

34th Sunday After Pentecost

St. Paul of Thebes & St. John the Hut-Dweller

January 28 / 15



Resurrection Tropar, Tone 1: When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, / And the soldiers were guarding Thine immaculate Body, / Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, / granting life unto the world. / Wherefore, the Hosts of the Heavens cried out to Thee, O Life-giver: / Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ. / Glory to Thy kingdom. / Glory to Thy dispensation, O only Lover of mankind.

Troparion of the Mother of God Tone 1: When Gabriel announced to thee, "Rejoice!", O Virgin, / the Master of all became incarnate within thee, the holy tabernacle, / at his cry, as the righteous David said. Thou wast shown to be more spacious than the heavens, / having borne thy Creator. / Glory to Him Who made His abode within thee! / Glory to Him Who came forth from thee! / Glory to Him Who hath set us free by thy birthing.

Resurrection Kondak, Tone 1: Thou didst arise from the grave in glory as God / and thus raised up the world with Thee; / and mortal nature sings Thy praises as God, / and death hath disappeared; / Adam danceth, O Master, / and now Eve, freed from her chains, / rejoiceth as she cries aloud: / It is Thee, O Christ, who grantest the Resurrection to all.

Troparion of SS. Paul of Thebes & John the Hut-Dweller Tone 4: O God of our fathers, / deal with us ever according to Thy meekness. / Deprive us not of Thy mercy, / but through their supplications // direct our life in peace.

Kontakion of the Venerable Paul, Tone 3: Assembling today let us praise in hymns the never-failing lamp of the noetic Sun; // for thou didst shine forth upon those in the darkness of ignorance, / leading all to the divine heights, / O venerable Paul, adornment of the Thebans, // steadfast foundation of the fathers and the venerable.

Kontakion of the Venerable John, Tone 2: Loving the riches which cannot be stolen, O all-wise John, / thou didst hate the riches of thy parents / and, holding the Gospel in thy hands, // thou didst follow after Christ God, praying unceasingly for us all.

Matins Gospel 1

Epistle for Sunday: Colossians 3:12-16

12. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13. bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

He shows the easiness of virtue, so that they might both possess it continually, and use it as the greatest ornament. The exhortation is accompanied also with praise, for then its force is greatest. For they had been before [840] holy, but not elect; but now both "elect, and holy, and beloved."

"A heart of compassion." He said not "mercy," but with greater emphasis used the two words. And he said not, that it should be as towards brethren, but, as fathers towards children. For tell me not that he sinned, therefore he said "a heart." And he said not "compassion," lest he should place them in light estimation, but "a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

Again, he speaks after the class, and he always does it; for from kindness comes humbleness of mind, and from this, longsuffering. "Forbearing," he saith, "one another," that is, passing things over. And see, how he has shown it to be nothing, by calling it a "complaint," and saying, "even as Christ forgave you." Great is the example! and thus he always does; he exhorts them after Christ. "Complaint," he calls it. In these words indeed he showed it to be a petty matter; but when he has set before us the example, he has persuaded us that even if we had serious charges to bring, we ought to forgive. For the expression, "Even as Christ," signifies this, and not this only, but also with all the heart; and not this alone, but that they ought even to love. For Christ being brought into the midst, bringeth in all these things, both that even if the matters be great, and even if we have not been the first to injure, even if we be of great, they of small account, even if they are sure to insult us afterwards, we ought to lay down our lives for them, (for the words, "even as," demand this;) and that not even at death only ought one to stop, but if possible, to go on even after death.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily on Colossians 3:12-13.

Gospel for Sunday: Luke 18:18-27

Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' " And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?" But He said, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

"Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. "

THOSE who believe that the Word, Who shone forth from the very substance of God the Father, is by nature and truly God, draw near to Him as unto an omniscient God, Who, as the Psalmist says, "tries the hearts and reins;" and sees all that passes in us: "for all things are naked, and spread out before His eyes," according to the expression of the blessed Paul. But we do not find the Jewish multitudes thus disposed: for they with their princes and teachers were in error, and saw not with the eyes of their mind the glory of Christ. Rather they looked upon Him as one like unto us: as a mere man, I mean; and not as God rather, Who had become man. They approached Him therefore to make trial of Him, and lay for Him the nets of their craftiness.

