

30th Sunday After Pentecost

Forefeast of Theophany,

Prophet Malachi

3 / 16 January



Resurrection Tropar, Tone 5: Let us, the faithful; praise and worship the Word, / Co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, / born for our salvation from the Virgin; / for He willed to be lifted up on the cross in the flesh, / to endure death, / and to raise the dead / by His glorious Resurrection!

Troparion of the Prophet Malachi tone 5: Bearing the name of the Angels, O glorious Malachi, / thou didst live the angelic life on earth, / thou summit of the Prophets. / Thou didst mystically converse with Angels / and wast filled with divine glory, / and dost set forth knowledge of things to come, / that we may be enlightened in soul.

Forefeast of the Theophany, Troparion, Tone IV — Make ready, O Zebulon! / Adorn thyself, O Nephthali! / O River Jordan, leaping up, / receive thou the Master Who cometh to be Baptized! / Rejoice, O Adam, with our first mother! / Hide not yourselves as ye did before in paradise; / for He that beheld you naked hath appeared, / that He may clothe you in your primal raiment. // Christ hath appeared, desiring to make all creation new!

Resurrection Tropar, Tone 5: Let us, the faithful; praise and worship the Word, / Co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, / born for our salvation from the Virgin; / for He willed to be lifted up on the cross in the flesh, / to endure death, / and to raise the dead / by His glorious Resurrection!

Kontakion of the Prophet Malachi tone 4: O Malachi enriched with the gift of prophecy, / thou didst openly foretell Christ's coming and the world's salvation. / His splendour illumines the universe.

Kontakion of the Forefeast, Tone IV, "Thou hast appeared today" — In the streams of the Jordan the Lord crieth out to John today: / Fear not to baptize Me, // for I have come to save Adam the first-created!

Matins Gospel VIII

Epistle: II Timothy 4: 5-8

5 But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

"The Struggle and the Crown."

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my cause, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness..." (II Tim. 4:5-8).

St. Paul, dear brethren, is for the second time imprisoned at Rome. The first time, as indicated in the epistle of Captivity (Eph., Phil., Col., and Phil.), he was very optimistic and he saw that very quickly he will gain his freedom and would visit them in the communities which he established. For instance, to Philemon he writes and begs him to prepare a room for him ... "but withal prepare me also a lodging for I trust that through your prayers I shall be grown unto you" (Phil. 1:22). To the Philippians he writes that although he was captive in jail, the Gospel arrived even in the house of the Emperor ... "so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places" (Phil. 1:13).

Things changed during the second imprisonment which took place A.D. 67-68. The persecutions of the Christians became an official policy of the State. The Christians were considered as an enemy of the Empire, spies against authorities, arsenists of Rome, and killers of innocent children, from whom they drank blood; and so many other false accusations. We have said many times before, and today repeat, that the Christian religion, in order to reach today's situation, in order to be considered the ideal man, passed through the fire and iron. Paul also writes this ... "and others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yes, moreover of bonds and imprisonment, they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were burnt, were slain with sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins ..." (Heb. 11: 36-38).

Paul is in jail and he feels that his end is at hand. But his conscience is alert. He has the calmness and tranquility which fill all men who do good works throughout their entire life. These men do not fear death. They don't shake in the fear of that moment. In whatever way death comes, martyrdom, painful, natural, they accept it with pleasure and they consider it (death)

as a redemption, as transfer from the earthly to the heavenly. For this reason, Paul wrote to the Philippians 1:21 ... "for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

From the jail he found time to write to his disciple Timothy, who was bishop at Ephesus, granting him the last of his advice. He exposes his struggle for Christ and his pains and labor for the Church which is the Body of Christ, the continuation of the work of Christ. The second epistle of Timothy is the "kyknon asma" (swan song). The epistle is a reflection of the depth of personal experiences of Paul. He begs Timothy not to forget that he is an apostle of Christ, that he undertook the responsibility of the Gospel. He commands him to be an example to the faithful through words and through practice. He orders him to keep the faith as to Christ, as good harbors shelter ships, according to the interpretation of St. John Chrysostom. And he foresees to Timothy that in the very near future will appear corrupted men and bad times will arise ... "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection .." (II Tim. 3:1-5).

