



## Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

### Fifth Sunday of Pascha

### & St Nicholas of Myra

9 / 22 May

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 4:** When the women disciples of the Lord / learned from the Angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection / they cast away the ancestral curse / and elatedly told the Apostles / death is overcome / Christ God is risen / granting the world great mercy.

**Tropar of St. Nicholas, Tone 4:** The truth of things revealed thee to thy flocks / as a rule of faith, a model of meekness / and teacher of temperance. / Therefore thou hast won the heights by humility / riches by poverty / holy Father Nicholas intercede with Christ our God / that our souls may be saved.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 4:** My Saviour and Redeemer / as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains / He has shattered the gates of hell, / and as Master, / He has risen on the third day.

**Kondak of the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, Tone 8:** Having come to the well in faith, the Samaritan woman saw Thee, the Water of Wisdom, whereof having drunk abundantly, she, the renowned one, inherited the kingdom on high forever.

**Kondak to St. Nicholas, Tone 3:** In Myra, O Saint, thou didst prove to be a minister of things sacred: for having fulfilled the Gospel of Christ, O righteous one, thou didst lay down thy life for thy people, and didst save the innocent from death. Wherefore, thou wast sanctified, as a great initiate of the grace of God.

#### Matins Gospel VII

#### Epistle: The Acts of the Apostles 11: 19-26 & 29-30

Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

#### BARNABAS AND SAUL TO ANTIOCH

The persecution turned out to be no slight benefit, as 'to those who love God all things work together for good' (Rom.8:28). If they had made it their express study how best to establish the Church, they would have done nothing else but this: they dispersed the teachers ...When Stephen was slain, when Paul was twice in danger, when the Apostles were scourged, then the Gentiles received the word, and also the Samaritans. Paul declared: 'It was necessary that the Word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles' (ch.13:46) ... 'And the hand of the Lord', it says, 'was with them,' that is, they wrought miracles ...Even so, it is no small part of providential management for Paul to be there ...In this way that Voice of the Gospel, that Trumpet of Heaven is not shut up in Jerusalem ...Truly this is the reason why it was there they were appointed to be called Christians, because Paul spent so long a time in Antioch!

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXV on Acts XI. B#55, pp.162-163.*

for the Hierarch Hebrews 13: 17-21

#### The Gospel According To St. John 4: 5-42

So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You

have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' For you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?" The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not laboured; others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours." And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

### Homily

"Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink" (Jn. 4:6-7). The Samaritan woman became filled with confusion and doubt of a purely worldly nature: How could He, a Jew, ask to drink from her, a Samaritan? The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. And even more, He said that if she knew Who He was, then she herself would ask drink from Him, and He would give her Living Water. How could He give her something to drink? Why, He didn't even have anything to draw water with, and the well was deep.

In worldly terms this was impossible. And what kind of "Living Water" was this? Christ was speaking about heavenly, spiritual things; but she understood in earthly, worldly terms. And she said to Christ: "Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? ...Jesus answered and said unto her: Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (Jn. 4:11, 13-14).

Still more confusing. But one thing was clear. He was offering a completely unusual kind of water. He who drank of it would never thirst. What a convenience. She would never have to come to this well and bend down to draw water. What a work and time saver. Although this offer seemed incredible, it was just too tempting and profitable to pass up; it paid to try it at least. "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw" (Jn. 4:15), said the Samaritan woman in absolute frankness, explaining the practical point of view she had in mind. And now she stood, in full anticipation of a material, worldly gift. And Christ, now using her attention, suddenly changed the topic of conversation: "Go, call thy husband and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband, for thou hast had five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly" (Jn. 4: 16-18).

Terror and joy seized the Samaritan woman. This was the secret of her life, which tormented her sick conscience. How much she wanted to free herself from these pangs of conscience, to repent. But until this time no one could help her. But now, before her stood the One Who knew the secret of her heart. This was an unusual man. He could save her, teach her to repent, to pray. But where to pray?

The woman said to Him: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me...the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:19-21, 23-24). The heart of the Samaritan woman accepted this Divine revelation with trembling, but still she was living by what she knew in worldly terms: "I know [she said] that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He" (Jn. 4:25-26). This was all. All earthly understandings were overturned. She became a new person. She believed.

