



## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

### St Sampson the Hospitable

27 June / 10 July

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 3:** Let the heavens rejoice / let the earth be glad / for the Lord has shown strength with His arm! / He has trampled down death by death! / He has become the first-born of the dead! He has delivered us from the depths of hell / and has granted the world great mercy.

**Troparion tone 4:** O holy Samson, imitator of God's compassion,/ thou dost pour forth streams of divine goodness./ For radiant with God's love/ thou didst relieve the afflicted and suffering,/ and dost grant eternal healing to all who honour thee.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 3:** On this day thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One, / leading us from the gates of death / On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices. / With the prophets and the patriarchs they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power.

**Kontakion tone 8:** We flock to thy shrine as to a most excellent physician, O righteous, holy Samson./ We come together to praise thee with psalms and hymns/ and we glorify Christ Who has gifted thee with healing.

#### Matins Gospel IV

#### EPISTLE: Romans 6: 18-23

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, BUT THE GIFT OF GOD IS ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD

[In the Orthodox Church] sin is identified not with transgression and guilt, but with failure and “missing the mark.” The idea cultivated in western Christendom, which identified sin with legal transgression and salvation with individual justification and atonement, linked Christian ethics in people’s minds with a host of psychological complexes offering no way of escape. The striving for individual justification and atonement leaves man still enslaved to his autonomous individuality, separated from the possibility of life and existence ...The egocentric fear of transgression, and the tendency to gloss over sin or to reach an accommodation with it are extensions and consequences of the psychological guilt complex, and neither has any place in the spiritual climate of Orthodox ethics...

In man’s sin, in his failure to be what he is called to be, the Church sees an affirmation of the truth of the person: personhood is affirmed even in man’s capacity to say no even to life and existence itself, to say no to God, although relationship and communion with Him are all that makes existence into a hypostasis of life. In man’s sin, the Church sees the tragic adventure of human freedom ...Sin is the measure of our awareness of separation from God, of separation from life - it is the measure of our conscious recognition of death ...Thus sin becomes a starting point for repentance, metanoia. This word in Greek means “change of mind,” in other words a change in man’s whole attitude... Christ’s assumption of human nature is the event which brings the Church into being. What Christ has assumed is all of us who make up the body of the Church, burdened as we are with daily failure: and He shows us to be partakers in His life, in His own mode of existence ...Participation in the antropoc body of Christ, in the existential unity of the communion of saints, is not secured by individual merit or the objectively recognized “virtues” of the individual: it is secured by repentance, by the new attitude of trust in God...

Repentance is a change in our mode of existence: man ceases to trust in his own individuality. He realizes that existing as an individual, even a virtuous individual, does not save him from corruption and death, from his agonizing existential thirst for life. This is why he takes refuge in the Church, where he exists as someone loving and loved. He is loved by the Saints, who give him a “name” of personal distinctiveness and take him into the communion of their love despite his sinfulness; and he himself strives to love others despite their sinfulness, to live free from the necessities of his mortal nature. He struggles to overcome his individual resistances, his individual wishes and autonomous impulses, not in order to “improve himself” individually, but in order to measure up to the “frenzied love” of Christ and the saints, to the preconditions required for personal life as opposed to natural survival.

*Christos Yannaras. The Freedom of Morality, B#81A, pp. 38-42.  
for the Saint: Galatians 5:22 – 6:2*

## GOSPEL – Matthew 8: 5-13

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Dear brothers and sisters, during His earthly life, our Lord Jesus Christ performed many miracles: He walked upon the waters as upon dry land, He calmed the tempests, He satisfied the hunger of thousands of people with a few loaves of bread, and He resurrected from the dead... But the Gospels are particularly rich in descriptions of His miraculous curing of various illnesses. The Lord healed the possessed, the weak, the leprous, those with withered limbs, the mute, and the crippled. He healed those afflicted in various circumstances; He healed not only Jews, but also pagans; He healed them at any place and any time, at the request of the afflicted themselves or of other people, even without any request whatsoever He hastened to those who were in need of His healing powers.