Alas, dear brethren, how many such men the Church knew during the course of her History. Paul also advised Timothy to avoid the foolish discussions which concerned things with no significance, and to devote all his energy and power to the propagation of the Gospel. Not to pay attention to the mouths of the evil men. One is his goal and struggle — Christ — and to try to satisfy only Christ. Finally, he supplicated him to come quickly to Rome because death is very near. Come, Timothy, quickly, for I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. All those words of the second epistle to Timothy were appointed to be read in Church today, the first Sunday after the new year, with one purpose — for Christians to compare how Paul finished his life, how he used the time of his life, and how we spend the invaluable investment which we call our life.

Dear brethren, the life of Christians is not only enjoyment, eating and drinking, or as we say, in modern language — a good time. But it is a struggle. Here is the struggle and afterwards enjoyment. With struggle, the honest man gains his bread and in this way he enjoys life. If man put first the enjoyment and later the struggle, then we wouldn't have any sacrifice. For example, if the astronauts attached more importance to pleasure and good times than conquering the moon, they would never get there. And so, first struggle and then enjoyment. Naturally, I think it is superfluous to make the distinction between struggles. The best struggle for man is the struggle for faith, moral life, righteousness, virtue, ideals, which uplift him and make him Christ-like.

St. Paul says to us, "I have finished my course." The life of man is a road, a procession toward the end. We pursue this course without possibility of stopping or turning back. And because it is not for our interest we say that time runs and leaves. The time does not run, we run. Time stands, like the tree immovable beside the river, in order to use the expression of St. Augustine.

We run, brethren, and all of us will arrive some day at the end. But who will receive the crown of God? That is the great question. Because the prize, the reward, the crown is not a favor, harisma. It is given in reward to those who are worthy of it, who gained it, as in the Olympic Games, And the crown will receive all those who accepted Him as their law-giver, as their teacher, as their God, who loved Him and worshipped Him as their Saviour. If you accept Him, my brethren, be sure that you will gain the crown. Amen.

Gospel: St. Mark 1: 1-8

1. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You." 3 "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.'" 4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5 And all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8 "I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE COMPLETED THE COURSE Sunday Before Theophany By Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev)

The feast of the Nativity of Christ has ended and the feast of the Baptism of the Lord is approaching.

Finding ourselves at the crossroad between the two feasts, we hear the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, where it speaks about John the Baptist (Mark 1:1-8), and the end of the Second Epistle to Timothy, which was written by the Apostle Paul not long before his martyrdom (2 Timothy 4:1-8). What is the connection between these two readings? It is that both of them speak to us about faith in God as a path. Faith is a path by which we go to God and a path by which the Lord comes to us. The preaching of the Gospel began with the words of John the Baptist which were addressed to the people: "*Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.*" The Apostle Paul says: "*For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*" (2 Timothy 4:6-7). The apostle is here using the image of a distance race in order to describe the achievement of his goal. In this way, we hear today about the beginning and the end of the path, as well as about the crown which is being prepared for each of us who does not stumble or sway from the race course of the spiritual life but achieves our goal. The goal is the Lord Himself.

The beginning of the Christian life is something that we must practice daily, which is repentance. The words of John the Forerunner: *"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"* (Matthew 3:2) is addressed to each of us. These words must be understood not in the sense that the Kingdom of God has approached chronologically, but in the sense that it is always ready to come and comes to us, the only question being whether or not we are prepared to enter into the Kingdom of God and to receive it within ourselves. You see, those who will remain outside of the Kingdom of God will not be those who God judges for their mistakes, but those who did not desire or did not find within themselves the strength to remain steadfast on this path to the end, to the doors of the Kingdom of God, those who stopped halfway. We must also remember that although we may be on the path, there is always the danger that we will not reach the end, that we will stumble and not make it to the end.

The Apostle Paul says: *"Always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry"* (2 Timothy 4:5). Each of us must be a preacher and bring to the world the Gospel of Christ, not only in word, but above all, by the example of our life ** and by that determination with which we must journey to meet God and to find God's Kingdom.

Translated from the Russian by Archpriest Peter Olsen

Saints of the week

3 / 16 January — The Prophet Malachi - Fast-free period — He was chronologically the last of the prophets, born after the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon in 538 B.C. He was unusually fair of face. According to folk-tradition, he was named 'the angel', perhaps because of his outward fairness, or because of his purity of spirit, or, again, perhaps, because of his companionship with an angel, with whom he often spoke face to face. At these times, others also heard its voice but were not worthy to look on its face. The young prophet spoke forth that which the angel revealed to him. He cried out against the ingratitude of Israel and the sins of the priests. Five hundred years before Christ, he clearly foretold the coming and work of St John the Baptist (3:7). But he was chiefly the prophet of the Day of Judgement (4:1-3). He went to God young in years, and after him there was no prophet in Israel until John the Baptist.

