



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

### St Mary Magdalene & Hieromartyr Phocas

22 July / 4 August

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

**Troparion tone 1:** O holy Mary Magdalene, thou didst keep Christ's commandments/ and follow Him Who for our sakes was born of a Virgin./ Today we celebrate thy memory/ and receive forgiveness through thy prayers.

**Hieromartyr Phocas, bishop of Sinope, Troparion, in Tone IV —** As thou didst share in the ways of the apostles/ and didst occupy their throne,/ thou didst find thine activity to be a passage to divine vision,/ O divinely inspired one./ Where-fore, ordering the word of truth,/ thou didst suffer for the Faith even to the shedding of thy blood.// O hieromartyr Phocas, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

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

**Kontakion tone 4:** When the transcendent God was incarnate/ He received thee as a true disciple in thy great love, O Myrrhbearer./ Then thou thyself didst work many healings/ and art now translated to heaven/ where thou ever intercedest for the world.

**Another Kontakion tone 3:** With others standing before the Saviour's Cross,/ weeping and suffering with the Mother of God,/ glorious Mary Magdalene offered praises saying:/ What is this strange wonder?/ He chooses to suffer Who upholds the whole creation: Glory to Thy Power.

**Kontakion of the hieromartyr, in Tone VI, "Fulfilling His dispensation concerning us..." —** Offering up sacrifices as a high priest, O father,/ in the end thou didst offer thyself as a living sacrifice,/ bearing witness lawfully to Christ God,/ accepting death and strengthened by angels,/ who cried out to thee:// Come with us, O Phocas, and no-one will be against us!

#### Matins Gospel VII

#### EPISTLE: ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 15: 1-7

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, That you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

#### HAVING GIFTS THAT DIFFER ACCORDING TO THE GRACE GIVEN TO US, LET US USE THEM

He wants to make them vie with each other, and to labour more earnestly by showing that it is they themselves who give the grounds for their receiving more or less. For he says indeed that it is given by God ...But he also says that the beginnings lie with themselves in order to rouse the listless. This he does in the Epistle to the Corinthians as well, to produce these emotions. For when he says, 'covet the gifts earnestly,' (I Cor. 12:31), he shows that they were themselves the cause of the differences in what was given ...For though it is a grace, yet it is not poured forth at random, but framing its measure according to the recipients, it lets as much flow as it may find the vessel of faith that is brought to be capable of holding...

## CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEEDS OF SAINTS, PRACTICE HOSPITALITY

Even the Apostleship is called a ministry, and every spiritual work is a ministry ... It is not enough to give, but we must also do it with munificence, for this always answers to the name of simplicity ... It is not enough to show mercy, but it behooves us to do it with largesse and an ungrudging spirit ... even with a cheerful and rejoicing one ... He said, 'He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully' (II Cor. 9:6) ... In this way the widow outweighed many talents by the two mites, for her spirit was large.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXI on Romans XII. B#55, pp. 501, 502.*

for St. Mary: I Cor. 9:2-12

### GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW 9: 27-35

When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

In today's Gospel lesson we heard, beloved, how our Lord Jesus Christ restored the sight of two blind men who followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us" (Matt. 9:27), that is to say, take pity on us and heal us, give us the sight which we have lost. Thus we may understand these Gospel words. Christ asked them: *Do you believe that I am able to do this* (Matt. 9:28)? And they said to Him: *Yes, Lord*. Then the Divine Teacher touched their eyes and said: *According to your faith let it be to you* (Matt. 9:29), and the blind men were able to see.

Faith in the victory of Good over Evil is inherent in every person. It is the foundation of our life. Faith moves us to activity. Thus, for example, a farmer sowing his wheat in the spring believes he will reap a harvest in the autumn. But the faith of which we are speaking today is higher and more perfect: We believe in God the Creator. This is the manifestation of our striving towards God. Such faith saves. *He who believes and is baptized will be saved* (Mark 16:16), says the Lord. Without faith it is impossible to please God.