And this you may learn by what has now been read. For a ruler, it says, asked Him, saying, "Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said unto him, "Why do you call Me good? None is good but one, God." Now he, who is here called a Ruler, and who fancied himself to be learned in the law, and supposed that he had been accurately taught therein, imagined that he could convict Christ of dishonouring the commandment spoken by the most wise Moses, and of introducing laws of His own. For it was the object of the Jews to prove that Christ opposed and resisted the former commandments, to establish, as I said, new laws, of His own authority, in opposition to those previously existing, that their wicked conduct towards Him might have a specious pretext, he draws near therefore, and makes pretence of speaking kindly: for he calls Him Teacher, and styles Him Good, and professes himself desirous of being a disciple. For "what, he says, shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Observe therefore how he mixes up flattery with fraud and deceit, like one who mingles wormwood with honey: for he supposed that he could in this way deceive Him. Of such men one of the holy prophets said, "Their tongue is a piercing lance: the words of their mouth are deceitful. To his neighbour he speaks peacefully: but there is enmity in his soul." And again the wise Psalmist also thus speaks of them: "Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." And again, "Their words are smoother than oil: and yet are they spears."

He therefore flatters Jesus, and attempts to deceive Him, making pretence of being well-disposed to Him. And what does the Omniscient reply, "Who, as it is written, takes the wise in their craftiness?" "Why do you call Me good? None is good but one, God," You see how He proved at once that he was

neither wise nor learned, though the ruler of a synagogue of the Jews. For if, He says, you did not believe that I am God, and the clothing of the flesh has led you astray, why did you apply to Me epithets suitable to the supreme nature alone, while still you supposed Me to be a mere man like unto yourself, and not superior to the limits of human nature? In the nature that transcends all, even in God only, is found the attribute of being by nature, and unchangeably good: but the angels, and we upon earth, are good by resembling Him, or rather by participation of Him. For as He is what He is, and this is His Name, and His everlasting memorial for all generations; but we exist and come into being by being made partakers of Him Who really exists: so He indeed is good, or the good absolutely, but angels and men are good, only by being made, as I said, partakers of the good God. Let therefore the being good be set apart as the special property of God over all alone, essentially attached to His nature, and His peculiar attribute. If, however, He says, I do not seem to you to be truly God, then you have ignorantly and foolishly applied to Me the properties and virtues of the divine nature, at the very time when you imagine me to be a mere man, one that is who never is invested with goodness, the property of the unchangeable nature, but only gains it by the assent of the divine will. And such then was the purport of what Christ spoke.

But those perchance will not assent to the correctness of this explanation, whose minds are perverted by sharing in the wickedness of Arius. For they make the Son inferior to the supremacy and glory of God the Father: or rather, they contend that He is not the Son; for they both eject Him from being by nature and truly God, and thrust Him away from having really been born, lest men should believe that He is also equal in substance to Him Who begat Him. For they assert, as though they had obtained a reason for their blasphemy from the passage now before us, 'Behold, He has clearly and expressly denied that He is good, and set it apart as something appropriate to God the Father only: but truly had He been equal to Him in substance, and sprung from Him by nature, how would not He also be good as being God?'

Let this then be our reply to our opponents. Since all correct and exact reasoning acknowledges a son to be consubstantial with the father, how is He not good, as being God? For He cannot but be God, if He be consubstantial with Him Who is by nature God. For surely they will not affirm, however extreme may be the audacity into which they have fallen, that from a good father a son has sprung who is not good. For to this we have the Saviour's own testimony, Who thus speaks; "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruits." How from a good root has there shot forth an evil sprout? Or how from a sweet fountain can there flow a bitter river? Was there ever a time when there was no Father, seeing that He is the Father eternally? But He is the Father, because He has begotten, and this is the reason why He bears this name, and not as being one who borrows the title by resemblance to some other person. For from Him all paternity in heaven and earth is named. We conclude therefore that the fruit of the good God is the good Son.

And in another way: as most wise Paul, says, "He is the image of the invisible God:" and the image, because He displays in His own nature the beauty of Him Who fathered Him. How therefore can we see in the Son, Who is not good, the Father, Who is by nature and truly good? "He is the brightness and likeness of His person:" but if He be not good, as the senseless heretic asserts, but the Father is by nature good, it is a brightness different in nature, and that possesses not the splendour of Him Who bade it shine. And the likeness too is counterfeit, or rather is now no likeness at all: for it represents not Him Whose likeness it is, if, as all must allow, that which is not good is the contrary of that which is good.

And much more might one say in opposition to them upon this point: but that our discourse may not extend to an unreasonable length, and be burdensome to any, we will say no more at present, and hold in as with a bridle our earnestness in this matter; but at our next meeting we will continue our explanation of the meaning of this passage from the Gospel, should Christ once again assemble us here: by Whom and with Whom, to God the Father, be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever, Amen.