The Holy Martyr Gordius - born in Caesarea of Cappadocia, he was an officer in the Roman army under the Emperor Licinius. At the outbreak of a terrible persecution, he left the army and his former rank and went into the Sinai desert. Alone on Mount Horeb, Gordius spent his time in prayer and in pondering the mysteries of heaven and earth. In particular he pondered on vanity and on the worthlessness of all for which people struggle and strive so on earth. He came finally to the desire to die and so move into that life that is without transience or corruptibility. With this desire, he went down into a town where pagan games were held. He presented himself to the governor as a Christian. The governor attempted in vain to turn him from the Faith with flattery and threats. Gordius remained unyielding and firm as diamond, saying: "It would obviously be an act of the greatest folly to trade this brief life for eternal torment and spiritual peril." Condemned to death, he hastened joyfully to the place of execution, speaking with the executioners on the way of the wonderful and sweet knowledge of Christ. With the name of Christ on his lips, he delivered his youthful body to the sword and his righteous soul to God in the year 320. St Genevieve; in County Derry, St. Finlugh, abbot.

4 / 17 January — The Synaxis of the Seventy Apostles - Fast-free period — In addition to the twelve Great Apostles, the Lord chose besides seventy other, lesser, apostles and sent them to preach to the Jews. He sent them out two by two before His face, to each town and place, saying: "Behold, I send you as sheep among wolves" (Lk. 10:1-5). But as Judas, one of the Twelve, fell away from the Lord, so some among these Seventy withdrew from Him, not with the intention of betraying Him but from human weakness and lack of faith (Jn. 6:66). And as Judas's place was filled from among the other apostles, so the places of these were filled with others chosen. These apostles laboured in the same way as the twelve Great Apostles; they were the assistants of the Twelve in the spreading and strengthening of the Church of God in the world. They suffered much torture and malice, from men and from demons, but their firm faith and burning love for the risen Lord made them conquerors of the world and heirs of the Kingdom of heaven. St Eustathius, Archbishop of Serbia - born in the diocese of Budim, of God-fearing parents, he became a monk as a young man in Zeta, then moved on to greater asceticism at Hilandar. In time he became abbot of Hilandar, was then chosen to be Bishop of Zeta and, after some time had elapsed, to be Archbishop of Serbia. He was a man of great virtue and led Christ's flock with zeal and love. He entered peacefully into rest at a great age in 1279, exclaiming as death drew near: 'Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.' His relics are preserved in the crypt of the church at Pec.

The Eunuch of Queen Candace - The Apostle Philip baptised this negro eunuch (Acts 8:26-40). After his baptism, the eunuch returned home and began to teach about Christ. He was the first apostle of the Faith among the negroes of Ethiopia. He died a martyr and was counted worthy of the Kingdom of God. Our Holy Father, the Martyr Onuphrius of Hilandar.

5 / 18 January — Eve of Theophany — Fast Day - The Hieromartyr Theopemptus and the Holy Martyr Theonas - when the Emperor Diocletian gave orders for the persecution of Christians, Theopemptus, Bishop of Nicomedia, was the first to suffer for Christ. He was brought before the Emperor, who threatened him with death if he did not deny Christ. To that threat, the courageous bishop replied: 'It is written: "Fear not those who are able to kill the soul". You, O King, have power over my body. Do with it whatever you will!' He was cruelly beaten and starved, and tortured in many ways. Finally the Emperor called in a magician, Theonas, to trick the man of God in some way with magic. Theonas dissolved a very strong poison in water and gave it to Theopemptus to drink. Theopemptus made the sign of the Cross over the cup and drank the poison. Theonas, seeing that it had no effect on Theopemptus, turned to the Emperor and cried out: 'I too am a Christian, and worship the Crucified!' They were both condemned to death; Theopemptus was slain with the sword and Theonas buried alive in the year 298. They suffered with honour and became citizens of the Kingdom of Christ.