The only thing the Lord required of those He healed or of their families and friends, was a firm faith in His Divine omnipotence. He performed miracles wherever He saw such faith appear. Daughter, be of

good cheer; your faith has made you well (Luke 8:48), said the Lord to the woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years and whom He cured; According to your faith let it be to you (Matt. 9:29), He said to the two blind men; Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well (Luke 8:50), He said to Jairus the president of the synagogue, of his daughter; O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire (Matt. 15:28), He said to a Canaanite woman.

In the Gospel we read of the miraculous healing performed by our Lord in answer to the appearance of a particularly firm faith. Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you (Matt. 8:13), said the Lord to the Centurion of Capernaum, amazed at the strength and firmness of his faith.

Where did this faith come from? When the Lord replied to the Centurion's request to cure his afflicted and cruelly suffering servant, saying, I will come and heal him, the Centurion replied: Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed (Matt. 8:7-8).

What consciousness of his own unworthiness! What deep humility! What firm faith! Having heard of the miracles performed by Christ, the Centurion had faith in Him and came to Him in his faith with the request to cure his afflicted servant. But being a pagan, he deeply felt his unworthiness and unpreparedness for close contact with such a lofty and holy Being.

One of the Church Fathers and Teachers spoke thus of the Centurion: "Feeling himself unworthy that Christ should come into his home, he was worthy that the Lord should find a place in his heart -a vastly greater gift, for Christ entered many men's homes, for instance the home of a leading Pharisee (Luke 7:36; 14:1), whose heart was nevertheless not deprived of His presence. But the Centurion received in his heart Him Whom he did not receive in his home. He showed his firm faith in the Lord as an Omnipotent Miracle-worker, so that one word from the Lord was sufficient to cure his afflicted servant" (The Blessed Augustine, Sermons, XII, 1): Only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.

And in affirmation of his faith in the omnipotent power of the Lord's word, the Centurion referred to his experience as a military leader: For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, "Go," and he goes; and to another, "Come," and he comes; and to my servant, "Do this," and he does it (Matt. 8:9). The Centurion is saying, "If I, a man who am myself subject to my superiors, can order my subordinates and they carry out my orders, then You, all the more, without any superiors, can perform Your will always and everywhere by means of Your heavenly host."

This faith amazed the Lord. The Evangelist says: When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" (Matt. 8:10). This faith was rewarded at once: "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour (Matt. 8:13).

And so, brothers and sisters, the afflicted and suffering servant was healed by the Lord according to his master's faith.

What was so special about the Centurion's faith, which we, too, can learn from him? What was his faith like? Above all, it was-as we have already noted -strong and firm. Only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. Is our faith even a little bit like this?

We often turn to the Lord in prayer to be healed of various ailments, but we do not always receive what we request because our faith is not firm enough. Instead of firmness of faith, which we lack, our prayers show our doubts, hesitations, and even duplicity. God's word says to us: Whoever says to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says (Mark 11:23). He who doubts, says the Apostle, is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will

receive anything from the Lord (James 1:6-7); But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him, says the Lord (Heb. 10:38).

The Centurion's faith was filled with such deep humility and consciousness of his unworthiness before the Lord: Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof (Matt. 8:8). And this was only natural: for one can only confess the might and omnipotence of God by humbling oneself. When we sinners turn to the Lord, we should also humble our pride and not imagine ourselves to be worthy of God's grace, for this can be the reason for not receiving what we request from the Lord; instead we should humbly recognize our insignificance and sinfulness and hope only for the Lord's infinite mercy. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble (1 Pet. 5:5). But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word (Is. 66:2).

Finally, the Centurion's faith merged with a fervent love for his neighbour. It was this love and compassion, not even for a man of his own family, but for his servant, that moved him to turn to the Saviour.

Do we also have such a "faith and active love?" Does our faith show itself in acts of love towards our neighbours? Alas, our deeds at times show not love, but hostility, coldness, and indifference for our neighbour. When we turn to God for help in our own needs and illnesses, at the same time we carry hatred and malice in our hearts for our neighbours, or we show indifference for the misfortunes of others and forget the Apostle's warning that judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13).

Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you, said the Lord to the Centurion. These words are also relevant for us. We receive everything from the Lord according to our faith. And we turn to the Lord with various requests, but we do not always receive what we have requested. This most frequently occurs because our faith is not of the same type as the Centurion's- it is wavering, weak, and hesitant, it is not fused with deep humility, and consciousness of our own unworthiness and insignificance before God, and is not expressed in active love for our neighbours.