"Faith is confidence in the unseen as in the seen, and in the desired and expected as in that which is present," Metropolitan Filaret of Moscow of blessed memory teaches us in his explanation of the words of the Holy Apostle Paul (Heb. 11:1). But faith alone, the simple recognition of God's existence, is insufficient for salvation, for *even the demons believe—and tremble!* (James 2:19), writes the Holy Apostle James. Faith without good deeds does not lead to salvation: *Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead* (James 2:17).

Man believes in God as the Creator of all things and the Providence, without Whose will nothing happens on earth. Man believes in God as the Source of all blessings, as the Supreme Being, Omnipresent, All-holy and Loving. Man is drawn to Him by his own heart, as a plant is drawn to the sun. He seeks communion with God and finds it in prayer. Through prayer he tastes the joy of communion with God. A believer loves God and feels in himself His merciful love. He wants to please God and always strives to fulfil God's commandments, keeping in mind the words of the Savior: *If you love Me, keep My commandments* (John 14:15).

Along this path one meets many tribulations and temptations. The believer must keep up an especially strenuous spiritual struggle with his thoughts and with sinful habits, affirming his will to sanctity in this struggle.

Divine Grace helps a man along his good path of pleasing God. The believer becomes humble, grieves and cries over his sins; he becomes meek, moderate, chaste and merciful. A true believer becomes faithful to God. While still on earth, his faith turns into knowledge of God, spiritual vision. Such a man becomes a son of God through Grace.

The Lord calls all of us to faith and faithfulness. He says: *Have faith in God* (Mark 11:22). But do we, beloved, have faith like the faith of the blind men healed by Christ? There is a great rift in many of us between faith and the life of faith. We must pay deep attention to our inner life so as to detect the spiritual flaws in it, and correct and heal them as quickly as possible. And may the Lord help us to be not only believers in God, but also faithful to Him. Amen.

A.A.R.

for St. Mary: Luke 8:1-3

**Saints of the Week**

**22 July / 4 August - St Mary Magdalene** - one of the myrrh-bearing women, and equal to the apostles, she was born in Magdala by the Lake of Gennesaret, of the tribe of Issachar. She was tormented by seven evil spirits, of which she was freed and healed by the Lord Jesus. She was a faithful follower and servant of the Lord during His earthly life, and also stood beneath the Cross on Golgotha and lamented bitterly with the most holy Mother of God. After the Lord's death, she visited His tomb three times; and when He rose again, she saw Him twice, once alone and the other time with the other myrrh-bearing women. She travelled to Rome, went before Tiberias Caesar and presented him with a red egg, greeting him with the words: 'Christ is risen!' At the same time, she denounced Pilate to Caesar for his unjust condemnation of the Lord Jesus. Caesar listened to her, and moved Pilate from Jerusalem to Gaul, where this unjust judge died under imperial displeasure after a terrible illness. After that, she returned from Rome to Ephesus, to St John the Theologian, whom she helped in his task of preaching the Gospel. With great love for the risen Lord and with great zeal, she proclaimed the holy Gospel as a true apostle of Christ. She died peacefully in Ephesus and was buried, according to tradition, in the same cave in which the seven young men (see August 4th) had been in a charmed sleep for a hundred years. They came to life, and then died. St Magdalene's relics were then taken to Constantinople. Near the Garden of Gethsemane, there is a beautiful Russian church dedicated to St Mary Magdalene. The Hieromartyr Phocas; Our Holy Father Cornelius of Pereyaslav; The Holy Martyr Marcella.