The Holy Prophet Micah the First (or Micaiah) - Micah was a contemporary of the Prophet Elias (9th century B.C.), and prophesied evil to King Ahab, who was killed in battle against the Syrians (I Kings 22:8; II Chron. 18:7). He prophesied entirely orally, writing nothing down. There was another Micah, in the eighth century, who prophesied the birth of the Lord in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2) and wrote one of the prophetic books. Our **Holy Mother Syncretica** - a native of Macedonia and educated in Alexandria, she was a rich young woman of standing. She had many suitors, but refused them all and fled from her parents' home to a monastery. In the greatest self-denial, in vigils and prayer, she lived to the age of eighty. Her counsels to the nuns have always been regarded as true spiritual pearls, the wisdom she attained coming not from reading but through suffering and pain, through constant meditation and spiritual converse with the divine world. Her soul entered into that higher world in the year 350. Among other counsels, St Syncretica taught: 'Do not abandon a fast in time of sickness, for lo, those who do not fast fall into the same sicknesses.' Also: 'Treasure, when discovered, is quickly seized upon; so virtue, when it is made public, is quickly eclipsed and lost.' Our Holy Mother Apollinaria.



6 / 19 January — The Theophany of Our Lord, God, & Saviour Jesus Christ (Baptism of the Lord) — When the Lord Jesus had lived for thirty years from His birth in the flesh, He began His teaching and saving work. He marked this very beginning of the beginning by His Baptism in the Jordan. St Cyril of Jerusalem says: 'The beginning of the world—water; the beginning of the Gospel—the Jordan.' At the Baptism of the Lord in the water, that mystery was revealed to the world that was predicted in the Old Testament and fabled in ancient Egypt and India—the mystery of the Holy Trinity of God. The Father revealed Himself to the sense of hearing, the Spirit to the sense of sight and the Son, further beyond these, to the sense of touch. The Father gave His testimony of the Son, the Son was baptised in the waters and the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, hovered over the waters. And when John the Baptist bore witness of Christ and said: 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (Jn. 1:29), and when he immersed the Lord in

the Jordan and baptised Him, there were thus revealed both the mission of Christ in the world and the path of our salvation. That is to say: Christ takes upon Himself the sin of the whole human race. He dies under it (the immersion) and rises again (the coming up out of the water), and we must die to the old, sinful man and rise again, cleansed, renewed and re-born. Here is the Saviour and here is the way of salvation. The Feast of the Theophany is also called the Illuminating, for in the Jordan there is given to us an illumining, revealing God to us as Trinity, consubstantial and undivided. That is one thing. And the other is that each of us baptised in the water is illumined by the Father of lights, through the merits of the Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

TODAY THE nature of the waters is sanctified. Today the Son of God is baptised in the waters of Jordan, having no need Himself of cleansing, but in order to cleanse the sinful human race from defilement. Now the heavens open and the voice of God the Father is heard: This is My beloved Son. The Holy Spirit descends upon the Saviour of the world, Who stands in the Jordan, thereby confirming that this indeed is He Who is the incarnate Son of God. The Holy Trinity is clearly made manifest and is revealed to mankind. The waters of the Jordan are sanctified, and together with them all the waters of creation, the very nature of water. Water is given power to cleanse not only the body, but also man's whole soul, and to regenerate the whole man unto a new life through Baptism. Through water all of nature is cleansed, for out of water the world was made, and moisture penetrates everywhere, giving life to everything else in nature. Without moisture neither animals nor plants can live; moisture penetrates into rocks, into every place in the world. The waters are sanctified and through them the whole world, in preparation for renewal and regeneration for God's eternal Kingdom which is to come.

Every year on this day the glory of God is revealed, renewing and confirming what was accomplished at Christ's Baptism. Again the heavens are opened; again the Holy Spirit descends. We do not see this with our bodily eyes, but we sense its power. At the rite of blessing, the waters which are thereby sanctified are transformed; they become incorruptible and retain their freshness for many years. Everyone can see this—both believers and unbelievers, both the wise and the ignorant. Whence do the waters acquire this property? It is the action of the Holy Spirit. Those who with faith drink these waters and anoint themselves with them receive relief and healing from spiritual and bodily infirmities. Homes are sanctified by these waters, the power of demons is expelled, God's blessing is brought down upon all that is sprinkled with these waters. Through the sanctifying of the waters God's blessing is again imparted to the whole world, cleansing it from the sins we have committed and guarding it from the machinations of the devil.

