christian heroine and saint: 'I seem to see this blessed virgin going to Christ with virginity in one hand and martyrdom in the other.' St Stephen, King of Serbia, the First-Crowned (Simon the Monk); St David; The Holy Prince Vladislav.

25 September / 8 October - Fast Day - The Repose of Our Holy Father Sergius of Radonezh — A great ascetic and light of the Russian Church, he was born in 1313 in Rostov of devout parents, Kiril and Maria. After the death of his parents, Bartholomew —for that was his baptismal name —became a monk and founded the community of the Holy Trinity in the forest of Radonezh. A gentle and meek servant of God, occupied only with labour and prayer, he was made worthy of the gifts of wonder-working for the purity of his heart, raising the dead in the name of Christ. The holy Mother of God appeared to him a number of times. Princes and bishops came to him for counsel, and he gave his blessing to Prince Dimitri of the Don and foretold his victory in Russia's war of liberation against the Tartars. He had insight into men's hearts and into distant events. His community became filled with monks during his lifetime, and has served through the ages as one of the chief centres of spiritual life and of God's miracles. St Sergius entered into rest in 1392. After his death, he appeared a number of times to various people;

Our Holy Mother Euphrosyne — The daughter of a rich and eminent man, Paphnutius, from Alexandria, she was besought of God by her childless parents, who brought their daughter up in the Christian faith. Not wishing to marry, the young Euphrosyne, in order to hide from her father, dressed herself in men's clothing and presented herself to the abbot of a monastery as a eunuch of the Emperor Theodosius with the name of Smaragdus. The abbot received her and placed her under the guidance of the monk Agapetus as spiritual father. By her fasting and prayers, Smaragdus quickly outstripped the other monks in the monastery. When she had spent thirty-eight years in strict asceticism, Paphnutius visited the monastery and the abbot placed him in Smaragdus's care for prayer and counsel. Smaragdus recognised Paphnutius, but Paphnutius did not recognise her. When her father confessed his grief for his lost daughter, Smaragdus told him not to lose hope, for he would see his daughter again once more in this life, and asked him to come again in three days' time. When Paphnutius returned, Smaragdus was on her deathbed. Then the dying monk said to Paphnutius: 'I am Euphrosyne your daughter; you are my father.' Her father could not for a long time collect himself, for sheer astonishment. Then Euphrosyne breathed her last and her father wept over her. After burying his daughter, Paphnutius remained in the monastery and settled in the cell of his departed, holy daughter. After ten years of asceticism, holy Paphnutius entered into rest in the Lord; Commemoration of the earthquake in Constantinople in 447, when a boy was lifted to heaven and heard the "Trisagion."

St. Finbar (Barry) bishop of Cork, Ireland (c.633) - Son of an artisan named Amergin and a lady of the Irish royal court. Educated at Kilmacahil monastery, Kilkenny, Ireland. Very light hair, which led to the nickname Fionnbharr, "white hair". Made multiple pilgrims to Rome, visiting Saint David of Wales on one trip. Preached throughout southern Ireland, and possibly in Scotland. Hermit on a small island at Lough Eiroe and at Gougane Barra. Founded a school at Eirce. Founded a monastery on the river Lee; it developed into the city of Cork, Ireland. First bishop of Cork. Extravagant miracles were attributed to him. It is said that the sun did not set for two weeks after his death.

26 September / 9 October - The repose of St John the Theologian, Apostle and Evangelist — the son of Zebedee the fisherman and Salome the daughter of Joseph, the betrothed of the holy Mother of God. Called by the Lord Jesus, John immediately left his father and the fishing nets and followed Christ with his brother James. From that time, he was not parted from his Lord until the end. With Peter and James, he was present at the raising of Jairus's daughter and at the Lord's Transfiguration, and laid his head on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. When all the others had forsaken the crucified Lord, John stayed beneath the Cross with the holy Mother of God. In obedience to the Lord's wish, he was as a son to the holy Virgin Mary, caring for her and serving her, looking after her right up to her falling-asleep. After her Dormition, John went off with his disciple Prochorus to preach the Gospel in Asia Minor, and mainly lived and worked in Ephesus. By his inspired preaching and miracles, he brought many to Christianity and undermined the foundations of paganism. The vexed pagans bound him and sent him to Rome to the Emperor Domitian. He was tortured and flogged before the Emperor, but, when he was unharmed either by the strong poison that he was given to drink or the boiling oil into which he was put, the Emperor was afraid and, thinking he was immortal, sent him into exile on the island of Patmos. On this island, St John brought many to Christianity by his words and miracles, and strengthened the Church of God. He wrote his Gospel and the Revelation there. In the time of the Emperor Nerva, who gave liberty to all the captives, John returned to Ephesus, where he lived for some time, confirming the work that he had earlier begun. He was over a hundred years old when he went to the Lord. When his disciples later opened his grave, they found that his body was not there. Every year, on May 8th, a fine, fragrant dust endowed with healing power rose from his grave. After a long and fruitful life of labour upon earth, this beloved disciple of Christ and pillar of the Church entered into the joy of his Lord, to peace and eternal rejoicing; Our Holy Father Nilus of Calabria.

St. Colman Elo - He was founder and first Abbot of Muckamore, and from the fact of being styled "Coarb of MacNisse", is regarded as Bishop of Connor. He was born c. 555 in Glenelly, in the present County Tyrone, and died at Lynally in 611, 26 September, on which day his feast is celebrated. He studied under his maternal uncle, St. Columcille (Columba), who procured for him the site of a monastery now known as Lynally (Lann Elo). Hence his designation of Colmanellus or Colman Elo.

Tropar of St. Colman Elo, Tone 8: Following in the footsteps of thy renowned kinsman Columba, O Father Colman Elo,/ thou didst bring many in the Celtic lands to Christ by thy preaching and virtuous life./ Pray that we who hymn thee may be given grace to follow in thy footsteps that our souls may be saved.