Therefore we should concern ourselves with particular zeal about the firmness of our faith. Brothers and sisters, learn from the Centurion's faith, imitate his humility and love for his neighbour. Then our faith shall also be pleasing to God, and the Lord shall not reject it, and to all our petitions we shall hear His merciful answer: Go your way; as you have believed, so let it be done for you. Amen.

A.N.S.

for the saint: Luke 12:32-40

### Saints of the Week

**27 June / 10 July — Apostles Fast - St Sampson the Hospitable** - born of rich and eminent parents in ancient Rome, where he studied all the secular wisdom of that time, devoting himself in particular to the study of medicine. Sampson was a compassionate and liberal physician, and gave the sick medicine for both soul and body, counselling each man to fulfil the requirements of the Christian faith. He moved to Constantinople, where he lived in a tiny house from which he distributed alms, comfort, advice, hope, medicine and all possible aid to those suffering in spirit and in body. The Patriarch heard of Sampson's great virtue and ordained him priest. At that time the Emperor Justinian the Great became ill with what his doctors believed to be an incurable disease. The Emperor prayed with great fervour, and God revealed to him in his sleep that Sampson would heal him. When the Emperor summoned Sampson to court, the old man had only to put his hand on the diseased place and the Emperor was healed. When Justinian offered him an immense sum of money, Sampson thanked him but would accept nothing, saying to the Emperor: 'O Emperor, I had silver and gold and other riches, but I left it all for the sake of Christ, that I might gain heavenly and eternal wealth.' When the Emperor insisted on doing something for him, Sampson asked him to build a home for the poor. In that home, Sampson cared for the poor as a father cares for his children. His compassion for the poor and weak was second nature to him. This holy man, filled with heavenly power and goodness, entered peacefully into rest on June 27th, 530. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Martyr Mocius, his kinsman. After his death, Sampson appeared many times to those who called upon him for aid; St Severus the Priest; St Joanna the Myrrh-Bearer.

**28 June / 11 July — Apostles Fast - The Holy Martyrs Cyrus and John** - these holy martyrs are commemorated on January 31st, and their lives and sufferings are described under that date. Today we commemorate the translation of their relics from Canopus to Menuthis, and the numerous miracles associated with them. St Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, prayed fervently for the extermination of the abominable idolatrous practices at Menuthis, where there was a temple and where the demonic powers held sway. An angel of God appeared to the Patriarch and told him that Menuthis would be cleansed of its impurity if he brought the relics of Ss Cyrus and John to the town. The Patriarch did this at once. He brought the relics of the holy martyrs to Menuthis and had a church built there in their honour. Ammonius, the son of the governor of Alexandria, Julian, was healed of scrofula through the martyrs' relics, and a certain Theodore was healed of blindness. Isidore of Maium was healed of a wasting disease of the liver, Theodore's wife of the effects of poison, a certain Eugenia of dropsy and a great many others of various diseases and torments. All this took place in the year 412.

**Our Holy Father Sennuphius the Standard-Bearer** - Sennuphius was a great ascetic and miracle-worker of the Egyptian desert. He was a contemporary of Patriarch Theophilus and Emperor Theodosius the Great. He is called the "Standard-bearer" because by his prayers he once helped Emperor Theodosius to gain a victory over the army of his adversaries. When the emperor summoned Sennuphius to Constantinople, Sennuphius replied that he was unable to do so but sent him his tattered monastic habit and

staff. Setting out to battle the emperor donned Sennuphius' monastic habit and carried the staff and returned victorious from battle;

**Our Holy Father Paul the Physician** - a Corinthian by birth. Completing his schooling, Paul withdrew to a monastery and was tonsured a monk. He had a difficult struggle with the impure spirit of fornication. However, when with the power of the cross he drove the impure spirit of fornication away from himself, that spirit created a malicious falsehood, i.e., [the spirit] gave approval to a depraved woman to say that she had given birth to a child by Paul. The heretics then dragged him from the monastery, placed the child in his arms and forced him to walk throughout the town for the people to spit on him. The baby was only a few days old. St. Paul prayed fervently to God and said to the people: "Behold, let the child himself say who is his father." The child stretched out its hand from the swaddling clothes and pointed to a blacksmith and said: "That man is my father and not Paul the monk!" The adversaries of Paul became ashamed and God granted great healing powers to Paul so that when he placed his hand on the sick, they became whole. Paul reposed peacefully in old age pleasing God by his life on earth. He lived in the seventh century;