St. Cyril of Alexandria, sermon 122, Luke 18:18-27

Saints of the week

15 / 28 January - Our Holy Father Paul of Thebes - Born of wealthy parents in Lower Thebes in Egypt in the reign of the Emperor Decius, he and a sister of his together inherited all their parents' property. But his brother-in-law, an idol-worshipper, plotted to seize Paul's half of the inheritance. He therefore threatened Paul that he would betray him to the authorities as a Christian if he did not hand over his share of the property. This misfortune, coupled with the examples of self-sacrifice by the

Christian martyrs that Paul saw with his own eyes, induced him to give his half of the property to his sister and go into the desert, where he lived in asceticism until his death. The spiritual heights attained by this giant of a monk are testified to by no less a person than St Antony the Great, who once visited Paul and saw how the wild animals and birds of the air ministered to him. Returning from this visit, Antony said to his monks: 'Woe is me, my children, a sinful and false monk, who am a monk in name only. I have seen Elias, I have seen John in the desert, and I have seen Paul—in Paradise!' St Paul lived 113 years, and entered peacefully into rest in the Lord in the year 342.

Our Holy Father John Kalyvites (The Hut-Dweller) - He was born in Constantinople in the early part of the 5th century, of rich and eminent parents whose only child he was. Drawn by inclination to the spiritual life, the young John fled with a monk to a monastery in Asia Minor. He spent six years in this monastery in the greatest restraint, prayer and obedience to the superior. Then the devil attacked him with the temptation to leave the monastery and return to his parents, to live with them as a nobleman. He indeed returned to his parents' home, but dressed as a beggar. He saw his parents, but, not wishing to reveal himself to them as their son, remained as a beggar in their courtyard, living off the crumbs that the servants threw him and enduring much ridicule from all. He lived thus for three years, praying God that He would save the souls of his father and mother. When he fell ill and felt death approaching, he revealed himself to his parents. They recognised him by a precious Gospel-book which they had given him in childhood and which he had kept with him as his sole possession. And so this young man, albeit so rich, saved his soul and those of his parents, overcame the devil and entered into rest in the Lord in about the year 450. Our Holy Father Gabriel of Lesnov; The Holy Martyr Pansophius; In Ireland at Limerick,

St. Ita, hermitess (570) - called the "Brigid of Munster"; born in the present County of Waterford, about 475; d. 15 January, 570. She became a nun, settling down at Cluain Credhail, a place-name that has ever since been known as Killeedy--that is, "Church of St. Ita"--in County Limerick. Her austerities are told by St. Cuimin of Down, and numerous miracles are recorded of her. She was also endowed with the gift of prophecy and was held in great veneration by a large number of contemporary saints, men as well as women. When she felt her end approaching she sent for her community of nuns, and invoked the blessing of heaven on the clergy and laity of the district around Killeedy. Not alone was St. Ita a saint, but she was the foster-mother of many saints, including St. Brendan the Voyager, St. Pulcherius (Mochoemog), and St. Cummian Fada.;

St. Maurus, disciple of St. Benedict (584); in Wales - Deacon, son of Equitius, a nobleman of Rome, died 584. Feast, 15 Jan. He is represented as an abbot with crozier, or with book and censer, or holding the weights and measures of food and drink given him by his holy master. He is the patron of charcoalburners, coppersmiths etc. -- in Belgium of shoemakers -- and is invoked against gout, hoarseness etc. He was a disciple of St. Benedict, and his chief support at Subiaco. He is described as a model of religious virtues, especially of obedience.

16 / 29 January — Veneration of the Precious Chains of the Holy and All-glorious Apostle Peter - Today we commemorate the chains with which Peter was shackled by the lawless Herod and which, when an angel appeared to him in prison, fell from him (Acts 12:7). The faithful kept these chains, both in memory of the great Apostle and also because of their healing power, for many of the sick were healed by touching them (as with the towel of the Apostle Paul: Acts 19:12). The Patriarch of Jerusalem, St Juvenal, made a gift of these chains to the Empress Eudocia, the exiled wife of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger. She divided them in half, sending one half to the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople and the other to her daughter, the Empress Eudoxia, wife of Valentinian of Rome. This Eudoxia built the Church of St Peter and placed these chains in it, together with those in which Peter was shackled before his death under the Emperor Nero.