**23 July / 5 August - The Holy Martyrs Trophimus and Theophilus and thirteen others with them** - they suffered in Lycia, in the time of the Emperor Diocletian. Because they would in no way deny Christ nor offer sacrifice to idols, they were put to manifold tortures: they were stoned, flayed with iron flails, their knees were broken and, thus tortured and more dead than alive, they were thrown into the flames, in which the power of God kept them unharmed. They were then taken from the fire and beheaded. The Lord glorified them both on earth and in His heavenly Kingdom. They suffered with honour in Lycia at the beginning of the fourth century; The Hieromartyr Apollinarius - he was a disciple of the Apostle Peter and was born in the city of Antioch. St Peter took him with him from Antioch to Rome, and, in Rome, consecrated him Bishop of Ravenna. Arriving in Ravenna, Apollinarius went into the house of a soldier, Irenaeus, whose blind son he healed and by this brought the whole family to the Christian faith. He also healed the wife of the military governor of Ravenna of a grave infirmity, and baptised his whole household. At the governor's request, Apollinarius remained in his house as his guest. Here he formed a house-church, and lived in that house for twelve years, preaching the Gospel and baptising unbelievers. He was grievously tormented in various ways by the pagan elders, but the strong right hand of God upheld him and preserved him. He was finally condemned to exile in Illyria in the Balkans. But the boat in which he was sailing capsized in a storm and, from among all the travellers, only St Apollinarius, together with two soldiers and three of his priests, was saved. Saved so miraculously, the soldiers came to believe in the power of Apollinarius' God and were baptised. Then Apollinarius began preaching the Gospel throughout the Balkans, travelling as far as the Danube. He then went to Thrace, where he spread the Gospel against great opposition. After three years of working in the Balkans, he was driven back to Italy. He went to Ravenna, where the faithful welcomed him with great joy. Hearing of this, the pagan elders wrote to Emperor Vespasian about Apollinarius, calling him a magician and asking if he should be put to death as an opponent of their gods. The Emperor replied that it was not necessary to kill him, but that he should be made to sacrifice to idols or driven from the city, for, he said: 'It is not seemly to take revenge on someone on behalf of the gods, for they can themselves be revenged on their enemies if they are angered.' But, in spite of this imperial decree, the pagans assaulted Apollinarius and stabbed him with daggers. This servant of God died of his wounds and went to the Kingdom of God. His relics are preserved in Ravenna, in the church dedicated to him.

**"Joy of All Who Sorrow" (with coins), which was at the glass factory in Petersburg** - This image was glorified in 1888 in Petersburg, when lightning hit a chapel during a terrible thunderstorm, but the holy icon of the Queen of Heaven located therein remained unharmed; only small brass coins (groshiki [half-kopecks]), that were lying in front of the icon, stuck to it. On the site of the chapel, a church was built in 1898. The Theotokos is depicted in a specific manner, standing beneath her Son, who is in Heaven as a king, and surrounded by people and angels. In addition, specific hymns are dedicated to celebrating her role of bringing hope and salvation into the world, thus becoming joy for all who sorrow "To Thee, the champion leader, do we Thy servants dedicate a hymn of victory and thanksgiving, as ones who have been delivered from eternal death by the Grace of Christ our God Who was born of Thee and by Thy maternal mediation before Him. As Thou dost have invincible might, free us from all misfortunes and sorrowful circumstances who cry aloud: Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of Grace, Joy of all who sorrow!" Many Orthodox parishes are named "Joy of all who Sorrow"

**24 July / 6 August - The Holy Martyr Christina** - Born in the city of Tyre, she was the daughter of the imperial governor, Urban, an idolater. It is not known why her parents gave her the name Christina, but it carried within itself the mystery of her future following of Christ. She knew nothing of Him until the age of eleven, but, when she reached that age, her father (wanting, because of her beauty, to hide her from the world until she was fully grown) made her live on the top floor of a high tower. He gave her every comfort — slaves and gold and silver idols to which to offer daily sacrifice. But the soul of the young Christina was weighed down and suffocated in this idolatrous atmosphere. Looking out of the window by day at the sun, and by night at the wonderful constellations of shining stars, she came, through her natural understanding, to a firm belief in the one, living God. God, in His great mercy, seeing her yearning for the truth, sent His angel to her, who signed her with the sign of the Cross, named her the bride of Christ and instructed her fully in the things of God. Then Christina smashed all the idols in her rooms, incurring her father's terrible wrath. He brought her to trial and had her tortured and thrown into prison, intending that she be beheaded on the following day. But that night, Urban, in full health, gave up the ghost and went to the grave before his daughter. After that, two of the governors, Dion and Julian, continued the interrogation of this holy maiden. Christina's courage in suffering and the marvels which were performed by the power of God brought many of the pagan inhabitants of Tyre to Christianity. During Christina's torture, Dion suddenly fell dead among the people. His successor, Julian, cut off Christina's breasts and cut out her tongue. The martyr took her tongue in her hand and threw it into Julian's face, and he was instantly blinded. Finally, her sufferings for Christ were ended under a sharp sword, but her life went on in the