Is it not the same with us, brothers and sisters? So often we ask God for earthly goods which to us seem so necessary, and God does not give them to us. Yet our prayer is never in vain. So it was with the Samaritan woman. She asked Christ for water. And He gave her water, but not the one she was asking for, but another one — His water, which became a “well of water springing up into everlasting life.” He gave her Eternal Life. But in order to receive this water of Christ, she had to repent.

Let us do the same. Then He will reveal Himself to us and say, “I that speak unto thee am He.” And we will have such joy that we will not be able to contain it within ourselves. No. Without noticing it ourselves, we will start to preach Christ. And not in words only, but in our whole life. And those around us will say: “Now we believe, not because of thy saying,” but seeing thy life which thou hast dedicated to Him, we “know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world!” (Jn. 4:42).

*The One Thing Needful - Archbishop Andrei*

### for the Hierarch Luke 6: 17-23

#### **Saints of the Week**

**9 / 22 May — St Nicolas the Wonderworker of Myra in Lycia** - on this day is commemorated the translation of his relics. In the time of the Emperor Alexius I Comnenus and Patriarch Nicolas Grammaticus, in 1087, the body of this saint was taken from Myra in Lycia to the town of Bari in Italy. This came to pass because of a Moslem attack on Lycia. The saint appeared to a priest in Bari and commanded that his relics be taken there. At that time, the town of Bari was Orthodox and under the administration of an Orthodox patriarch. At the translation of the saint's relics, many miracles were wrought on those who touched them, and a healing myrrh flowed in abundance from them. Also on this day is commemorated the miracle worked by St Nicolas on Stefan of Decani, King of Serbia. This was when the saint restored the sight of the blind King Stefan.

**The Holy Prophet Isaiah** - This great prophet was of royal birth. He was born in Jerusalem of Amoz the brother of Amaziah, King of the Jews. By the great grace of God that was within him, Isaiah was made worthy to see the Lord of Sabaoth on His heavenly throne, surrounded by six-winged seraphim which cried unceasingly: 'Holy, holy, holy Lord of Sabaoth' (Is. 6). Isaiah prophesied many things, both to individuals and to nations. Once he walked for three days naked through the streets of Jerusalem, prophesying the imminent fall of the city to the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, and warning the King and the leaders of the people not to seek help from Egypt and Ethiopia, because they too would shortly be over-run by the same Sennacherib, but to seek the aid of the all-seeing God. And this prophecy, like all the rest, was literally fulfilled (37:31-35). But his most important prophecies were on the incarnation of God, on the conception of the most pure Mother of God, on John the Baptist and on many events in the life of Christ. This seer, because of his pure heart and zeal for God, also received the gift of working miracles. Thus, when the besieged city of Jerusalem was suffering from thirst, he prayed to God and water flowed out from beneath the hill of Sion. This water was named Siloam (Sent), and it was to that water that, later, the Lord sent the man born blind, to wash himself and receive his sight (Is. 8:6; Jn 9:7). In the time of King Manasseh, when Isaiah thundered against the pagan practices of the king and the leaders of the people, comparing that generation with Sodom and Gomorrah, the anger of the leaders and the people was lifted up against this great prophet, and he was seized, taken out of Jerusalem and sawn in half. He lived and prophesied seven hundred years before Christ;

**The Holy Martyr Christopher** - Third century martyr in the persecutions of Decius. His fame derives from the pious legend of him being a "Christ-bearer" (= Christopher). He was a powerfully built man who wandered the world in search of novelty and adventure. He came upon a hermit who lived beside a dangerous stream and served others by guiding them to safe places to cross. He gave Offero instruction in the truth of God. Offero took the hermit's place, but instead of guiding travellers, he carried them safely across the stream. One day he carried a small child across the stream; the child's weight nearly crushed him. When they arrived on the other side, the child revealed himself as Christ, and he was so heavy because he bore the weight of the world on himself. He then baptised Offero with water from the stream. Christopher's service at the stream led to his patronage of things related to travel and travellers, people who carry things.