The Holy Martyrs Speusippus, Eleusippus, Meleusippus and their grandmother Leonilla - They suffered for Christ in France in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161 - 180). The three brothers were triplets. At first only Leonilla was a Christian, while her grandsons were pagans. After much exhortation on the part of the pious Leonilla and a local priest, the three brothers were baptised. Being baptised, they began with youthful fervour to witness to their faith, and in their zeal went out and smashed all the idols in the area. Accused and brought before the judge, they acknowledged their action and openly confessed their faith in Christ. The judge threw them into prison, then summoned their grandmother and directed her to go to the prison and counsel her grandsons to deny Christ and worship idols. Leonilla went off without a word to the prison, but instead of advising her grandsons to deny the true Faith, she set about encouraging them not to give up, but to persevere to the end in all their sufferings and die for Christ. When the judge examined them again and saw their yet stronger steadfastness in the Faith, he condemned them to death. All three were first hanged on one tree, where they hung 'like the strings of a lute', and after that flogged and then finally burned. A woman, Jovilla, stirred by the courage of these martyrs, cried out: 'I too am a Christian!' They immediately seized her and beheaded her with a sword, together with the aged Leonilla. Our Holy Father, the Martyr Damascene of Gabrovo; Our Holy Father Romil;

St. Honoratus, archbishop of Arles & founder of the Lerins Monastery - b. about 350; d. 429. It is believed that he was born in the north of Gaul and that he belonged to an illustrious pagan family. Converted to Christianity with his brother Venantius, he embarked with him from Marseilles about 368, under the guidance of a holy person named Caprasius, to visit the holy places of Palestine and the lauræ of Syria and Egypt. But the death of Venantius, occurring suddenly at Methone, Achaia, prevented the pious travellers from going farther. They returned to Gaul through Italy, and, after having stopped at Rome, Honoratus went on into Provence and, encouraged by Leontius, Bishop of Fréjus, took up his abode in the wild island of Lérins with the intention of living there in solitude. Numerous disciples soon gathered around him and thus was founded the monastery, which has enjoyed so great a celebrity and which was during the fifth and sixth centuries a nursery for illustrious bishops and remarkable ecclesiastical writers. Honoratus's reputation for sanctity throughout the south-eastern portion of Gaul was such that in 426 after the assassination of Patroclus, Archbishop of Arles, he was summoned from his solitude to succeed to the government of the diocese, which the Arian and Manichaean heresies had greatly disturbed. He appears to have succeeded in re-establishing order and orthodoxy, while still continuing to direct from afar the monks of Lérins. However, the acts of his brief pontificate are not known. He died in the arms of Hilary, one of his disciples and probably a relative, who was to succeed him in the See of Arles. His various writings have not been preserved, nor has the rule which he gave to the solitaries of Lérins; St. Sigebert, king of the East Angles, martyr (635);

St. Fursey, of Burgh Castle, enlightener of East Anglia - Son of an Irish prince, Fursey became abbot of a monastery in Tuam, Co. Galway, but it was as a missionary in England and France that he achieved a European fame overshadowed only by Columbanus. He was welcomed to East Anglia c. 630 by King Sigebert, who granted land for a monastery at Burgh Castle in Suffolk. Becoming ill, Fursey fell into a trance and, according to Saint Bede the historian, quit his body from evening till cock-crow and was found worthy to behold the chorus of angels in Heaven. Fursey's visions of Heaven and Hell, experienced throughout his life and widely recounted, are thought to have inspired Dante's Divine Comedy. After some years in East Anglia, Fursey set out on a pilgrimage to Rome. He was well-received by Clovis, king of the Franks, whose palace mayor, Erconwald, persuaded the saint to build a monastery at Lagny, outside Paris. Fursey died c. 648 at Mazerolles, where he had once miraculously restored a nobleman's son to life. Erconwald had the body brought to Péronne in Picardy, where it awaited entombment while a new church was built. Four years later, when the body was buried near the altar, it was found to be completely free from decomposition;

Tropar of St Fursey of Burgh Castle, tone 5: Establishing thy monastery in a Roman fortress thou didst teach men that the Orthodox Faith is a true bastion/ against the onslaughts of every evil force, O Father Fursey./ Wherefore pray to God for us/ that we may all be bastions of the Faith/ standing firm against the rising tide of falsehood,/ that our souls may be saved.

Kondak of St Fursey of Burgh Castle, tone 4: Thou didst need the walls of stone/ to defend the Faith against its pagan enemies, O Father Fursey,/ but pray for us that we may have a spiritual wall around us/ to defend the Faith against its enemies./ Following thee and praising thy eternal memory,/ we stand firm against every error, ever singing:/ Rejoice, beloved of God, our Father Fursey.