immortal kingdom of the angels. St Christina suffered with honour in the third century; Our Holy Father Polycarp, Abbot of the Kiev Caves;

**The Holy Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb** - They were sons of the great Prince Vladimir, Baptiser of the Russian people. Until his baptism, Vladimir had many wives, and children by them. Boris and Gleb were brothers of one mother. Before his death in 1015, Vladimir divided the Kingdom among all his sons. But Svyatopolk, his eldest son and Prince of Kiev, desired to take the parts that were set aside for Boris and Gleb, so he sent men to kill Boris. They carried a message to Boris, pretending that he wished to live in peace with him, and to increase Boris's land holdings inherited from their father. Some of Vladimir's advisers told Boris that he should take the army and establish himself as ruler of Kiev. St Boris, however, said that he could never lift his hand against his own brother. Unfortunately, Svyatopolk was not so scrupulous. He came to the town of Vyshegorod to ask its leaders if they were loyal to him. They assured him that they were ready to die for him. Svyatopolk sent assassins to the Alta to kill Boris, who already knew that his brother wanted him dead. When they arrived they heard him chanting psalms and praying before an icon of Christ. He asked the Lord to strengthen him for the suffering he was about to endure. He also prayed for Svyatopolk, asking God not to count this against him as sin. Then he lay down upon his couch, and the assassins stabbed him with their lances, and also killed some of Boris's servants. Wrapping Boris in a cloth, they threw him onto a wagon and drove off with him. When Svyatopolk saw that he was still breathing, he sent some men to finish him off with swords. St Boris received the crown of martyrdom in 1015. After Svyatopolk had killed Boris, he wondered, "Now how can I kill Gleb?" He sent him a message saying that their father was ill and wished to see him. As he was on his way, he received word from Yaroslav that their father had died and that Svyatopolk had murdered Boris. St Gleb wept for his father and brother, and was lamenting them when the assassins arrived. They seized his boat and drew their weapons, but it was Gleb's cook Torchin who stabbed him with a knife. The martyr's body was thrown onto the shore between two trees. Later, he was buried beside St Boris in the church of St Basil. The holy martyrs Princes Boris and Gleb are also commemorated on May 2.

**St. Declan, bishop of Ardmore, Ireland (5th c.)** - Born at Desi (Decies), Waterford, Ireland, 5th century. Declan, an Irish monk, was baptised by and a disciple of Saint Colman. He appears to have been an Irish evangelist before the arrival of Saint Patrick. He may have made two pilgrimages to Rome and later became the first bishop of Ardmore, a see confirmed by Patrick during the synod of Cashel in 448. Many miracles are attributed to Declan. Five miles or less to the east of Youghal Harbour, on the southern Irish coast, a short, rocky and rather elevated promontory juts, with a south-easterly trend, into the ocean [ $\pm 51^{\circ} 57' N / 7^{\circ} 43' W$ ]. Maps and admiralty charts call it Ram Head, but the real name is Ceann-a-Rama and popularly it is often styled Ardmore Head. The material of this inhospitable coast is a hard metamorphic schist which bids defiance to time and weather. Landwards the shore curves in clay cliffs to the north-east, leaving, between it and the iron headland beyond, a shallow exposed bay wherein many a proud ship has met her doom. Nestling at the north side of the headland and sheltered by the latter from Atlantic storms stands one of the most remarkable groups of ancient ecclesiastical remains in Ireland—all that has survived of St. Declan's holy city of Ardmore. This embraces a beautiful and perfect round tower, a singularly interesting ruined church commonly called the cathedral, the ruins of a second church beside a holy well, a primitive oratory, a couple of ogham inscribed pillar stones, &c..