**10 / 23 May — The Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot** - One of the twelve Great Apostles, he was born in Cana of Galilee. The Lord Jesus came to his wedding with His Mother and His disciples, and, when the wine ran out, the Lord changed water into wine. Seeing this wonder, the newly-married Simon left his home and parents and bride, to go after Christ. Simon was called the Zealot because of his great and burning zeal for the Saviour and His Gospel. After receiving the Holy Spirit, he went off to preach the Gospel in Mauretania in Africa. As a result of his success in bringing many to the Faith of Christ, he was tortured and finally crucified like his Lord, who had prepared a crown of glory for him in His immortal Kingdom. The Holy Martyrs Alphaeus, Philadelphus and Cyprinus;

**Our Holy Mother Isidora the Fool for Christ** - Isidora lived in the fourth century and was a nun in a convent in Tabennisi. She pretended insanity in order to conceal her virtues and her mortification. Isidora performed the most menial tasks, fed on the leftovers on the dishes, served all and everyone and was despised by all and everyone. At that time, an angel of God revealed to the great ascetic Pitirim about Isidora's secret. Pitirim came to the convent and when he saw Isidora he bowed down to the ground before her. And so, she to him. Then the sisters informed Pitirim that she was insane. "All of you are insane" replied Pitirim, "and this one is greater before the Lord than I and all of you; I only pray that God will render to me that which is intended for her at the Dreadful Judgment!" Then the sisters became ashamed and begged both Pitirim and Isidora for forgiveness. From then on, everyone began to show respect for Isidora. And she, to escape the honours of men, fled the convent to a place unknown and died about the year 365 A.D.; Blessed Thais;

**St. Conleth, hermit and bishop of Kildare (c.520)** - Skilled worker in gold and silver, and manuscript illuminator. Hermit in a cell in Old Connell, Ireland near the Liffey river. His reputation for holiness attracted would-be disciples. Friend and co-worker with Saint Brigid; they ran first double monastery together. First bishop of Kildare, Ireland c.490. Baptised Saint Tigernach of Clogher Died while on pilgrimage to Rome.

Born c.450 in Ireland Died attacked by wolves on 3 May 519 in the forests of Leinster, Ireland; buried nearby; relics translated to the Kildare cathedral in 799; relics taken to Connell in 835 to protect them from Danish invaders.

**11 / 24 May — Ss Cyril and Methodius, Equal to the Apostles** - brothers from Salonica, of eminent and wealthy parents, Leo and Maria. The elder brother, Methodius, spent ten years as an officer among the Slavs in Macedonia, and thus learned the Slavic language. After that, Methodius went off to Olympus and gave himself to monastic asceticism, and Cyril (Constantine) later joined him there. When the Khazarite king, Kagan, sought preachers of the Christian faith from the Emperor Michael, the Emperor commanded that these two brothers be found and sent to the Khazars. They converted Kagan to the Christian faith and baptised him, together with a great number of his nobles and an even greater number of the people. After some time, they returned to Constantinople, where they compiled a Slavic alphabet of 38 letters and began to translate the service books from Greek into Slavonic. At the invitation of Prince Rastislav, they went to Moravia, where, with great devotion, they spread and confirmed the Faith, made more copies of the books, brought them priests and taught the young. They went to Rome at the invitation of the Pope, and Cyril fell ill and died there, on February 14th, 869. Then Methodius returned to Moravia and laboured at the confirming of the Faith among the Slavs until his death. After his death—he entered into rest in the Lord on April 6th, 885 —his disciples, the Five Followers, with St Clement as bishop at the beginning, crossed the Danube and moved towards the south, to Macedonia, where, from Ochrid, they continued the work among the Slavs that Cyril and Methodius had begun in the north; The Hieromartyr Mocius;

**St Nicodemus, Archbishop of Pec** - This great hierarch was a Serb by birth. He lived a life of asceticism on Holy Mt. Athos and was abbot of Hilendar Monastery. Following the death of Sava III, he was elected as the Archbishop of "All the Serbs and the Coastal Lands" in the year 1317 A.D. Nicodemus crowned King Milutin in the year 1321 A.D. He translated the Jerusalem Typikon into Serbian. [The Typikon is a book containing the rubrics (directions) for the celebration of the Divine Mysteries and other offices of the Orthodox Church.] In the introduction of this book, Nicodemus says: "Almighty God, Who knows our weaknesses, will give us spiritual strength, but only if we first display effort." He sincerely loved the ascetical life and laboured to strengthen it throughout the Serbian land. He laboured relentlessly to uproot the Bogomil heresy and to strengthen the Orthodox Faith. He died in the Lord in the year 1325 A.D. His miracle-working relics repose in the monastery in Pec.; St. Comgall, founder and abbot of Bangor (c.601); St. Mayeul, abbot of Cluny (994).