Today the Holy Spirit, descending upon the waters when the Cross of Christ is immersed into them, descends upon all of nature. Only into man He cannot enter without his will. Let us open our hearts and souls to receive Him and with faith cry from the depth of our souls: "Great art Thou, O Lord, and marvellous are Thy works, and there is no word which sufficeth to hymn Thy wonders."

Man of God, St. John of Shanghai & San Francisco, p.163

7 / 20 January — Afterfeast of Theophany - Synaxis for the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, John — John's greatest role during his life was enacted on the day of the Theophany, and because of this the Church has, from the earliest times, dedicated the day following that feast to his memory. This day is also connected with an event involving the hand of the Forerunner. The Evangelist Luke desired to take John's body from Sebaste, where the great prophet had been beheaded by Herod, to Antioch, his own birthplace. He succeeded, though, in acquiring and taking only one hand, which was kept in Antioch till the tenth century. It was then moved to Constantinople, whence it disappeared during the Turkish occupation. (It is related that each year, on his feast-day, the archbishop would bring it out before the people. Sometimes the hand appeared open, and sometimes clenched. In the first case it indicated that it would be a fertile year, and in the second that it would be a year of famine.) St John is commemorated several times during the year, but his greatest feast is on this day,

January 7th. Among the Gospel-figures surrounding the Saviour, the person of John the Baptist holds a very special place, by the manner of his birth in this world and of his earthly life, by his role of baptiser of men to repentance and his baptism of the Messiah, and, lastly, by the tragic manner of his departure from this world. He was of such moral purity that he indeed deserved the name 'angel', as he was named in the Scriptures, rather than being thought of as just a mortal man. John differs from all the other prophets in that he had the joy of showing forth to the world the One Whom he had foretold.

Tropar of St. John the Baptist (Tone 2): The memory of the just is praised, but thou art well pleased, O Forerunner, with the testimony of the Lord. For thou hast verily been shown forth as more honoured than the prophets, since thou wast counted worthy to baptise in the stream Him whom they foretold. Therefore, having mightily contended and suffered for the truth, with joy thou hast preached also to those in hell the good tidings of God made manifest in the flesh, who takes away the sin of the world and grants us great mercy. The Holy Martyr Athanasius; St. Cedd of Lastingham, bishop of the East Saxons (664); St. Brannoch (Brynach) of Braunton (6th c).

8 / 21 January — Afterfeast of Theophany — The Holy Martyrs Julian and Vasilissa - They were both of rich and noble families and, though married, agreed to live in celibacy as brother and sister. They gave their goods to the poor and embraced the monastic state; Julian founding a men's monastery of about 10,000 monks and Vasilissa one for about a thousand nuns. When a violent persecution of Christians was launched under Diocletian, Vasilissa besought God that none of her nuns should suffer torture nor repudiate the Orthodox faith. The Lord hearkened to the petition of His worthy servant and, during the next six months, took all the nuns to Himself, one by one, and finally their abbess Vasilissa. Before her own death, Vasilissa had a vision of her sisters in the other world. They were all bathed in light and were rejoicing like the angels. They appealed to their spiritual mother to join them as quickly as possible. Julian's monastery was burned by fire, and Julian was inhumanly tortured, being killed only after the most horrible sufferings. The Lord inspired and strengthened him in his torments and he endured them with heroism, keeping faith and glorifying the name of Christ. Together with Julian were beheaded the son and wife of the persecutor Marcian, Celsus and Maronilla, who, seeing Julian's heroic and patient sufferings, were themselves converted to Christianity. Also martyred with him were twenty Roman soldiers, seven brothers from that locality, a priest named Antony and a man called Anastasius whom Julian, at the time of his own martyrdom, raised from the dead by his prayers. They all suffered with honour for Christ and became citizens of the Kingdom of heaven in about the year 313. Our Holy Father George the Chozebite; St. Domnica; St. Gregory, Bishop of Ochrid; Holy Virgin Gudula of Brussels (659).