St. Dunchaid O'Braoin, abbot of Clonmacnoisen - Born in Westmeath; died at Armagh, 988. Saint Dunchaid was an anchorite until 969, when he was chosen abbot of Clonmacnoise Monastery. In his old age he retired to Armagh, where he died.

17 / 30 January —Our Holy Father Antony the Great - He was an Egyptian, born about 250 in a village called Quemem-el-Arons near Heracleopolis. After the death of his rich and noble parents, he shared his inherited possessions with his sister, who was still in her minority, made sure that she was cared for, gave away his half of the inheritance to the poor and, at the age of twenty, consecrated himself to the life of asceticism that he had desired from childhood. At first he lived near his own village but then, in order to escape the disturbance of men, went off into the desert, on the shores of the Red Sea, where he spent twenty years as a hermit in company with no-one but God, in unceasing prayer, pondering and contemplation, patiently undergoing inexpressible demonic temptations. His fame spread through the whole world and around him gathered many disciples whom he, by word and example, placed on the path of salvation. In eighty-five years of ascetic life, he went only twice to Alexandria: the first time to seek martyrdom during a time of persecution of the Church, and the second at the invitation of St Athanasius, to refute the Arians' slanderous allegations that he too was a follower of the Arian heresy. He departed this life at the age of 105, leaving behind a whole army of disciples and followers. And, although Antony was unlettered he was, as a counsellor and teacher, one of the most learned men of his age, as also was St Athanasius the Great. When some Hellenic philosophers tried to test him with literary learning, Antony shamed them with the question: 'Which is older, the understanding or the book? And which of these is the source of the other?' The shamed philosophers dispersed, for they saw that they had only book-learning without understanding, while Antony had understanding. Here was a man who had attained perfection insofar as man is able on earth. Here was an educator of educators and teacher of teachers, who for a whole eighty-five years perfected himself, and only thus was able to perfect many others. Full of years and great works, Antony entered into rest in the Lord in the year 356.

St. Anthony teaches: "Learn to love humility, for it will cover all your sins. All sins are repugnant before God but the most repugnant of all is pride of the heart. Do not consider yourself learned and wise; otherwise, all your effort will be destroyed and your boat will reach the harbour empty. If you have great authority, do not threaten anyone with death. Know, that according to nature, you too are susceptible to death and that every soul sheds its body from itself as the final garment." In Byzantium there existed an unusual and instructive custom during the crowning of the emperors in the Church of the Divine Wisdom [St. Sophia]. The custom was that when the patriarch placed the crown on the emperor's head, at the same time, he handed him a silk purse filled with dirt from the grave. Then, even the emperor would recall death and to avoid all pride and become humble. The Holy Emperor Theodosius the Great; The Holy Martyr George the New of Ioannina;

St. Nennius - One of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland, he was a disciple of St. Finian. The only other thing known about him is that he was born in Ireland..

18 / 31 January - Fast Day (Fish Allowed) - St Athanasius the Great and St. Cyril archbishops of Alexandria - Born in Alexandria in 296, he had from childhood an inclination to the spiritual life. He was a deacon with Archbishop Alexander and accompanied him to Nicaea, to the First Ecumenical Council in 325. At this Council, Athanasius became famed for his learning, his devotion and his zeal for Orthodoxy, and contributed very greatly to the containing of the Arian heresy and the strengthening of Orthodoxy. After the death of Alexander, Athanasius was chosen as Archbishop of Alexandria. He remained in his archiepiscopal calling for more than forty years, although he was not on the archiepiscopal throne the whole time. He was persecuted by heretics through almost the whole of his life, particularly by the Emperors Constantius, Julian and Valens, by Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia and many others, and by the heretic Arius and his followers. He was forced to hide from his persecutors in a well, a grave, private houses and the deserts. Twice he was forced to flee to Rome. Only just before his death did he have a peaceful period as a good shepherd with his flock, which truly loved him. There are few saints who have been so callously slandered and so criminally persecuted as St Athanasius. But his great soul endured all with patience for the love of Christ and at last emerged victorious from all these terrible and lengthy struggles. He often went to St Antony for advice and moral support, revering him as his spiritual father. He suffered greatly for the truth, until the Lord gave him rest in His kingdom as His faithful servant, in the year 373; St Maxim, Archbishop of Wallachia; Saint Leobardus of Marmoutier (Gaul), hermit.