**25 July / 7 August - Fast Day - The Dormition of the Righteous Anna, the Mother of the Most Holy Mother of God.;**

**St Olympias the Deaconess** - Olympias was born in Constantinople of very distinguished parents. Her father, Anysius Secundus, was a senator and her mother was the daughter of the famous nobleman Eulavius who is mentioned in the hagiography of St. Nicholas the Wonder-worker. When Olympias reached maturity, she was betrothed to a nobleman who died before the marriage took place. The emperor and the other relatives pressured Olympias to marry another, but in vain. However, she refused them this and devoted herself to a god-pleasing life, giving from her inherited estate great offerings to the churches and alms to the needy. She served as a deaconess in the Church, at first during the time of Patriarch Nectarius and, after his death, during the time of St. John Chrysostom. When Chrysostom was exiled, he counselled Olympias to remain in the church and to serve as before regardless who the patriarch after him would be. Immediately after the banishment of this great saint, someone started a fire in the Great Church [The Church of the Divine Wisdom Hagia Sophia] and the fire consumed many prominent buildings in the capital. The enemies of Chrysostom accused this holy woman of initiating this malicious fire. Olympias was banished from Constantinople to Nicomedia where she died in the year 410 A.D., requesting in her testament that her body be placed in a box and cast into the sea and wherever the water tosses it up, there she is to be buried. The coffin was cast ashore in the city of Vrochthoi, where there existed a church dedicated to the Apostle Thomas. From her relics, great healing miracles appeared throughout the centuries. The exiled Chrysostom wrote beautiful letters to the exiled Olympias which, even today, serve as a great comfort to all those who suffer for the sake of God's justice. Among other things, Chrysostom writes to Olympias: "Now I am very elated not only because you were relieved from infirmity, but more so, that you are nobly enduring all difficulties referring to them as trivialities which is characteristic of a soul full of power and abounding in the rich fruits of courage. For you not only courageously are enduring misfortune rather you do not even notice it when it comes and without exertion, without labour and disturbance not even talking about it to others but rejoicing and triumphing over it. That serves as the greatest wisdom" ([Letter VI](#)). ;

**Our Holy Mother Eupraxia the Virgin** - Eupraxia was the daughter of Antigonus, a nobleman of Constantinople and a relative of Emperor Theodosius the Great. Her mother, a young widow, with Eupraxia settled in Egypt and visited the monasteries there distributing alms and praying to God. By her fervent desire, the seven-year-old Eupraxia was tonsured a nun. The older she got the more she imposed upon herself the heavy burden of mortification. At one time, she fasted for forty days. She reposed in 413 A.D, in her thirtieth year. She possessed the great grace of God and healed the most difficult illnesses. **Commemoration of the Fifth Ecumenical Council** - This Council was convened in Constantinople during the reign of Emperor Justinian the Great in the year 553 A.D. All the heresies of the Monophysites were condemned at this Council as well

as the heretical writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Origen (his teaching against the resurrection of the dead).

Tropar of St. Nessian Tone 2: O thou who didst converse with St. Patrick/ and follow him in the monastic way:/ as thou didst guide monks to Christ our God,/ pray that our souls may be saved.