9 / 22 January — Afterfeast of Theophany — Hieromartyr Philip the Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia
Saint Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, in the world Theodore, was descended from the illustrious noble lineage of the Kolichevi, occupying a prominent place in the Boyar дума at the court of the Moscow sovereigns. He was born in the year 1507. His father, Stephen Ivanovich, "a man enlightened and filled with military spirit," attentively prepared his son for government service. Theodore's pious mother Barbara, who ended her days as a nun with the name Barsanouphia, implanted in the soul of her son a sincere faith and deep piety. Young Theodore Kolichev applied himself diligently to the Holy Scripture and to the writings of the holy Fathers. The Moscow Great Prince Basil III, the father of Ivan the Terrible, brought young Theodore into the court, but he was not attracted to court life. Conscious of its vanity and sinfulness, Theodore all the more deeply immersed himself in the reading of books and visiting the churches of God. Life in Moscow repelled the young ascetic. The young Prince Ivan's sincere devotion to him, promising him a great future in government service, could not deter him from seeking the Heavenly City.

On Sunday, June 5, 1537, in church for Divine Liturgy, Theodore felt intensely in his soul the words of the Savior: "No man can serve two masters" (Mt.6:24), which determined his ultimate destiny. Praying fervently to the Moscow wonderworkers, and without bidding farewell to his relatives, he secretly left Moscow in the attire of a peasant, and for a while he hid himself away from the world in the village of Khizna, near Lake Onega, earning his livelihood as a shepherd.

His thirst for ascetic deeds led him to the renowned Solovki monastery on the White Sea. There he fulfilled very difficult obediences: he chopped firewood, dug the ground, and worked in the mill. After a year and a half of testing, the igumen Alexis tonsured him, giving him the monastic name Philip and entrusting him in obedience to the Elder Jonah Shamina, a converser with Saint Alexander of Svir (August 30).

Under the guidance of experienced elders Philip grew spiritually, and progressed in fasting and prayer. Igumen Alexis sent him to work at the monastery forge, where Saint Philip combined the activity of unceasing prayer with his work with a heavy hammer.

He was always the first one in church for the services, and was the last to leave. He toiled also in the bakery, where the humble ascetic was comforted with a heavenly sign. In the monastery afterwards they displayed the "Bakery" image of the Mother of God, through which the heavenly Mediatrix bestowed Her blessing upon the humble baker Philip. With the blessing of the igumen, Saint Philip spent a certain while in wilderness solitude, attending to himself and to God.

In 1546 at Novgorod the Great, Archbishop Theodosius made Philip igumen of the Solovki monastery. The new igumen strove with all his might to exalt the spiritual significance of the monastery and its founders, Saints Sabbatius and Zosimus of Solovki (September 27, April 17). He searched for the Hodigitria icon of the Mother of God brought to the island by the first head of Solovki, Saint Sabbatius. He located the stone cross which once stood before the saint's cell. The Psalter belonging to Saint Zosimus (+1478), the first igumen of Solovki, was also found. His robe, in which igumens would vest during the service on the days when Saint Zosimus was commemorated, was also discovered.

The monastery experienced a spiritual revival. A new monastic Rule was adopted to regulate life at the monastery. Saint Philip built majestic temples: a church of the Dormition of the Mother of God, consecrated in the year 1557, and a church of the Transfiguration of the Lord. The igumen himself worked as a simple laborer, helping to build the walls of the Transfiguration church. Beneath the north portico he dug himself a grave beside that of his guide, the Elder Jonah. Spiritual life in these years

flourished at the monastery: struggling with the brethren with the disciples of Igumen Philip were Saints John and Longinus of Yarenga (July 3) and Bassian and Jonah of Pertominsk (July 12).

Saint Philip often withdrew to a desolate wilderness spot for quiet prayer, two versts from the monastery, which was later known as the Philippov wilderness.

But the Lord was preparing the saint for other work. In Moscow, Tsar Ivan the Terrible fondly remembered the Solovki hermit from his childhood. The Tsar hoped to find in Saint Philip a true companion, confessor and counsellor, who in his exalted monastic life had nothing in common with the sedition of the nobles. The Metropolitan of Moscow, in Ivan's opinion, ought to have a certain spiritual meekness to quell the treachery and malice within the Boyar soul. The choice of Saint Philip as archpastor of the Russian Church seemed to him the best possible.

For a long time the saint refused to assume the great burden of the primacy of the Russian Church. He did not sense any spiritual affinity with Ivan. He attempted to get the Tsar to abolish the Oprichniki [secret police]. Ivan the Terrible attempted to argue its civil necessity. Finally, the dread Tsar and the holy Metropolitan came to an agreement: Saint Philip would not meddle in the affairs of the Oprichniki and the running of the government, he would not resign as Metropolitan in case the Tsar could not fulfill his wishes, and that he would be a support and counsellor of the Tsar, just as former Metropolitans supported the Moscow sovereigns. On July 25, 1566 Saint Philip was consecrated for the cathedra of Moscow's hierarch saints, whose number he was soon to join.