With St Athanasius, the Church commemorates St Cyril (Kyrillos), also Archbishop of Alexandria (412-44). His lot was to defend the Faith against the heretic Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who denied that Christ in his Incarnation truly united the divine with the human nature. Cyril attempted in private correspondence to restore Nestorius to the Christian faith, and when this failed he, along with Pope Celestine of Rome, led the defense of Orthodoxy against Nestorius' teaching. Saint Cyril presided at the Third Ecumenical Council in 431, at which the Nestorian error was officially overthrown. After guiding his flock for thirty-two years, he reposed in 444.

St.

Dermot, abbot - (also known as Diarmaid) - 6th century. Ruins of six churches can be seen on Inchcleraun (Innis Clothran) in Louch Ree, where Saint Dermot founded a monastery. His burial site there became a pilgrimage centre. It is believed that Dermot was a native of Connaught and of royal blood.

19 January / 1 February — Our Holy Father Macarius the Great - He was an Egyptian and one of the contemporaries of St Antony the Great. His father was a priest. He married in obedience to his parents' wishes, but his wife died very soon and he went off into the desert of Scetis, where he spent sixty years in toil and struggle, both physical and spiritual, for the Kingdom of heaven. When he was asked why he was so thin, both when he ate and when he fasted, he replied: 'From fear of God!' He succeeded so greatly in purifying his mind from evil thoughts and his heart from evil desires that God endowed him with abundant wonderworking gifts, such that he even raised the dead from the grave. His humility made men and demons marvel. A demon once said to him: 'There is only one thing in which I cannot excel you: that is not in fasting, for I never eat, nor in vigils, for I never sleep.' 'Then what is it?' asked Macarius. 'Your humility', replied the demon. Macarius often said to his disciple, Paphnutius: 'Condemn no man, and you will be saved.' He lived for ninety years. Before his death, St Antony and St Pachomius appeared to him from the other world and told him that he would die in nine days' time. And so it came to pass. Cherubim also appeared to him before his death and revealed the heavenly, blessed world to him in a vision, praised his labours and virtues and told him that they had been sent to take his soul to the heavenly Kingdom. He entered into rest in the year 390; Our Holy Father Macarius of Alexandria; St Arsenius, Bishop of Corfu; St Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus; Blessed Theodore, the Fool for Christ of Novgorod;

Venerable Macarius of Alexandria - Macarius was born in Alexandria and, at first, was a fruit vendor. He was baptized at age forty and as soon as he was baptized, he immediately withdrew to lead a life of

asceticism. At first, he, together with Macarius the Great, was a disciple of St. Anthony. After that, he became the abbot of the Monastery called the Cells, located between Nitria and Skete. He was somewhat younger than Macarius the Great and also lived longer. He lived to be more than a hundred years old. Tormented by demonic temptations, especially the temptation of vanity, he humbled himself by the most rigorous labors and ceaseless prayer, uplifting his mind constantly toward God. Once, a brother saw him fill a basket with sand, carry it uphill and empty it. Astonished, the brother asked him, "What are you doing?" Macarius answered, "I am tormenting my tormentor," i.e. the devil. He died in the year 393 A.D.

St. Mark, archbishop of Ephesus - Mark was famous for his courageous defense of Orthodoxy at the Council of Florence (1439 A.D.) in spite of the emperor and the pope. He died peacefully in the year 1452 A.D. On his death bed, Mark implored Gregory, his disciple, and later the glorious Patriarch Genadius, to be careful of the snares of the West and to defend Orthodoxy.

St. Branwallader (Breward) of Cornwall and the Channel Islands, bishop of Jersey, (6th C.) - the day of the translation of his relics. Saint Branwallader was a Celtic or Welsh monk, who is said to have been a bishop in Jersey. It is believed that Branwallader worked with Saint Samson (f.d. July 28) in Cornwall and the Channel Islands, where he is remembered at Jersey in St. Brelade. He may also have travelled with Samson to Brittany in northern France. In the Exeter Martyrology, Branwallader is described as the son of the Cornish king, Kenen.

St. Nathalan - Born near Aberdeen, Scotland; died 678. Nathalan was a nobleman, who possessed a large estate which he gave to the poor in order to become an anchorite. Nathalan is especially praised for having earned his living by farming, "which approaches nearest to divine contemplation." He fed his neighbours from his produce during times of famine, and found that farming served him as a type of penance. During his pilgrimage to Rome, Nathalan was consecrated bishop by the pope, because of his holiness and proficiency in profane and sacred learning. He took up residence at Tullicht (now in the diocese of Aberdeen), where he built a church, but he continued to use all his revenues for the relief of the poor as he had previously. He continued to earn his livelihood by the work of his hands, while living austere, and preaching the Gospel. He is also credited with founding the churches at Bothelim and Colle.