**26 July / 8 August - The Hieromartyr Hermolaus** - he was a priest in Nicomedia in the time of the Emperor Maximian, and was with the twenty thousand martyrs condemned by the Emperor to be burned in their church (see December 28th). Hermolaus somehow escaped death on that occasion, together with two other priests, Hermippus and Hermocrates. Hermolaus baptised St Panteleimon, with whom he was brought to trial, tortured and finally beheaded. Hermippus and Hermocrates suffered with them, and they were all crowned with wreaths of victory and glory in the Kingdom of Christ. They suffered with honour in about 304; Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Paraskeva - Paraskeva was born in Rome of Christian parents and from her youth was instructed in the Faith of Christ. With great fervence, St. Paraskeva endeavoured to fulfill all the commandments of God in her life. Believing strongly and living according to her faith, Paraskeva directed others on the path [of salvation] with the help of the True Faith and pious living. When her parents died Paraskeva distributed all of her property to the poor and was tonsured a nun. As a nun she preached the Faith of Christ with an even greater zeal, not hiding from anyone, even though at that time the Roman authorities bloodily persecuted the Faith of Christ. First the pernicious Jews accused St. Paraskeva of preaching the prohibited Faith. She was brought to trial before Emperor Antoninus. All the flatteries of the emperor did not help in the least to cause her to waver in the Faith. They then subjected her to fiery torments and placed a red-hot helmet on her head. The Lord miraculously saved her and Paraskeva was delivered and left Rome. She again traveled from city to city to convert the pagan people there to the True Faith. In two more cities she was brought before princes and judges and was tortured for her Lord, at the same time working great miracles and by the power of God quickly recuperated from her pains and wounds. The pagans, as always, ascribed her miracles to magic and her power of recovery to the mercy of their gods. St. Paraskeva once said to the prince who tortured her: "It is not your gods, O prince, who healed me but my Christ the True God." Finally Prince Tarasius beheaded her. Thus this saint gloriously ended her fruitful life. Her relics were later translated to Constantinople. She suffered honourably for Christ in the second century;

**Our Holy Father Moses the Ugrian** - He was at the court of the young Russian Prince Boris. When the godless Svyatopolk murdered Boris, Moses escaped and fled to Kiev. A little later he was taken to Poland as a slave by the Polish King Boleslav and there was sold for a thousand gold coins to a young and depraved widow, the wife of one of Boleslav's commanders who was slain. This wicked woman tempted Moses to commit adultery but Moses would not be tempted for he vowed to live chastely before the Lord. She then suggested marriage to him but he rejected that also. Moses secretly received the monastic tonsure from an Athonite monk and he appeared before the lady in the monastic habit. She bound him, ordered that he be flogged and to have his private organ severed. This unsuccessful seduction by this shameful woman lasted for five years - five years of pain and torture! However, King Boleslav was slain unexpectedly in an uprising during which this woman was also killed. Then Moses was free to go to Kiev where, at the monastery of St. Anthony, he devoted his life to prayer and silence. Completely conquering the shameful vice in himself, Moses assisted many to also be saved from it. His holy relics helped many (St. John, the much suffering July 8). After ten years of silence in the Monastery of the Caves, St. Moses found rest on July 26, 1043 A.D. and took up habitation in the eternal virginal Kingdom of Christ.

