



## 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

### Righteous John, wonderworker of Kronstadt

19 October / 1 November

**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 St John of Kronstadt tone 4:** With the Apostles thy message has gone out to the ends of the world, / and with the Confessors thou didst suffer for Christ; / thou art like the Hierarchs through thy preaching of the Word; / with the Righteous thou art radiant with God's grace. / The Lord has exalted thy humility above the heavens / and given us thy name as a source of miracles. / O wonderworker living in Christ for ever, / have mercy on those in trouble / and hear us when we call to thee with faith, O our beloved shepherd John.

**Another Troparion of St John of Kronstadt (composed by Archbishop Maximovich of San Francisco) tone 4: O** Wonderworker living in Christ for ever, / with love have mercy on those in danger; / hear thy children who call upon thee with faith; / be compassionate to those who hope for aid from thee, / O Father John of Kronstadt, our beloved shepherd.

**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 St John of Kronstadt tone 4:** Thou wast chosen by God in infancy / and in childhood received the gift of learning. / Thou wast called to the priesthood in a vision during sleep / and didst become a wonderful shepherd of Christ's Church. / Pray to Christ our God / that we may all be with thee in the Kingdom of heaven, / O Father John, namesake of grace.

**Vespers:** Joel 2:12-26; Joel 2:27-32; I John 4:20-5:5

**Matins Gospel: X**

**EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S Letter To The Galatians 2: 16-20**

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

#### **I HAVE BEEN CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST; IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE, BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME**

Observe how cautiously he expresses himself; he does not say that they had abandoned the Law as evil, but as weak. If the law cannot confer righteousness, it follows that circumcision is superfluous; and this far he now proves, but he proceeds to show that it is not only superfluous but dangerous ...He speaks more strongly ...If faith in Him, he says, does not avail for our justification, and should it be necessary to embrace the law again, having forsaken the law for Christ's sake, we are not justified but condemned for such abandonment. Then will we find Him, for whose sake we forsook the law and went over to faith ...Observe how he has resolved the matter to a necessary absurdity ...Observe the Apostle's discernment. His opponents tried to show that one who did not keep the law was a transgressor, but he reverts the argument against them and shows that the one who did keep the law was a transgressor, not merely of faith, but of the law itself ...He means this: the law has confessedly ceased, and we have abandoned it and betaken ourselves to the salvation which comes of faith. But if we make a point of setting it up again, we become by that very act transgressors, striving to keep what God has annulled ...He adds the cause of his living, and shows that when alive, the law slew Him, but that when dead, Christ through death restored him to life.

He shows the wonder to be twofold: that by Christ both the dead was begotten into life, and, that by means of death. He means here immortal life, for this is the meaning of the words, 'That I might live to God I have been crucified with Christ.' How, it is asked, can a man now living and breathing have been crucified? ...It is Baptism He alludes to ...our subsequent manner of life, whereby our members are mortified. By saying, 'Christ lives in me,' he means nothing is done by me which Christ disapproves; for as by death he signifies not what is commonly understood, but a death to sin, so by life, he signifies a delivery from sin. For a man cannot live to God otherwise than by dying to sin, and as Christ suffered bodily death, so does Paul experience a death to sin (Cf. Col. 3:5) ...As sin, when it has the mastery, is itself the vital principle, and leads the soul wherever it will, so, when it is slain and the will of Christ is obeyed, this life is no longer earthly, but Christ lives, that is, works, has mastery within us.

*St. John Chrysostom. Commentary on Galatians, Chapter II. B#57, pp. 20-22*

for the Saint: I John 4:7-11

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE 8: 5-15

THE LORD SAID THIS PARABLE: "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?" And He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

### THE SOWER

**A** young man was impatient. He wanted everything in life all at once. He could not wait. One night he dreamed he was in a shop. Behind the counter was an angel. Nervously he asked what the shop sold. "Everything your heart desires," said the angel. "Then I want peace on earth, an end to sorrow, famine and disease..." "Just one moment," smiled the angel. "You haven't quite understood. We don't sell fruits here — only seeds."

It is not only great oak trees that from tiny acorns grow; most ideas and thoughts grow from seeds that have been sown in our minds and hearts. How important then are the thoughts sown in the mind!

Sow a thought, reap an act, Sow an act, reap a habit, Sow a habit, reap a character, Sow a character, reap a destiny.