Ivan the Terrible, one of the greatest and most contradictory figures in Russian history, lived an intensely busy life. He was a talented writer and bibliophile, he was involved in compiling the Chronicles (and himself suddenly cut the thread of the Moscow chronicle writing), he examined the intricacies of the monastic Rule, and more than once he thought about abdicating the throne for the monastic life.

Every aspect of governmental service, all the measures undertaken to restructure civil and social life, Ivan the Terrible tried to rationalize as a manifestation of Divine Providence, as God acting in history. His beloved spiritual heroes were Saint Michael of Chernigov (September 20) and Saint Theodore the Black (September 19), military men active with complex contradictory destinies, moving toward their ends through whatever the obstacles before them, and fulfilling their duties to the nation and to the Church.

The more the darkness thickened around Ivan, the more resolutely he demanded cleansing and redemption of his soul. Journeying on pilgrimage to the Saint Cyril of White Lake monastery, he declared his wish to become a monk to the igumen and the brethren. The haughty autocrat fell on his knees before the igumen, who blessed his intent. Ivan wrote, "it seems to me, an accursed sinner, that I am already robed in black."

Ivan imagined the Oprichnina in the form of a monastic brotherhood, serving God with weapons and military deeds. The Oprichniki were required to dress in monastic garb and attend long and tiring church services, lasting from 4 to 10 o'clock in the morning. "Brethren" not in church at 4 o'clock in the morning, were given a penance by the Tsar. Ivan and his sons fervently wished to pray and sing in the church choir. From church they went to the trapeza, and while the Oprichniki ate, the Tsar stood beside them. The Oprichniki gathered leftover food from the table and distributed it to the poor at the doorway of the trapeza.

Ivan, with tears of repentance and wanting to be an esteemer of the holy ascetics, the teachers of repentance, he wanted to wash and burn away his own sins and those of his companions, cherishing the assurance that even his terribly cruel actions would prove to be for the welfare of Russia and the triumph of Orthodoxy. The most clearly spiritual action and monastic sobriety of Ivan the Terrible is revealed in his "Synodikon." Shortly before his death, he ordered full lists compiled of the people murdered by him and his Oprichniki. These were then distributed to all the Russian monasteries. Ivan acknowledged all his sins against the nation, and besought the holy monks to pray to God for the forgiveness of his tormented soul.

The pseudo-monasticism of Ivan the Terrible, a dark most grievous oppression over Russia, tormented Saint Philip, who considered it impossible to mix the earthly and the heavenly, serving the Cross and serving the sword. Saint Philip saw how much unrepentant malice and envy was concealed beneath the black cowls of the Oprichniki. There were outright murderers among them, hardened in lawless bloodletting, and profiteers seeking gain, rooted in sin and transgressions. By the sufferance of God, history is often made by the hands of the impious, and Ivan the Terrible wanted to whiten his black brotherhood before God. The blood spilled by its thugs and fanatics cried out to Heaven.

Saint Philip decided to oppose Ivan. This was prompted by a new wave of executions in the years 1567-1568. In the autumn of 1567, just as the Tsar was setting out on a campaign against Livonia, he learned about a boyar conspiracy. The plotters intended to seize the Tsar and deliver him to the Polish king, who already was on the move with an army towards Russian territory.

Ivan dealt severely with the conspirators, and again he shed much blood. It was bitter for Saint Philip, and the conscience of the saint compelled him boldly to enter into defense of the executed. The final rift occurred in the spring of 1568. On the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, March 2, 1568, when the Tsar with his Oprichniki entered the Dormition cathedral in monastic garb, as was their custom, Saint Philip refused to bless him, and began openly to denounce the lawless acts committed by the Oprichniki. The accusations of the hierarch shattered the harmony of the church service. In a rage Ivan retorted, "Would you oppose us? We shall see your firmness! I have been too soft on you."

The Tsar began to show ever greater cruelty in persecuting all those who opposed him. Executions followed one after the other. The fate of the saintly confessor was sealed. But Ivan wanted to preserve a semblance of canonical propriety. The Boyar Duma obediently carried out his decision to place the Primate of the Russian Church on trial. A cathedral court was set up to try Metropolitan Philip in the presence of a diminished Boyar Duma, and false witnesses were found. To the deep sorrow of the saint, these were monks of the Solovki monastery, his former disciples and novices whom he loved. They accused Saint Philip of a multitude of transgressions, including sorcery.