**St. Austol of Cornwall (6th c.)** - *Tropar of St Austol, Tone 7:* Light of Cornwall and pillar of the Faith,/ holy Austol, disciple of Samson:/ thou wast a fellow-labourer with Saint Mewan,/ in such companionship that thou didst die with him and share his grave./ Pray to Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.



**29 June / 12 July — The Holy Apostle Peter** - the son of Jonah and brother of Andrew the First-Called, of the tribe of Simeon and the town of Bethsaida, he was a fisherman and was at first called Simon, but the Lord was pleased to call him Cephas, or Peter (Jn 1:42). He was the first of the disciples to give clear expression to his faith in the Lord Jesus, saying: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Mt. 16:16). His love for the Lord was very strong, and his faith in Him went from strength to strength. When the Lord was put on trial, Peter denied Him three times, but it needed only one look into the face of the Lord, and Peter's soul was filled with shame and repentance. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Peter became a fearless and powerful preacher of the Gospel. After his first sermon in Jerusalem, about 3,000 souls were converted to the Faith. He preached the Gospel throughout Palestine and Asia Minor, in Italy and in Illyria. He performed many wonders, healing the sick and raising the dead, and even his shadow had the power of healing the sick. He had a major struggle with Simon the Magician, who declared himself to be from God but was actually a servant of the devil. He finally put him to shame and overcame him. Peter was condemned to death on the order of the wicked Emperor Nero, a friend of Simon's. After installing Linus as Bishop of Rome and exhorting and encouraging the flock of Christ there, Peter went to his death with joy. When he saw the cross before him, he

asked the executioner to crucify him upside-down, because he felt himself to be unworthy to die in the same way as his Lord. And so this great servant of the greatest Master went to his rest and received a crown of eternal glory.

**The Holy Apostle Paul** - born in Tarsus and of the tribe of Benjamin, he was formerly called Saul and studied under Gamaliel. He was a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians. He was wondrously converted to the Christian faith by the Lord Himself, who appeared to him on the road to Damascus. He was baptised by the Apostle Ananias, named Paul and enrolled in the work of the Great Apostles. He preached the Gospel everywhere with burning zeal, from the borders of Arabia to the land of Spain, among both the Jews and the heathen, and receiving the title of 'the Apostle to the Gentiles'. His fearful sufferings were matched only by his superhuman endurance. Through all the years of his preaching, he hung from day to day like a thread between life and death. Filling his days and nights with toil and suffering for Christ, organising the Church in many places and reaching a high level of perfection, he was able to say: 'I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2:20). He was beheaded in Rome in the reign of Nero, at the same time as St Peter. The repose of Archbishop Andrei of Neo Diveyevo (1979).

**30 June / 13 July — Fast Day - Synaxis of the Holy, Glorious and All-praised Twelve Apostles** - although each of the Twelve Apostles has his own Feast

Day during the year, the Church has set aside this day for a general Feast of all of them together, including St Paul. The names, their Feast Day(s) and how these most holy and selfless men in the history of the world died and finished their earthly course:

Peter—June 29th and January 16th - crucified upside-down.

Andrew—November 30th - crucified.

James the Son of Zebedee—April 30th - beheaded.

John the Theologian—September 26th and May 8th - died in a wondrous way.

Philip—November 14th - crucified.

Bartholomew—June 11th and August 25th - crucified, then flayed and beheaded.

Thomas—October 6th - pierced with five spears.

Matthew the Evangelist—November 16th - burned by fire.

James the Son of Alphaeus—October 9th - crucified.

Thaddeus (or Jude the brother of James)—June 19th - crucified.

Simon the Zealot—May 10th - crucified.

Matthias—August 9th stoned, then beheaded with an axe when dead.

Paul—June 29th - beheaded.