In the natural world seeds are so powerful that they can push through thick black asphalt. What of the heart's seeds of love, hate, compassion, greed, envy? Let us never doubt their power to push through any part of our lives where there is an entering wedge.

John Oxenham wrote,

I spoke a word  
And no one heard;  
I wrote a word,  
And no one cared  
Or seemed to heed.  
But after half a score of years  
It blossomed in a fragrant deed.  
Preachers and teachers all we are,  
Sowers of seed unconsciously,  
Our hearers are beyond our ken,  
Yet all we give may come again  
With usury of joy and pain;  
We never know  
To what one little word may grow.  
See to it, then, that all your seeds  
Be such as bring forth noble deeds.

In today's Gospel lesson Jesus compares the truth, which is His word, to a seed. The seed is scattered everywhere: on the beaten path, among rocks and thorns as well as on good ground. It falls everywhere with the same possibility and promise of life and growth. Every word in the Gospels is a seed, the beginning of an endless process of development.

Sometimes we hear people say, "If only I had an opportunity to hear God speak in Person, I would run my feet bloody to get there." Yet God speaks to us in Person every Sunday when His words are read in the Gospel and preached in the sermon.

God has given us His word in Church and at home in the Holy Bible. This is God's word as surely as if God Himself were speaking to us.

The word of God is the seed: His parables, His healings, His miracles but also the Word (Logos) Himself Who was cast as a seed into the ground and buried to be raised to new life. Jesus sowed His seed o'er hill and dale, and on the last bare hill He sowed Himself. This is how far the love of God has gone for us.

## **The Soils.**

The emphasis in the parable is not on the seed or the sower but on the soil which is the final determining factor as to whether or not the seed bears fruit. The seed falls on four types of soil, says Jesus. Three out of four reject it. I suppose this means that there are four types of people who go to church. Three out of four receive no lasting good by going. Three out of four will miss the point of this sermon or perhaps get the point and be offended by it, or perhaps not hear the sermon because their mind is on some other matter or on no matter at all because they will sleep or daydream through it.

If Christianity has experienced crop failure through the centuries, it is because God's truth was preached but not accepted. The fault is not in the truth, the seed, but in the soil, the hearts of the hearers, where the truth was never allowed to take root.

Let us look briefly at the four types of soil as Jesus described them.

### **Those Along the Path.**

"The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved."

We have heard of hardening of the arteries, but a far more deadly disease is hardening of the heart toward God. One stops the flow of blood causing physical death; the other prevents us from receiving the Bread of life causing the death of the soul. Nothing stops the word of God but a closed heart: it stops it completely; it doesn't penetrate at all. There is no softness at all in the soil to receive the life-giving seed, only a supercilious hardness. It is of these hearts that Jesus said, "Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

"But," some will object, "this is an extreme case. This is certainly not true of me. In no way is my heart like the hard ground" Think again! How many times have you heard a sermon and never realized that it was for you. You were thinking of the sins of someone else and hoping that the preacher would "pour it on them." If you think hardened sinners are bad, "hardened saints" are far worse.

### **How Hearts Are Hardened.**

How are hearts hardened to the word of God? Some are hardened by pride. They think they have the answer to every question. They do not want to be disturbed by any fresh ideas or new growth. They call it growing up and becoming wiser. Perhaps this is the reason Jesus urges us to be like little children who are forever open to new ideas. Like the soil beaten hard by many footsteps, some hearts are like highways — hard-pounded thoroughfares. So much goes over them, such a huge volume of traffic, such a constant pounding that the word of God has hardly a chance to get through. Familiarity also induces hardness. Having heard some of the truths of our Christian faith since childhood, we take them for granted; they make no impression on us any more. Finally the heart can become hardened to the word of God through lack of cultivation. Just as no water hardens the soil, so no prayer, no church, no sacraments hardens the soul. It loses its responsiveness to God; it becomes hard. The word of God cannot get through.

If only once — just once — it could get through, what a transformation it would bring about. If only we would lay ourselves bare to receiving the life-giving seed, what faith it would produce, what love, what hope, what peace, what power! But we remain hard. Like the birds that snatch up the seed, demonic forces come and take away the word of God lest we believe and be saved. As the devil comes to us when we pray to steal our prayers by distracting us with other thoughts, so he steals the word of God from our hearts by thickening the surface of the heart to prevent its receptivity.