"Like all my ancestors," the saint declared, "I came into this world prepared to suffer for truth." Having refuted all the accusations, the holy sufferer attempted to halt the trial by volunteering to resign his office. His resignation was not accepted, however, and new abuse awaited the martyr.

Even after a sentence of life imprisonment had been handed down, they compelled Saint Philip to serve Liturgy in the Dormition cathedral. This was on November 8, 1568. In the middle of the service, the Oprichniki burst into the temple, they publicly read the council's sentence of condemnation, and then abused the saint. Tearing his vestments off, they dressed him in rags, dragged him out of the church and drove him off to the Theophany monastery on a simple peasant's sledge. For a long while they held the martyr in the cellars of the Moscow monasteries. They placed his feet into stocks, they held him in chains, and put a heavy chain around his neck. Finally, they drove him off to the Tver Otroch monastery. And there a year later, on December 23, 1569, the saint was put to death at the hands of Maliuta Skuratov. Only three days before this the saint foresaw the end of his earthly life and received the Holy Mysteries. At first, his relics were committed to earth there at the monastery, beyond the church altar. Later, they were transferred to the Solovki monastery (August 11, 1591) and from there to Moscow (July 3, 1652).

Initially, the memory of Saint Philip was celebrated by the Russian Church on December 23, the day of his martyric death. In 1660, the celebration was transferred to January 9.

The Holy Martyr Polyeuctus - The Armenian town of Melitene was soaked in Christian blood, as was all the land of Armenia. The first blood shed for Christ in that town was that of St Polyeuctus, spilled in about the year 259, during the reign of Valerian. There were in the town two friends who were officers: Nearchus and Polyeuctus, the former baptised and the latter unbaptised. When a decree went out from the Emperor that all Christians were to be killed, Nearchus prepared himself for death, though with great sorrow at not having brought his friend Polyeuctus to the true Faith. When Polyeuctus became aware of Nearchus' sorrow, he promised to become a believer. On the following day, he related to Nearchus a dream that he had: the Lord Himself had appeared to him in light, stripped his old clothing from him, clothed him in new and shining raiment and set him upon the saddle of a winged horse. After relating this dream, Polyeuctus went off to the town, tore up the royal decree on the persecution of Christians and smashed many statues of idols. He was tortured and condemned to death. On the way to the place of execution, he caught sight of Nearchus in the crowd and called joyfully to him: 'Save your soul, my dear soul-friend! Remember the vow of love confirmed between us!' And St Nearchus later ended a martyr for Christ in the fire. His feast is on April 22nd. Our Holy Father Eustratius; St Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow;

St. Adrian of Canterbury (710) - When Archbishop Deusdedit of Canterbury died in the year 664 the Pope decided that the best man to succeed him was an African named Adrian who was already abbot of a monastery in Italy, near Naples. But Adrian did not want this high office. Bede tells us that when the Pope summoned Adrian and instructed him to go to Canterbury as archbishop, the abbot excused himself, saying that he was not fitted for such a great dignity, but that he would find someone else more suited for the task. The first substitute was too ill to become archbishop. Again the pope urged the post on Adrian. Again Adrian begged permission to find someone else. At that time a monk from Tarsus named Theodore was in Rome. Adrian nominated Theodore to the Pope. Theodore was willing to become Archbishop of Canterbury, but only if Adrian agreed to come to England and help him. So on 26 March 668 Theodore was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, and two months later he and Adrian set sail for England. They were a perfect team. Theodore appointed Adrian abbot of the monastery of St Peter and St Paul at Canterbury. Here the saint's learning and great virtues were employed to their best. Scholars came to the monastery from far away and Adrian taught there for thirty-nine years. His pupils could often speak Latin and Greek as well as they could speak their own languages, if not better. He knew an astonishing amount - teaching poetry, astronomy and maths (to calculate the church's calendar) as well as the Bible. Into the minds of his students Adrian 'poured the waters of wholesome knowledge day by day,' Bede records. The saint could convey happiness. 'Never,' asserts Bede, 'had there been such happy times as these since the English settled in Britain.' Adrian died in 710.