**THE HOLY APOSTLES** - As a dry desert, the whole world was; / Across it [the world] the chariot of the Spirit flew / A fiery vision, the Holy Apostles; / The All-holy Spirit, through them, the universe rebuilt. / The rivers of wondrous grace flowed, . The dead desert, to life converted. / Wonderful Apostles, watery clouds, / Simple ones, wise ones, fishermen, heroes! / From the Ganges to the Thames, they carried the torch, / From the Nile to Pontus, holiness they proclaimed, / From variegated Persia to bronze Gaul, / Where the feet walk or the galleys sail / Everywhere, the miracle of the Incarnate God, brought, / Everywhere, the Name of the Resurrected Christ proclaimed, / Without complaint and fear, without any confusion: / Mountains and seas, to them were not obstacles, / The sword did not frighten them, nor persecution prevent them, / Neither all the fires of Hades which, against them, erupted. / Truth guided them and not a false fable: / Our life is Christ, and death a beautiful gain! / Thus, they spoke. To such as these, what could be done? / Crucify their bodies? Scrape their skins? / That, the world did, but what kind of harm did it do them? / To reign eternally! Thus, God judged.

**Blessed Peter the Heir** - by descent, was a Tartar and the nephew of the Tartar King Berkai. He heard the words of salvation from Bishop Cyril of Rostov and those words adhered to his heart. And yet when he witnessed the miraculous healing of Berkai's son, by the help of Bishop Cyril's prayer, he secretly left the Golden Horde and fled to Rostov where he was baptized and where, with all his soul and mind, dedicated himself to asceticism and the study of the honourable Faith. Once at night, Saints Peter and Paul appeared to him in a dream on the shores of the lake and commanded him to build a church in their name on that same place and along with that, Blessed Peter received from the saints the necessary amount of money for that purpose. Indeed, Blessed Peter built a most beautiful church there in which he in old age, following the death of his wife, was tonsured a monk. Blessed Peter died peacefully in ripe old age on June 29, 1290 A.D. and his church became and remains a monastery called the Petrovski Monastery.;

**Our Holy Father George the Georgian** - George was born in Iberia [Georgia] in 1014 A.D. and was a relative of the Georgian kings. George

received a good classical education in his childhood but his heart drew him to the spiritual life. He lived a life of asceticism with the famous spiritual father George in the Black Mountain. He fled to Holy Mount Athos and continued his asceticism in the monastery Iveron. George became the abbot of Iveron. With the help of Emperor Constantine Monomachus he restored Iveron and covered the monastery church with lead. That lead roof remains even today. He translated the Holy Scriptures, the Prologue and books of the Divine Services into the Georgian language. King Bagrat invited him to Georgia to teach the people. George was royally welcomed in his homeland. He travelled everywhere and taught both the clergy and people. In his old age, he desired to die on Mt. Athos where he set out for but death overtook him in Constantinople in the year 1067 A.D. His relics were translated to Iveron. Even though he died on May 24, the monks of Iveron commemorate his memory on June 30 considering him to be as "equal to the apostles.;" Synaxis of All Saints of Tver.

**1 / 14 July — The Holy Martyrs Cosmas and Damian** - unmercenary doctors and wonderworkers, these two saints were brothers. Born in Rome, baptised as children and given a Christian education, they were endowed by God with the gift of healing, generally by the laying-on of their hands, of both men and animals. They sought no reward for their work, only urging the sick to faith in Christ the Lord. Inheriting great wealth, they compassionately divided it among the poor and needy. The Emperor Galerius was on the throne in Rome at that time. Persecutors of the Christian faith brought these two holy brothers, bound in chains, before him. After prolonged interrogation, the Emperor charged them to deny Christ and offer sacrifice to idols. Cosmas and Damian not only refused to obey the Emperor; they urged him to forsake dead idols and come to the knowledge of the one, true God. 'Our God is not created, but is the Creator of all, and your gods come of the imaginings of men and the hands of artists. If there were no artists to make your gods, you would have nothing to worship.' After a miracle performed on the Emperor himself—healing him of a grave infirmity—the Emperor declared his faith in Christ and let the holy brothers go in peace. They continued to glorify Christ our God and to heal the sick, and were themselves glorified on all sides by the people. A doctor, a former teacher of theirs, envying their fame, lured them into the hills on the pretext of collecting herbs and stoned them to death. They suffered with honour for the Christian faith in 284. Their memory endures in the Church on earth, and their souls went to the Kingdom of the Lord, to live eternally in glory and joy.