### **Some Fell on the Rock.**

"And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away because it had no moisture/" Explaining this, Jesus said, "And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away."

These are the people who admire the word of God. "What a lovely sermon!" and that's the end of it. They "receive it with joy." But that's as far as it goes. "They have no root in themselves." There are many subtle ways of rejecting the word of God. Strange as it may seem, one is by admiring it.

Let me illustrate.

The Danish Theologian Kierkegaard once told a homely parable about a flock of geese that milled around in a filthy barnyard imprisoned by a high wooden fence. One day a preaching goose landed in the barnyard. He stepped onto an old crate and began to preach. He castigated the geese for being satisfied to live in that filthy barnyard when God had given them wings with which to fly into the trackless wastes of the sky. He spoke of the goodness of God in giving the geese wings. He urged them to use their wings to fly out of the barnyard to better surroundings. This pleased the geese. They nodded their heads in approval and commented on what a great preacher the goose was. They marveled at what he had said and applauded his eloquence. All this they did. But one thing they never did. They did not use their wings to leave the barnyard. They went right back to their old accustomed haunts.

Apply this to ourselves and see how true it is! When we hear a good sermon we are eloquent in our praise of it. When we read a great verse in the Bible we are deeply moved. But then what? Most of us go back to our old ways. We hear the truth — we may even admire it — but we do not accept it. So we continue to live with our hatreds, our prejudices, our pride, our envy, and our wars.

### **Some Fell Among the Thorns.**

“And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it.” Explaining, Jesus said, “And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.”

This is probably the saddest part of this parable. The soil that could produce greatness produces a jungle. A soil that produces weeds has great potential. It must be good soil; otherwise weeds would not grow there. But, said Jesus, the thorns grow quick and fast, and they soon choke the good seed. Now there are a lot of good people represented here. They receive the word of God and they really want to serve God. But they become involved in so many other interests that God is gradually choked out. It's not that the things they're busy with are always bad; on the contrary, they may be good things, but they drain our energies and turn our hearts away from Christ. Someone has well said, “Many people give first-rate loyalties to second-rate causes.” A real estate salesman said once, “My prayers don't even reach the ceiling before I'm thinking about that real estate deal that's hanging over me.” One day a church announced the reception of new members on a certain Sunday. One new member called the office and said he was sorry but he could not be present on that day. Later on in the week he called again. “I made a mistake,” he said, “The Vikings are playing out of town Sunday. I can be there after all.” “The thorns grew with it and choked it.”

So many activities that are good clutter up our lives that they become the enemy of the best. Jesus poses a question to each one of us: what thorns are we permitting to grow in our own life that are choking at that one great central loyalty to God?

Some Fell Into Good Soil “And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” “And as for that in the good soil,” said Jesus, “They are those who hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.”

The good ground represents those of us who receive the word of God. It becomes a part of us. We keep it in our heart and bring forth fruit with patience. It grows and slowly takes possession of our desires, our emotions, our thoughts and our actions. Little by little our lives become fruitful and God-like.

We must admit that there are times when we are any one of the three poor types of soil or we are a strange combination of all of them. There is a beaten path in each one of us and rocky soil and thorny ground. But the point Jesus makes is that soil can be improved. Hard soil can be plowed; rocks and thorns can be removed. By care and cultivation, our hearts can become fertile and productive, like “the good soil” that produces a hundredfold.

### **Let Him Who Has Ears Hear.**

One of the key ways to improve the poor soil of our hearts, says Jesus, is by good hearing. “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God.” How can we know if we do not hear?

A person boasted once of the fact that he heard a great and famous preacher every Sunday morning. He did not expect the reply he received: “What a terrible responsibility!” It was true! Anyone who hears the word of God preached is under great obligation not to criticize or compliment but to decide.

We need to become sensitive to God's voice, as sensitive as a sleeping mother is to the cry of her infant; as sensitive as the great music lover is to the different instruments of the orchestra, able to catch a lonely wrong note from the second violin; as sensitive as a farmer is in New York City, able to hear a single grasshopper above the roar of traffic; as sensitive as those who sit in a lawyer's office listening to the reading of a last will in which they expect to be remembered. It is a law of life that we hear what we have trained ourselves to hear. Day by day may we listen to the voice of God so that it becomes not fainter but stronger as we move in years closer to our final meeting with Him.