20 January / 2 February - Fast Day (Fish Allowed) - Our Holy Father Euthymius the Great - Born in the Armenian town of Melitene near the River Euphrates in 377, of noble and eminent parents, he was their only son. His mother Dionysia had prayed for a child, and had a heavenly vision concerning his birth. He lived in asceticism from his youth, at first in the vicinity of his town, but then, after a visit to Jerusalem at the age of 29, in the Wilderness of Pharan, between Jerusalem and Jericho. He filled his days and nights with prayer and meditation, contemplation and physical toil. Many disciples gathered round him, such as Cyriac the Hermit, Sava the Sanctified, Theoctistus and others. He was, by God's gift, a great worker of wonders: he drove out demons, healed grave illnesses, brought forth water in the desert, multiplied bread and prophesied. He taught his monks the love of hardship, saying: 'If you eat bread that comes not from your own labours, that means that you eat the labour of another'. When one of the younger brethren desired to fast more than others, he forbade him and ordered him to come to the common table, so that he should not become proud through his too-great fasting. He also said that it is not good for a monk to move from place to place, for, he said: 'A tree that is frequently transplanted does not bear fruit.' Whoever desires to do good can do it in the place where he is. On love, he said: 'As salt is to bread, so is love to the other virtues.' He went off into the desert in the first week of the Great Fast and remained there in silence and meditation on God until before Easter. During his lifetime, a great monastery grew up near his cave, which was for centuries as full of monks as a hive of bees. His last command was that there should be loving hospitality to guests in the monastery, and that its gate should never be closed. He entered into rest at the age of 97. Patriarch Anastasius of Jerusalem was at his funeral. The Patriarch waited the entire day while a great mass of people gave the saint the last kiss, and only in the evening was he able to finish the funeral. On the seventh day after his death, Euthymius appeared to his disciple Domitian in light and joy. St Euthymius was a true 'son of light'. He entered into rest in the year 473. The Holy Martyrs Innas, Nirras and Pinnas;

St. Fechin, abbot - was probably born at Luighne (Leyney), Ireland. He was trained by St. Nathy, was founding Abbot of Fobhar, or Fore, in Westmeath, and died of the plague that devastated Ireland in the year 665.

21 January / 3 February — Our Holy Father Maximus the Confessor - By birth a citizen of Constantinople and at first a high-ranking courtier at the court of the Emperor Heraclius, he then became a monk and the abbot of a monastery not far from the capital. He was the greatest defender of Orthodoxy against the so-called Monothelite heresy, which developed from the heresy of Eutyches. That is to say: as Eutyches asserted that there is in Christ only one nature, so the Monothelites asserted that there is in Him only one will. Maximus resisted this assertion and found himself in opposition to both the

Emperor and the Patriarch. But he was unafraid, and persevered to the end in proving that there are in the Lord two wills and also two natures. By his efforts, one Council in Carthage and one in Rome stood firm, and both these Councils anathematized the Monothelite teaching. Maximus's sufferings for Orthodoxy cannot be described: tortured by hierarchs, spat upon by the mass of the people, beaten by soldiers, persecuted, imprisoned; until finally, with his tongue cut out and one hand cut off, he was condemned to exile for life in Skhimaris, where he gave his soul into God's hands in the year 662. Blessed Maximus the Greek; The Holy Martyr Neophytus; The Holy Martyr Agnes; in Wales, St. Laudog, confessor; in Scotland,

The Holy Martyr Neophytus - Neophytus was born in Nicaea. While he was still a child and with God's Grace, he worked great miracles. Neophytus brought forth water from a rock and raised his dead mother. He was led by a white dove to Mount Olympus where he drove a lion from its cave and there, took up residence. At age fifteen, he was tortured for Christ in Nicaea during the reign of Emperor Diocletian. By no means would he deny Christ. After beatings and imprisonment, Neophytus was thrown into the fire, but God preserved his life. Then, they placed him before a hungry lion, but the lion ingratiated himself to Neophytus. The saint recognizing this lion as the same one in whose cave he practiced asceticism, began to pet him and ordered the lion to return to the cave. Then Neophytus was pierced with a lance and his soul took up habitation in the mansion of the Lord.