**Our Holy Father Peter the Patrician** - a nobleman from Constantinople and a commander during the reign of Emperor Nicephorus. In a war with the Bulgarians, Emperor Nicephorus was slain and Peter, with fifty Greek commanders and princes, was captured and cast into prison. St. John the Theologian miraculously freed Peter from prison. Peter then despised all earthly glory, left his wife and son, and withdrew to Mount Olympia where, as a monk and as a disciple of St. Joannicius the Great, lived a life of mortification for thirty-four years. Following the death of his wife and son, he settled in Constantinople where he spent eight more years in fasting and prayer and fell asleep in the Lord in the year 865 A.D. in the seventy-seventh year of his life;

**The Holy Martyr Potitus** - a thirteen-year-old child who was born in Sardinia. He endured much suffering for Christ both from his father and from the civil persecutors of Christianity. Potitus was beheaded during the reign of Emperor Antoninus (138-161 A.D.) but, before this, Potitus cured and baptized Agnes, the daughter of the emperor; Holy Julius and Aaron, protomartyrs of Wales (c.304); St. Servanus, Apostle of the Western Fife of East Scotland (6th c.).

**2 / 15 July — Fast Day - Deposition of the Vesture of the Most Holy Mother of God in the Blachernae Church in Constantinople** - in the time of the

Emperor Leo the Great (457-474) and the Empress Verina and Patriarch Gennadius, two Constantinopolitan nobles, Galbuis and Candidus, were travelling in the Holy Land to venerate the holy places there. In Nazareth, they stayed in the house of a Jewish girl who had the vesture of the Mother of God kept in a secret place. Many of the sick and wretched had received healing through prayer and the touching of this vesture. Galbuis and Candidus took this holy relic to Constantinople and informed the Emperor and the Patriarch of its existence. It was the cause of great rejoicing in the imperial city. The vesture was ceremonially placed in the

Blachernae church (a church built by the Emperor Marcian and Empress Pulcheria on the shore of a bay, and named 'Blachernae' after a General Blacheran from Scetis, who was killed there), and this commemorative feast was instituted;

**St Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem** – a contemporary of the great illuminators of the Orthodox Church: Euthymius, Theodosius, Gerasimus, Simeon the Stylite and others. He participated in two Ecumenical Councils: the Third Council in Ephesus [431 A.D.] and the Fourth Council in Chalcedon [451 A.D.]. With great power and zeal, he fought against the blasphemous heresies: in Ephesus against Nestorius who called the Birth-giver of God the Birth-giver of Christ and in Chalcedon against Eutyches and Dioscorus who taught that there was only one nature in Christ, i.e., only a divine nature without a human nature. Following the victory of Orthodoxy at both councils, Juvenal returned to his throne in Jerusalem. Even though the heresies were condemned, the heretics were not eliminated. Through the intrigue and violence of Theodosius, a friend of Dioscorus, Juvenal was banished from the patriarchal throne and Theodosius, on his own, elevated himself in Juvenal's place. In the beginning, this heretic Theodosius was supported by Empress Eudocia, the widow of Theodosius the Younger who, at that time, took up residence in Jerusalem. Hesitant and indiscreet, Eudocia finally went to see St. Simeon the Stylite in order to ask him wherein lies the truth. The saint of God unmasked all the heretical teachings and instructed the empress to adhere to the teachings of Orthodoxy as confirmed at the councils. The empress heeded, repented and she herself became embittered against the false Patriarch Theodosius. During that time Marcian and Pulcheria reigned in Constantinople. A letter from the emperor was sent to Commander Athanasius ordering him to banish Theodosius and to return and reinstate Juvenal to his throne which the commander quickly did. Juvenal governed the Church in Jerusalem for thirty-eight years as its hierarch and at a ripe old age presented himself to the Lord in the year 458 A.D. to receive from Him the reward for great suffering and misery which he had endured for the truth. During the reign of St. Juvenal, the celebration of Christmas was established on December 25;

**St Photius, Metropolitan of Moscow** - of Greek descent. He prudently governed the Russian Church for twenty years. Photius died in the year 1430 A.D. A week before his death an angel of God appeared to him and informed him of the exact time of his departure from this world.