There's an old Japanese legend according to which a pious Buddhist monk died and went to heaven. He was taken to a place where there were piled and labeled on shelves what looked like dried mushrooms. On closer examination, he saw they were actually human ears. Upon inquiring he discovered that they were the ears of people who on earth went diligently to the

temple, listened with pleasure to the teaching of the gods, yet did nothing about what they heard so that after death they themselves went elsewhere and only their ears were saved. Only their ears reached heaven.

How often have we heard the complaint that we church people are mostly ears, that we go to church and nothing comes of it, that we substitute hearing for doing and call that serving God. It is a complaint that is painfully true. It has caused great crop failures for Christianity through the ages. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Let him roll up his sleeves, pick up a hoe, plow the soil, pull up the weeds and stones and prepare to bear rich fruit for Christ!

*Gems from the Sunday and Feasts Gospels*  
*Anthony M Coniaris*

for the Saint: Luke 6:31-36

### **Saints of the week**

**19 October / 1 November - St. John of Kronstadt, priest, wonderworker** - A married priest, he served in the Cathedral of St. Andrew's in Kronstadt, a busy port near St. Petersburg. A great man of prayer, he served Divine Liturgy every day and read the entire cycle of daily services. He visited the poor and the sick, generously giving alms, himself often going without. He and his matushka lived as brother and sister. He taught and advised all those who came to him, young and old, rich and poor. Such was the love of the people for him throughout Russia that the Kronstadt post office had a special section just for St. John! Even during his lifetime hundreds were healed through his holy prayers. In 1906, he became very ill and suffered with this sickness until his death. Nevertheless, he continued to serve daily. On December 20, 1908, he quietly reposed in the Lord. A crowd of 60,000 attended his funeral, an unprecedented event in Russia. He was formally glorified as a saint by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad on June 3, 1964. Holy blessed Father John, pray to God for us!

**The Holy Prophet Joel** - The second in order of the Minor Prophets, Joel was the son of Phanuel, of the tribe of Reuben. He lived eight hundred years before Christ, and foretold the misfortunes of the Israelites and their captivity in Babylon for the sins that they had committed against God. He called the people to fasting and the priests to penitent and tearful prayer that God would have mercy on them: Sanctify ye a fast and cry unto the Lord' (1:14); 'Let the priests weep between the porch and the altar' (2:17). Joel also prophesied the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and the outpouring of His grace on all the faithful (2:28). He foretold and described the Dreadful Judgement of God, and also the glory of God's holy Church; The Holy Martyr Varus; Our Holy Father Prochorus of Pchinja;

**St. Frideswide of Oxford, abbess (c.735)** - the daughter of Didian, a Mercian prince whose lands included the upper reaches of the River Thames. She took a vow of perpetual virginity. A local prince named Algar refused to accept that she would not marry him. He pursued the saint, only to be struck blind. His sight returned once he had renounced his plan to make her forsake her vow. Frideswide had hidden herself from Algar in a village near present-day Oxford called Binsey. Eventually she founded a nunnery there and became its first abbess. There she lived until her death around the year 735. The nunnery flourished and her name was not forgotten. In the twelfth century her nunnery was refounded, this time as a convent for Augustinian canons. In 1180 in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and King Henry II of England her remains were translated to a new shrine in the monastery church. A yet greater shrine was built nine years later. Countless pilgrims visited her relics. Twice a year the University of Oxford held a solemn feast in her honour and came to venerate her bones. In 1440 the Archbishop of Canterbury declared her patroness of the university. Then in 1525 Cardinal Wolsey suppressed St Frideswide's monastery. Two decades later the monastery church became the new cathedral of Oxford. But the shrine containing Frideswide's relics had been broken up by Protestant reformers. The stone was used for building; but happily some Catholics preserved the saint's bones. Meanwhile the wife of the Protestant professor Peter Martyr had been buried in the Cathedral. In 1561, in an extraordinary burst of fanaticism a canon dug up her bones and mixed them with those of Saint Frideswide, adding the epitaph *Hic jacet religio cum superstitione* ('Here lies religion with superstition'). Today the place where her remains finally rested is marked with four elegant candlesticks in Christ Church.