**27 July / 9 August - Fast Day - The Holy and Great Martyr Panteleimon** - born in Nicomedia of a Christian mother, Eubula, and a pagan father, Eustorgius, he studied medicine as a young man. The priest Hermolaus befriended him, instructed him in the Christian faith and baptised him. Panteleimon miraculously healed a blind man whom other doctors had treated in vain: he healed him by the name of Christ and baptised him. From jealousy, the doctors denounced Panteleimon as a Christian, and he went before the Emperor Maximian for judgement. 'He stood before the earthly ruler in the body, but in his mind he stood before the heavenly King.' He freely declared himself to be a Christian before the Emperor, and, in front of his eyes, healed a paralytic of a long infirmity. This miracle brought many of the pagans to the Christian faith. The Emperor put him to torture, but the Lord appeared to him on several occasions and delivered him whole and uninjured. Then St Hermolaus suffered, along with Hermippus and Hermocrates. Condemned to death, St Panteleimon knelt in prayer. At that, the executioner gave him a blow on the neck with his sword, and the sword broke as if made of wax. The executioner could not kill him until he had finished his prayer and had himself given the word to behead him. Panteleimon was beheaded under an olive tree, which after that became laden with fruit. 'Panteleimon' means 'all-merciful'. God the all-merciful received his righteous soul, and glorified him among His greatest saints, his relics remaining incorrupt. This wonderful martyr suffered with honour as a youth for Christ on July 27th, 304. St Panteleimon is invoked in the prayers at the blessing of water and the blessing of oil, together with St Hermolaus and the other unmercenaries and wonderworkers. The loveliest church dedicated to him is to be found on the Holy Mountain; St Clement, Archbishop of Ochrid; Blessed Nicolas the Fool for Christ; Our Holy Mother Anthusa; The 153 Martyrs in Thrace; commemoration of the canonisation of St. Herman of Alaska (1970).

**July 28 / August 10 — The Smolensk "Hodigitria" Icon of the Theotokos**, or "She who leads the way," was, according to Church Tradition, painted by the holy Evangelist Luke during the earthly life of the Most Holy Theotokos. The holy hierarch Demetrius of Rostov suggests that this icon was painted at the request of Theophilus, the prefect of Antioch. From Antioch the holy image was transferred to Jerusalem. From there the empress Eudokia, the spouse of Arcadius, gave it at Constantinople to Pulcheria, the sister of the emperor, who put the holy icon in the Blachernae church. In 1046, the Byzantine emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1054), gave his daughter Anna in marriage to Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavich, the son of Yaroslav the Wise. He blessed her on her way with this icon. After the death of Prince Vsevolod the icon went to his son Vladimir Monomachos, who transferred it at the beginning of the twelfth century into the Smolensk cathedral church in honor of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. From that time, the icon was known as the Smolensk Hodigitria. In the year 1238, at the bespeaking of the icon, the self-sacrificing Orthodox warrior Mercurius went by night into the camp of Batu and

killed many of the enemy, in whose number was their most powerful warrior. Having accepted a martyr's death in battle, he was included by the Church in the ranks of the Saints (November 24).

In the fourteenth century, Smolensk came into the possession of the Lithuanian princes. The daughter of prince Vitovt, Sophia, was given in marriage to the Moscow Great Prince Basil Dimitrievich (1398-1425). In 1398, she brought the Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God with her to Moscow. They set the holy image in the Annunciation cathedral of the Kremlin, on the right side of the Royal Doors. In 1456, at the request of the inhabitants of Smolensk with Bishop Misael at the head, the icon was solemnly returned to Smolensk in a church procession, and at Moscow there remained two copies. One was put in the Annunciation cathedral, and the other, "a measure for measure," was put in the Novodevichi monastery, founded in memory of the return of Smolensk to Russia. The monastery was built on Devichi Pole (Virgin's Field), where "with many tears" the Muscovites handed over the holy icon to Smolensk. In 1602 an exact copy was painted from the wonderworking icon (in 1666 together with the ancient icon they brought a new copy to Moscow for restoration), which they placed in the tower of the Smolensk fortress wall over the Dneprovsk Gates, under a specially constructed cover. Afterwards, in 1727, a wooden church was built there, and in 1802, a stone church. The new copy took on the power of the old image, and when the Russian armies left Smolensk on August 5, 1812, they took the icon with them for defense from the enemy forces. On the eve of the Battle of Borodino they carried this icon through the camp, to encourage and inspire the soldiers to great deeds. The ancient image of the Smolensk Hodigitria, taken to the Dormition cathedral on the day of the Battle of Borodino went in procession with the Iveron and Vladimir Icons of the Mother of God through the Belo and Kitai quarters and the Kremlin walls, and then they sent it to the sick and wounded at the Lefortovo palace. After leaving Moscow, the icon was taken to Yaroslavl. Thus were these sister-icons preserved, and the Mother of God defended Russia through Her icons. After the victory over the enemy forces the Hodigitria Icon was returned to Smolensk together with its glorified copy. The celebration in honor of this wonderworking icon on July 28 was established in the year 1525 in memory of the return of Smolensk to Russia. There exist many venerated copies of the Smolensk Hodigitria, for which the celebration is set on this day. There is also a day of celebration for the Smolensk Icon (November 5), glorified in the nineteenth century when this image was returned to Smolensk on the orders of the commander-in-chief of the Russian army M. I. Kutuzov. In memory of the expulsion of the enemy from Russia, it was decided to celebrate this day annually at Smolensk. The holy icon of the Hodigitria Mother of God is one of the chief holy objects of the Russian Church. Believers have received and do receive from it an abundant help of grace. The Mother of God through Her holy icon intercedes for and strengthens us, guiding us on the way to salvation, and we call out to Her, "Thou art the All-Blessed Hodigitria for faithful peoples, Thou art the affirmation, the Praiseworthy of Smolensk and all the Russian land. Rejoice, Hodigitria, salvation of Christians!"