**3 / 16 July — The Holy Martyr Hyacinthus** - a young man, a courtier at the court of the Emperor Trajan, he was a secret Christian. Once, when the Emperor and all his court were offering sacrifice to idols, Hyacinthus stood apart from these abominable ceremonies. He was therefore denounced and brought to trial before the Emperor. The Emperor urged him to deny Christ and sacrifice to idols, but Hyacinthus remained firm as diamond and said to the Emperor: 'I am a Christian. I revere Christ and worship Him, and I bring my living self to Him as a sacrifice.' Whipped, spat upon and flayed, this holy martyr was flung into prison. By order of the Emperor, he was given nothing to eat but food that had been sacrificed to idols. Hyacinthus would not eat this, and died in prison after eight days. The warder saw two shining angels in the prison, one covering the martyr's body with his own glorious vesture and the other placing a wreath of glory on his head; and the whole prison was filled with light and radiance. The young Hyacinthus suffered with honour and was crowned with a wreath of glory in the year 108.

**St Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople** - At first, Anatolius was a presbyter in the Church at Alexandria and following the death of Patriarch Flavian, he was elevated to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople in the year 449 A.D. During his reign, the throne of Constantinople was recognized as equal to the throne of Rome by the Ecumenical Council held at Chalcedon in 451 A.D. He struggled greatly for the purity of the Orthodox Faith, suffered much at the hands of the heretics and finally was slain by them in the year 458 A.D. during the reign of Pope Leo the Great. Anatolius governed the church for nearly nine years and took up his habitation among the holy hierarchs in the Kingdom of God;

**Our Holy Father Alexander** - born in Asia, educated in Constantinople and after the completion of his schooling he devoted himself to military service and attained the rank of an officer. Reading Holy Scripture, he came across the words of the Savior: "If you seek perfection, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven. Afterward come back and follow me" ([St. Matthew 19:21](#)). These words had such an effect on Alexander that he immediately sold and distributed all that he had and withdrew into the wilderness. After many mortifications and labours in purifying himself, he established a monastery of the Sleepless Ones with a special constitution according to this rule: the divine services [offices] were carried on night and day without interruption in his community. The brotherhood was divided into twenty-four relays [cursus]. Each relay knew their hour of the day and night and went to church to continue the reading and singing of the preceding relay. Carrying nothing with him, Alexander traveled much throughout the eastern regions enlightening men with the Faith of Christ. Alexander disputed with heretics, worked miracles by the Grace of God, grew old serving the Lord and finally ended his earthly life in Constantinople in the year 430 A.D. where his relics manifested miraculous power and glory through which God glorifies His holy servants; Our Holy Father Isaiah the Solitary.

**St. Germanus, bishop of Isle of Man and enlightener of Peel, (5th c.)** - a nephew of Saint Patrick; when Saint Germanus of Auxerre (July 31) visited Britain in 448 AD to refute the Pelagians, he met an Irish colonist whose son became his disciple and chose his master's name for himself.

Germanus of Man was born in Brittany and went to Ireland to work with Saint Patrick. He was a missionary monk in Ireland, in Wales under Saints Brioc (May 1) and Illtyd (November 6), and Brittany. Germanus left Brittany to meet Patrick in Britain about 462. There he engaged in a magic contest with Gwrtheyrn. After that he returned to Ireland (c. 466) eventually to become the bishop of the Isle of Man during the lifetime of

Patrick. After evangelising in Wales, his name is traced in Spain and Gaul. His martyrdom is recorded in Normandy. His memory is preserved in place names, such as Jarman and Gremain, in areas such as Caernavonshire, Denbighshire, Montgomeryshire, and Radnorshire. His name is also found in the Acts of Kieran and those of other early Irish saints. Leland mentions a pilgrimage to Garmon ("Armon") at Llanarmonyn.

Tropar of St German, Tone 2: Nephew of Patrick and missionary in Ireland,/ thou didst spread the Faith in many lands./ From Wales to Brittany, and thence to the Isle of Man,/ thou didst glorify Christ wherever thou didst tread./ Pray to Christ to save our souls.