**20 October / 2 November - The Holy and Great Martyr Artemius** - This glorious saint was Egyptian by birth, and the commander-in-chief of the army of the Emperor Constantine the Great. When the victorious Cross, encircled by stars, appeared to the Emperor, Artemius also saw it, came to faith in Christ the Lord and was baptised. Later, in the time of the Emperor Constantius, Constantine's son, he was sent to Greece to take the relics of St Andrew and St Luke from Patras and Thebes respectively to Constantinople, which charge Artemius carried out with joy. After that, he was appointed governor and imperial representative in Egypt, in which appointment he remained throughout the reign of Constantius and for a certain time under Julian the Apostate. When this renegade Emperor went to war against the Persians, he stopped for a time in Antioch, and summoned Artemius and his army to join him there. Artemius went. At that time, the Emperor gave two Christian priests, Eugenius and Macarius, over to torture. Seeing this, St Artemius was profoundly alarmed, went to the Emperor and said to him: 'Why are you so inhumanly torturing these innocent and dedicated men, and why are you putting pressure on them to turn back from the Orthodox faith?' He also prophesied to the Emperor that his end was near. The furious Emperor sent the two priests into exile in Arabia, where they soon died, and stripped Artemius of his Military rank, ordering that he flogged and whipped. All wounded and covered with blood, Artemius was thrown into prison, where the Lord Christ Himself appeared to him, healing and comforting him. After that, the Emperor ordered that he laid on a flat stone and that another stone he put on him, so crushing his body like a board. Finally, he was beheaded(c. 362); The Emperor Julian then went out against the Persians and perished in a dishonourable way, as St Artemis had foretold. Our Holy Father Gerasim the New. Our Holy Father, the New Martyr Ignatius; **St. Acca, bishop of Hexham, England, (c. 740)** - From his youth he had been close to the great saints of the time, brought up in the household of Saint Bosa of York, accompanying Wilfrid to Rome (and there, says Bede, 'learning many valuable things about the organisation of the church

which he could not have found out in his own country'). After serving for several years as chaplain to the redoubtable Saint Wilfrid, Bishop of Hexham in Northumbria, Acca succeeded to the bishopric on Wilfrid's death. Acca believed that the English church needed to include the beauties of the Roman liturgy rather than the Roman legal system. 'He invited a famous singer named Maban, who had been trained by the followers of Pope Gregory's disciples in Kent, to come and teach him and his clergy,' wrote the Venerable Bede. This man taught church music for twelve years - reviving old forgotten chants as well as bringing new ones. Acca also sang beautifully, says Bede (who knew him), and encouraged this revival by his own example. He loved and studied the Scriptures. He refurnished the churches with sacred vessels and lights. Above all he enlarged and beautified the cathedral of St Andrew at Hexham. He built up a fine library to which scholars and students were drawn, all of whom received the patronage of Bishop Acca. For some reason Acca was forced out of his diocese in the year 732. He was exiled to Withern, Galloway; but he returned before his death in 742 and was buried at Hexham.

**21 October / 3 November - Our Holy Father Hilarion the Great** - As a rose growing among thorns, so was this great saint born of pagan parents in the village of Tabatha near Gaza in Palestine. His parents sent him to study in Alexandria, where the gifted youngster quickly assimilated both secular learning and spiritual wisdom. Coming to know Christ the Lord and receiving baptism, he desired to serve the Lord with his whole heart. With this desire, Hilarion visited St Antony the Great in the desert and became his disciple. He then returned to his homeland and lived in asceticism near Maiuma, not far from Gaza. Demons tried to frighten him with various terrors, but he, with prayer to God and the sign of the Cross, overcame them all and drove them away. A great many who were desirous of the spiritual life gathered around him, and St Hilarion became for Palestine what St Antony was for Egypt. A divine teacher, a strict ascetic, a marvellous wonderworker, Hilarion was revered not only by Christians but also by pagans. He, though, fearing the praise of men and crying out through his tears: 'Woe is me, for I am getting my reward in this life!', fled from place to place simply to hide from men and remain alone with his soul and God. He therefore settled and lived for a time in Egypt, Sicily, Dalmatia and finally in Cyprus, where his life of great toil came to an end in about 372, when he had reached the age of eighty. Hilarion's wonderworking relics were taken by Ezekiel, one of his disciples, to Palestine and laid in the monastery that he had founded; St Hilarion, Bishop of Meglin; Our Holy Father Philotheus.