**12 / 25 May — Fast Day - St Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus** - born a Jew, but, seeing the power of the Christian faith, was baptised together with his sister, Callithrope. He became a monk at the age of twenty-six, in the monastery of St Hilarion. He later founded a monastery of his own, and became famed throughout Palestine and Egypt for his asceticism, his spiritual wisdom and the wonders he worked. Fleeing the praise of men, he went off to Egypt. On the way, he met Paphnutius the Great, who prophesied that he would be a hierarch on the island of Cyprus. And indeed, many years later, by God's providence, Epiphanius came to Cyprus, where he was unexpectedly chosen as bishop. He became bishop of the town of Salamis at the age of fifty, and governed the Church of God for thirty-six years. In all, he lived nearly ninety years on this earth, and entered into rest from this life to live eternally in the Kingdom of Christ. Before his death, he was invited to Constantinople by the Emperor Arcadius and his wife, Eudoxia, for the Council of Bishops which was forced, at the desire of the Emperor and Empress, to condemn St John Chrysostom. Arriving in Constantinople, he came to the Emperor's court, where the Emperor and Empress talked with him at great length, endeavouring to make him declare against Chrysostom. The citizens and Chrysostom heard that Epiphanius had agreed with the Emperor against him. Chrysostom therefore wrote him a letter: 'My brother Epiphanius, I hear that you have advised the Emperor that I should be banished: know that you will never again see your episcopal throne.' To this, Epiphanius wrote in return: 'John, my suffering brother, withstand insults, but know that you will not reach the place to which you are exiled.' And these two prophecies of the two saints soon came about. Refusing to agree with the Emperor on the exile of Chrysostom, Epiphanius took ship and set off for Cyprus, but died on the voyage. The Emperor sent Chrysostom into exile in Armenia, but the saint died on the road. Saint Epiphanius entered into rest in the year 403. Of his many writings the best-known is his 'Medicine Chest', in Greek, in which he explains and refutes eight heresies;

**St Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople** - Germanus was the son of the head imperial senator who was killed by Emperor Constantine Pogonatus. This same evil emperor castrated the senator's son, Germanus, and forcibly banished him to a monastery. As a monk, Germanus shone like a star by his life and good works. Because of that, he was chosen as the first bishop of Cyzicus and, when Anastatius II was crowned emperor, Germanus was elected as patriarch of Constantinople. As patriarch he baptized the ill-reputed Copronymos who, during the time of his baptism, soiled the water with his uncleanness. Then the patriarch prophesied that this child, when he becomes emperor, will introduce into the Holy Church some impure heresy. And this happened. When Copronymos became emperor, he restored the heresy of the iconoclasts. Leo Isaurian, the father of Copronymos, initiated the persecution of icons and when Patriarch Germanus protested, the arrogant Leo cried out: "I am emperor and priest!" He removed Germanus from the patriarchal throne and banished him to a monastery where this saint lived for ten more years until the Lord called him to Himself and to the heavenly kingdom in the year 740 A.D.; The Holy Martyr Pancras.

**13 / 26 May — The Holy Martyr Glykeria** - daughter of a governor of Rome, she became poor after her father's death and went to live in Trajanopolis in Thrace. In the time of the wicked Emperor Antoninus, Glykeria was brought to offer sacrifice to the idol of Zeus. She traced the Cross on her forehead and, when the governor asked her where was her lamp (for they all carried lamps in their hands), Glykeria indicated the Cross on her forehead and said: 'This is my lamp!' At her prayers, the idol was struck by lightning and broken into pieces. The governor was furious with her and commanded that she be thrown into prison. He sealed the door of the prison, intending to starve the maiden to death, but an angel of God appeared to Glykeria and gave her heavenly food. After a certain time, when the governor reckoned that the maiden must have died of hunger, he opened the prison and was astounded to see her in good health, bright and merry. The warder, Laodicius, seeing this marvel, himself confessed Christ the Lord and was at once beheaded. After that Glykeria was thrown into a burning furnace, but she



remained untouched by the flames. Standing in the midst of the fire, she praised the Lord, commemorating the wonder with the Three Children in the burning fiery furnace in Babylon. Finally, she was thrown to the lions and, praying to God, this holy maiden gave her soul into the hands of the Lord for whom she had heroically suffered much torture. She suffered with honour in the year 141. A healing myrrh flowed from her relics, which healed the sick of the gravest illnesses;