## HYMN OF PRAISE

### SAINT PETER SAINT PAUL

Unlearned and learned but equal in spirit And in the love of God, as strong as angels, Peter a simple man, Paul educated Both illumined, by the grace of the Spirit, Two flaming candles, unquenchable candles, Towering and beautiful, two brilliant stars. Traversed the earth and spread the light Nothing did they take, to men they gave all, Completely poor, the world they enriched, Prisoners and servants, conquered the entire world, With the teaching of Christ, enriched the world, With a new weapon, conquered the entire world: By humility and peace and meekness blessed, Prayer and fasting and mercy powerful. When to them, that stormy day, arrived the stormy night Nero, their life cut short. But when the ruler of the world, a command issued And to suffering, gave over Peter and Paul The world was theirs and not his [Nero's] anymore, By death, the apostles gained the Kingdom.

## REFLECTION

Simon Peter and Simon the Magician. The enemies of Christianity frequently like to cite examples of great miracle-workers among the pagans in order to deceive the gullible, to humiliate the Christian Faith and to elevate paganism, sorcery, soothsaying, Satanism and every other charlatanism. There is no doubt that Satan through his servants also attempted to perform miracles but all of the miracles of his servants do not emanate out of love for man, compassion and from faith in God but rather from pride, selfishness, vanity and hatred for mankind. A Christian should learn from the history of the apostles to differentiate divine miracles from satanic deceits and fantasies. Let the Christian only remember the Apostle Peter and Simon the Magician. Let the Christian compare the miracles of Peter with the so-called miracles of Simon. The apostle converted the stony hearts of men into noble hearts, cured the sick, and raised the dead and all of this by prayer and faith in the Living God. However, Simon the Magician amazed men with the devil's illusions. The Apostle Peter was a friend of God and Simon the Magician was a friend and protege of the perverted Emperor Nero who ended his life by suicide. The miracles of the pagan fakirs belong to the category of illusions and deceits of Simon the Magician. Just as from a distance hot sand resembles water so also the "miracles" of the fakir resemble the life-creating miracles of Christianity.

## CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the miraculous healing of the blind Bartimeus: "And they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a very great crowd, Bartimeus, a blind man, the son of Timeus, was sitting by the wayside begging" (St. Mark 10:46): 1. How Bartimeus prayed to the Lord: "Have mercy on me!" 2. How the Lord said: "See!" And he saw; 3. How the word of the Lord can give sight to my blinded soul if I pray.

## HOMILY

### **About the fear of God**

***"Conduct yourselves with fear in the time of your sojourning" (1 Peter 1:17).***

These are the words of the great Apostle Peter, words that have a dual foundation: heavenly inspiration and personal experience. By divine inspiration, Peter, a simple fisherman, became a teacher of the people, a pillar of the Faith and a powerful miracle-worker. According to his own experience he learned that all of his wisdom and power was of God and, because of that, one should possess the fear of God. No other fear, except the fear of God.

The foolish one becomes frightened only when lightning flashes and thunder cracks but the wise man fears God every day and every hour. The Creator of lightning and thunder is more awesome than both of them and He does not appear before you, from time to time, as lightning and thunder rather He is continually before you and does not move away from you. That is why it is not enough, from time to time, to have fear of God, but one must breathe in the fear of God. The fear of God is the ozone in the suffocating atmosphere of our soul. This ozone brings purity, easiness, sweet fragrance and health. Until he had become strengthened in the fear of God, Peter was only Peter and not an apostle, hero, teacher of the people and miracle-worker.

O my brethren, let us not rejoice before the harvest. This, our life, is not a harvest but rather, it is a sowing, labor, sweat and fear. The plow lives in fear until he has gathered the fruits from the field. Let us also delay our rejoicing for the day of harvest, for now is the time for labor and fear. Will I be saved? This question should torment every one of us, in the same way that the plow is tormented by the question: "Will I reap the fruit of my labor in the field?" The plow labors and fears everyday. Let us also labor and fear "all the time of our sojourning" on earth.

O awesome and powerful Lord, sustain us in Your fear.

**To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.**