**22 October / 4 November - The Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos** - commemorating the deliverance from the Poles in 1612.

St Abercius, Equal to the Apostles - In the time of the Emperor Antoninus (138-161), St Abercius was bishop in the city of Hierapolis in Phrygia. The great majority of the town's inhabitants were pagans, and St Abercius governed his little flock with a heart greatly saddened by the great number of pagans and idolaters, and with fervent prayer to God that He would bring them to the true Light. At the time of a rowdy idolatrous festival, Abercius became inflamed with godly zeal and went into the temple, smashing all the idols. When the furious pagans tried to kill him, three young madmen fell down before the man of God, foaming at the mouth and bellowing. The man of God drove the demons out of them, and they were healed and became calm. Seeing this, the fury of the pagans turned to marvelling at Christ's wonderworker, and five hundred of them were immediately baptised. Little by little, everyone in the city of Hierapolis came to believe in Christ and was baptised. The proconsul of the region, Publius, had a blind mother whose sight Abercius restored by prayer, and both Publius and his mother came to faith in Christ, along with many other people. In old age, Abercius was summoned to Rome, where he healed the Emperor's mad daughter. The Lord Christ appeared to His faithful follower, St. Abercius, several times. People from far and near came to him for help in chronic sickness, and the demons not only feared him but were obedient to his commands. At the order of the Lord Himself, he preached the Gospel throughout Syria and Mesopotamia, and went to his beloved Lord in great old age, in the city of Hierapolis at the end of the second century; Our Holy Father Lot.

**23 October / 5 November - The Holy Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord** - He is called 'the Lord's brother' because he was the son of righteous Joseph, the betrothed of the most holy Mother of God. When Joseph was dying, he shared out his goods among his sons and wanted to leave a share to the Lord Jesus, the Son of the most holy Virgin Mary, but his sons opposed this, not reckoning Jesus to be a brother of theirs. James, though, loved Jesus greatly and announced that he would include Him in his share, counting himself to be indeed brother to the Lord. James was, from the first, devoted to the Lord Jesus. According to tradition, he went to Egypt with the most holy Virgin and Joseph when Herod tried to kill the new-born King. As soon as he heard Christ's teaching, he began to live by it. It is said that, during the whole of his life, he ate neither fat nor oil, but lived only on bread and water, and he was chaste to the end of his days. He often kept a vigil of prayer at night. The Lord included him among his Seventy apostles, appearing to him after His glorious Resurrection, as the Apostle Paul testifies (I Cor. 15:7). He was bishop in Jerusalem for thirty years, and governed the Church of God with zeal. On the Lord's instructions, he composed the first Liturgy, which was far too long for later Christians and was shortened by St Basil and St John Chrysostom. He brought many Jews and Greeks to the Christian faith, and even unbelieving Jews marvelled at his justice, nicknaming him James the Just. When Ananias became High Priest, he decided, along with other of the Jewish elders, to kill James as a preacher of Christ. One day, at Pascha, when many people were gathered in Jerusalem, the elders told him to climb up onto a roof and speak against Christ. St James climbed up there, and began to speak to the people about Christ as the Son of God and the true Messiah, and of His Resurrection and eternal glory in heaven. The infuriated priests and elders cast him down from the roof, and he was badly injured though still alive. A man then ran up and gave him such a vicious blow on the head that his brains spilled out. Thus this glorious apostle of Christ died a martyr's death and entered into the Kingdom of his Lord. James was sixty-three years old when he suffered for Christ. St Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople; The Holy Martyr James of Borovitz; St. Ethelfleda, abbess of Romsey; St. Oda of Amay, foundress of churches (Neth.).