**The Holy Apostles of the Seventy and Deacons: Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon & Parmenas** — all four were of the number of the seven deacons and the seventy apostles. The other three deacons were Stephen, Philip and Nicolas. Stephen, the first martyr, is commemorated on December 27th, and Philip on October 11th. Nicolas was not included in the ranks of the saints because of heresy. These first four have no separate commemoration, and are commemorated together on this day. Prochorus was consecrated by the Apostle Peter as Bishop of Nicomedia. He served for a time with St John the Evangelist and, on the island of Patmos, wrote down the Revelation that he heard from St John's lips. After that, he returned to Nicomedia, where he made great efforts to bring the people to the Faith. He died a martyr in Antioch, where he was murdered by unbelievers. Holy Nicanor suffered in Jerusalem on the same day as St Stephen the Archdeacon, quickly followed by two hundred others, killed by the wicked Jews. Timon was bishop in Arabia, and was crucified for Christ. Parmenas died before the eyes of the apostles, and was mourned and buried by them; The Holy Martyr Julian; Our Holy Father Paul of Xeropotamou; The Holy Martyr Eustathius (Eustace);

**St. Samson, bishop of Dol in Brittany (c.565)** - Bishop and confessor, born in South Wales; died 28 July, 565 (?). The date of his birth is unknown. His parents whose names are given as Amon of Dyfed and Anna of Gwynedd, were of noble, but not royal, birth. While still an infant he was dedicated to God and entrusted to the care of St. Illtyd, by whom he was brought up in the monastery of Llantwit Major. He showed exceptional talents in his studies, and was eventually ordained deacon and priest by St. Dubric. After this he retired to another monastery, possibly after that on Caldy Island, to practise greater austerities, and some years later became it abbot. About this time some Irish monks who were returning from Rome happened to visit Samson's monastery. So struck was the abbot by their learning and sanctity that he accompanied them to Ireland, and there remained some time. During his visit he received the submission of an Irish monastery, and, on his return to Wales, sent one of his uncles to act as its superior. His fame as a worker of miracles now attracted so much attention that he resolved to found a new monastery or cell "far from the haunts of men", and accordingly retired with a few companions to a lonely spot on the banks of the Severn. He was soon discovered, however, and forced by his fellow-countrymen to become abbot of the monastery formerly ruled by St. Germanus; here St. Dubric consecrated him bishop but without appointment to any particular see. Now, being warned by an angel, he determined to leave England and, after some delay, set sail for Brittany. He landed near Dol, and there built a monastery which became the centre of his episcopal work in the district. Business taking him to Paris, he visited King Childebert there, and was nominated by him as Bishop of Dol; Dol, however, did not become a regular episcopal see till about the middle of the ninth century. Samson attained the age of 85 years, and was buried at Dol.