**The Holy Martyr Alexander** - a Slav. As an eighteen year old soldier in the army of Emperor Maximilian, he refused the order of the emperor to give honor to the Roman idols and for that which he was handed over to Captain Tiberian, to either counsel Alexander to deny Christ or else torture and kill him. Since all the counselling was in vain, Tiberian took Alexander with him across Macedonia to Constantinople where he traveled for duty. In every town along the way, the young Alexander was cruelly tortured but, in every town, Christians came out before him and begged him for a blessing and they encouraged him in his mortification. Pimonia, his mother, followed after him. During the course of this travel, an angel of God appeared many times to Alexander soothing his pains and encouraging him. In one place, Carasura, the martyr performed a miracle through prayer: when thirst overcame him and the soldiers who escorted him, he brought forth a well of cold water from an arid place. On the shore of the Ergina river, Tiberian ordered the executioner to behead Alexander and to toss his body into the water. When the executioner swung at the martyr's head, he saw radiant angels of God around Alexander and became frightened and his hand dropped. Alexander asked him why his hand dropped and the executioner replied that he sees some radiant young men around him. Yearning death and union with the Lord, Alexander prayed to God to withdraw the angels from him so that the executioner would not be frightened. And thus, the executioner carried out his work in the year 298 A.D. Pimonia removed the body of her son and honourably buried him. Many healings occurred at the grave of the martyr. After death, the martyr appeared to his mother and informed her of her imminent translation to the other world.; Our Holy Fathers John, Euthymius, George and Gabriel of Iviron.

**14 / 27 May — Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Isidore** - in the reign of the Emperor Decius, this Isidore was taken by force by soldiers from the island of Chios. He had held the Christian faith from his youth, and had spent his life in fasting, prayer and good works. So when, in the army, he declared himself to be a Christian, the commander took him to task for it, and urged him to deny Christ and offer sacrifice to idols. The saint replied: 'Even if you kill my body, you have no power over my soul. I have the true and living God, Jesus Christ, who lives in me and will be with me at my death; and I am in Him and shall remain in Him, and will not cease to confess His holy name while the spirit is in my body.' The commander ordered that they first beat him with iron flails and then cut out his tongue. But, even without his tongue, Isidore was able to speak, and confessed the name of Christ by the Spirit of God. Meanwhile the punishment of God struck the commander, and he suddenly became mute. The mute commander finally gave the signal to behead Isidore. Isidore rejoiced at this sentence and, praising God, went out to the scaffold, where his head was cut off in the year 251. His friend, Ammon, buried his body and, after that, himself suffered and received the wreath of martyrdom; Our Holy Father Serapion the Sindonite; Blessed Isidore the Fool for Christ.

**15 / 28 May — Our Holy Father Pachomius the Great** - an Egyptian by birth and was a pagan in his youth. As a soldier, he took part in the Emperor Constantine's war against Maxentius. After that, learning from Christians about the one God and seeing their devout life, Pachomius was baptised and went to the Tabennisiot desert, to the famous ascetic Palamon, with whom he lived in asceticism for ten years. Then an angel appeared to him in the robes of a monk of the Great Habit at the place called Tabennisi and gave him a tablet on which was written the rule of a cenobitic monastery, commanding him to found such a monastery in that place and prophesying to him that many monks would come to it seeking the salvation of their souls. Obeying the angel of God, Pachomius began building many cells, although there was no-one in that place but himself and his brother John. When his brother grumbled at him for doing this unnecessary building, Pachomius simply told him that he was following God's command, without explaining who would live there, or when. But many men soon assembled in that place, moved by the Spirit of God, and began to live in asceticism under the rule that Pachomius had received from the angel. When the number of monks had increased greatly, Pachomius, step by step, founded six further monasteries. The number of his disciples grew to seven thousand. St Antony is regarded as the founder of the eremitic life, and St Pachomius of the monastic, communal life. The humility, love of toil and abstinence of this holy father were and remain a rare example for the imitation of monks. St Pachomius performed innumerable miracles, and also endured innumerable temptations from demons and men. And he served men as both father and brother. He roused many to set out on the way of salvation, and brought many into the way of truth. He was and remains a great light in the Church and a great witness to the truth and righteousness of Christ. He entered peacefully into rest in 346, at the age of sixty. The Church has raised many of his followers to the ranks of the saints: Theodore, Job, Paphnutius, Pecosius, Athenodorus, Eponichus, Soutus, Psois, Dionysius, Petronius and others; St Achillius, Bishop of Larissa; Our Holy Father Silvanus.