**24 October / 6 November - The Holy Martyr Arethas** - This holy martyr suffered for the Christian faith with more than four thousand other Christians: priests, monks and nuns, townsmen and women and children. Arethas was the local governor of the town of Negran, in the land of Omir in southern Arabia, and was ninety-five years old when he suffered. The land of Omir was governed by a Jew called Dunaan, a vicious persecutor of Christians. Resolving to exterminate Christianity completely in his land, he laid siege to the Christian town of Negran and told the citizens that, if they did not deny Christ, he would put them all to death. The citizens closed the gates, and Dunaan attacked the city wall for a long time without success. Then the iniquitous governor swore to the citizens that he would do nothing to them if they opened the gate for him to enter and take the tribute owing to him, saying that he would then go away at once. The Christians believed him, and opened the gates. Then the bloodthirsty Jew summoned the aged Arethas to him, along with his clergy and other eminent citizens, and slew them all with the sword, and then indulged in a riot of butchery through the town. Hearing of this, the Byzantine Emperor, Justin, was greatly distressed and wrote a letter to the Ethiopian Emperor Elesbaan, urging him to set out with an army against Dunaan and avenge the Christian blood that had been spilled. Elesbaan obeyed Justin, attacked the governor of Omir, overcame him, slaughtered his entire army and put him to the sword. A devout man called Abramius was installed as ruler of Omir by God's revelation and, as archbishop, also by God's revelation, St Gregory (see Dec. 19th). In Negran, the Christians rebuilt the Church of the Holy Trinity that Dunaan had burned, and built a church to the holy martyr Arethas and the other martyrs of that city. They suffered and received wreaths of martyrdom from the Lord in 523.

**The Icon of the Holy Theotokos, "Joy of All Who Sorrow"**: This name is given to one of the wonderworking icons of the Most-holy Theotokos. On this day the icon is celebrated for the miraculous healing in Moscow, of Euphemia, the sister of Patriarch Joachim, in the year 1688. Euphemia had a serious wound in the side and as the doctors failed in their treatments, she prayed with tears to the Most-holy Theotokos. Then, she heard a voice: "Euphemia, go to the Church of the Transfiguration of my Son; there you will find the icon, 'Joy of All Who Sorrow.' Have the priest pray for you before this icon and you will be healed." Euphemia did so, and was immediately made well.

HYMN OF PRAISE to the Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos, "Joy of All Who Sorrow" O Most-holy Mother of God, "Joy of All Who Sorrow," Grant thy mercy to us sinners. Thy Son now sits on the throne of the Eternal Kingdom, And all our troubles thou seest; thou knowest them as they occur. Thou hast always prayed to Christ God for the faithful, And hast relieved much pain and misery of the sorrowful. O Holy Virgin, never cease, to the end of time, To pray for the salvation of our race. God hast made thee even more glorious than the Seraphim: O hasten to us, O Joy of all who sorrow!

**St. Maglorius, abbot of Sark** - Died 586. Abbot Maglorius of Lammear, Brittany, was born in south Wales and educated under Saint Illtyd. He was a cousin of Saint Samson, with whom he crossed over to Brittany, where they became abbots of two monasteries. St. Samson became bishop of Dol, and on his death he is said to have been succeeded by St. Maglorius, who finally retired to the Channel Islands and built an abbey on Sark, where he died. He is represented in art giving Holy Communion to an angel and is sometimes shown with Saint Samson of Dol. Venerated at Sark; St. Elesbaan, Emperor of Ethiopia; The Icon: Joy of all who Sorrow; Our Holy Father Arethas of the Kiev Caves.

**25 October / 7 November - The Holy Martyrs Marcian and Martyrius** - These saints were clergy with Patriarch Paul of Constantinople in the time of the Emperor Constantius. After the death of the great Emperor Constantine, the Arian heresy, which had till then been kept under, sprang up again and began to spread, and the Emperor Constantius himself inclined towards it. There were two influential nobles at the imperial court, Eusebius and Philip, both ardent Arians. Through their influence, Patriarch Paul was dethroned and driven out to Armenia, where the Arians strangled him, and the patriarchal throne was seized by the dishonourable Macedonius. At that time, when Orthodoxy had two fierce struggles on hand, against both the pagans and the heretics, Marcian and Martyrius ranged themselves decisively and with all their strength on the side of Orthodoxy. Marcian was a reader and Martyrius a sub-deacon at the Cathedral, and had been secretaries to Patriarch Paul. The Arians first tried to bribe them, but, when the two holy men refused this with scorn, the heretics condemned them to death. When they were led to the scaffold, they raised their hands and prayed to God, thanking Him that they were finishing their lives as martyrs: 'Lord, we rejoice that we are leaving this world by such a death. Make us worthy to be partakers of eternal life, O Thou our Life!' They then laid their heads under the sword and were beheaded, in 355. A church was later built to them over their relics by St John Chrysostom. The Holy Martyr Anastasius; St Tabitha.