St. Vimin (6th C) - the founder of the monastery of Holywood at Nithsdale. It is related that St. Vimin was an abbot in Fifeshire when he was consecrated bishop. He actively evangelized the region. In order to avoid the temptations to pride that accompanied his many miracles, he moved to a deserted place and founded Holywood (Sacrumboscum), which later became famous for producing many holy and learned men

HYMN OF PRAISE
VENERABLE JOHN KALYVITES [KUSHCNIK]

**John was a young lad,
A young and wealthy lad,
But nothing tempted him -
Neither youth nor gold.
His father was a nobleman royal,
And his mother, a lady fine,
But he left them both
For the sake of the love of the Son of God.
His wealth was Christ,
All riches, all beauty.
Christ the Lord he loved
More than his own life.
And, instead of his parents
Now crying out in Hades,
Behold, their son, through poverty
Himself and them, he saved.
Even today, many people
Who, themselves, choke with riches,
John can shame,
And their sinful souls save.**

REFLECTION

Do not ever think that God does not hear you when you pray to Him. He hears our thoughts just as we hear the voices and the words of one another. And, if He does not act immediately according to your prayer, i.e., either because you are praying to Him in an unworthy manner or because you ask something of Him which would be detrimental to you, or, because He, in His

wisdom and providence delays the fulfillment of your petition until the proper moment. Father John of Kronstadt writes: "As by means of the electric telegraph we speedily communicate with persons who are far away from us, so, likewise, by means of lively faith, as though through the telegraph wires, we speedily communicate with God, with the angels and saints. As we

entirely trust to the speed of the electric current and to its reaching its destination, so likewise, we should completely trust to the speed of the prayer of faith and to it reaching its destination. Send your petition to God and the saints by means of the telegraph of faith and you will speedily obtain an answer." And again, in another place St. John writes: "God and the created spirits and the souls of the departed as well as those of the living are thinking beings and thought is rapid and in some sort omnipresent. Think of them with your whole heart and they will be present with you. God will always be with you and necessarily so by the gift and power of God, the others will also be with you."

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the purity of the Lord Jesus:

1. The purity of His mind;
2. The purity of His heart;
3. The purity of His will;
4. The purity of His tongue;
5. The purity of His appearance and all of His senses.

HOMILY

-About the victorious faith-

"And the victory that conquers the world in our faith" (I John 5:4).

Christ the Lord conquered the world. That, brethren, is also our victory. The apostles conquered the world and that is our victory. The saints, virgins and martyrs conquered the world and that is our victory. Brethren, there is nothing more powerful in the world than the Christian Faith. The swords that struck this Faith became blunt and broken but the Faith remained. The kings who fought against this Faith were smothered under the anathema of crimes. The kingdoms that waged war against this Faith are destroyed. The towns that rejected this Faith lay demolished in their ruins. The heretics who corrupted this Faith perished in soul and body and under anathema departed from this world, and this Faith remained. Brethren, when the world pursues us with its temptations: the temptation of external beauty, the temptation of riches, the temptation of pleasure, the temptation of transient glory; with what shall we resist and by what shall we be victorious if not by this Faith? In truth, by nothing except by this invincible Faith which knows about something better than all the wealth of this world.

When all the temptations of this world reveal the opposite side of their faces, when beauty turns into ugliness, health into sickness, riches into poverty, glory into dishonor, authority into humiliation and all blossoming physical life into filth and stench--by what shall we overcome this grief, this decay, this fifth and stench, and to preserve oneself from despair, if not by this Faith? In truth, by nothing except this invincible Faith which teaches us eternal and unchangeable values in the Kingdom of Christ. When death shows its destructive power over our neighbors, over our relatives and our families, over our flowers, over our crops, over the works of our hands and, when it turns its irresistible teeth even on us, by what shall we conquer the fear of

death and by what shall we unlock the doors of life, stronger than death, if not by this Faith? In truth, by nothing except this invincible Faith, which knows about the resurrection and life without death. O Lord Jesus, the Conqueror of the world, help us also to conquer the world with faith in You.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

WORDS OF WISDOM

The young man asked the Lord how to attain to eternal life and heard that he must sell all his goods and distribute them to the poor and have his treasure in heaven. Why else did he go away sad, except that he had, as the Gospel says, great riches? It is one thing not to wish to hoard up what one does not have. It is another thing to scatter what has been accumulated. The former is like refusing food; the latter, like cutting off a limb.

- St. Augustine

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