

SOBORNOST

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wed: Liturgy of the
Presanctified Gifts 6:00 PM

Sat: Confession 4:30 PM

Great Vespers 5:00 PM

Sun: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

April 2, 2023 – 5th Sunday in Great Lent

St. Mary of Egypt

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasίου

Many people nowadays, because of various unstable circumstances in their lives, are tormented by states of guilt, which inevitably lead to existential suffering, depression and despair. The Church, however, offers us consolation by showing us ways to escape from disillusionment, the devil's strongest weapon for man's destruction, and making us aware of the fact that we have enormous potential for transformation through the energy of divine grace. However bad the state in which we find ourselves, we can attain to deification. We can become by grace what God is by nature.

The whole of ecclesiastical life is focused on this goal, because without this perspective the Church becomes secularized. The theology of [theosis] deification is evident in every part of the Church's life: in the definitions and canons of the Ecumenical and Local Councils; in patristic teaching; in the sacramental prayers of the Church, particularly those of the great Sacrament of the Divine Eucharist; and in the ecclesiastical arts, such as hymnography and iconography.



The Church is not content, however, just to teach about theosis, but presents us with specific examples to demonstrate how a person in the most wretched condition can experience blessed deification [theosis]. One such example is St Mary of Egypt, whose memory the Church has appointed to be celebrated not just on the day of her repose (1st April) but also on the 5th Sunday of Great Lent, to encourage each of us on our path to deification and sanctification.

The life of St Mary of Egypt was written by St Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem, a saintly patristic figure of the 6th to 7th century. He is also the author of various ascetical texts and hymns imbued with the spirit of Orthodox theology and the ascetic tradition. He wrote this biography from the accounts of the fathers of the monastery where Abba Zosimas had lived, which had been passed on by word of mouth. The text is now preserved in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*. There are also translations of the life in circulation as independent publications.

The narrative tells us that the hieromonk Abba Zosimas was adorned with sanctity of life. He saw divine visions and had received the gift of divine enlightenment, having lived until the age of fifty-three in great asceticism, and he was renowned in the surrounding region. Then, however, the thought came to him that he was in some way spiritually superior, and he began to wonder if there was any other monk alive who had anything to offer him, or could teach him any new form of asceticism. In order to instruct and correct him, God revealed to him that no one can reach perfection. He then told him to go to a monastery situated on the River Jordan.

Abba Zosimas obeyed God's voice and went to the Monastery of St John the Baptist as he had been told. He met the Abbot and the monks, and perceived that they were radiant with theoria and praxis, and lived an intense monastic life in poverty, great asceticism and ceaseless prayer.

There was a rule at this monastery that on Cheese Sunday, just before the beginning of Great Lent, when all the monks had received Holy Communion, prayed and greeted each other, they should take a few provisions and leave for the desert on the other side of the Jordan, to undertake ascetic struggles during the period of Great Lent. They would return to the monastery on Palm Sunday to commemorate the Passion, Cross and Resurrection of Christ. The brethren were not allowed to meet one another in the wilderness, nor to ask each other on their return what kind of asceticism they had undertaken during this period.

Abba Zosimas put this rule into practice. Taking some meager provisions, he left the monastery and went into the desert. His desire was to go as far into it as he could, in the hope of encountering a Father who could help him to attain what he longed for. He prayed as he walked, eating very little, and sleeping wherever he happened to be.

After he had walked for about twenty days, while he was sitting down to rest and singing psalms, he saw in the distance a shadow that looked like a human form. At first he thought it was a demonic delusion, but then he realized that it was a person. The human being he saw was naked, had a black body – the color was due to the sun's rays – and had a few white hairs on his or her head that reached no further than the neck.

Abba Zosimas attempted to draw near to ascertain what he was seeing, but the person went further away. Abba Zosimas ran, and so did he or she. Weeping, the Abba shouted to the figure to stop so that he could receive a blessing. There was no response. When the Abba reached a stream and was worn out, the other person, who caused the Abba great amazement by addressing him by his Christian name, told him that she could not turn round to face him because she was a naked woman and the parts of her body were uncovered. She asked him, if he would, to throw her a rag from his clothing to cover her naked body and then to give her his blessing. The Abba did as she said, and she then turned towards him. At once the Abba knelt down to receive her blessing, and she did the same. Both remained on their knees “each asking the other to bless”. This was the first encounter between Abba Zosimas and St Mary of Egypt, whose name had not been revealed to the Abba (and would not be until after her death).

As the Abba was wondering whether she might be an immaterial spirit, she told him that she was a sinful woman who had been walled about by Holy Baptism, and was dust and ashes, not an incorporeal spirit. Conversing with Abba Zosimas in an atmosphere of penitence, St Mary revealed her life to him.

According to the account of the woman whose name was later, after her death, revealed to him to be Mary, from the age of twelve she had lived a dissolute life in Egypt, having lost her virginity at that tender age, and she possessed an uncontrollable and insatiable passion for sexual intercourse. She did not earn money by her manner of life, but simply satisfied her passion. She told him, “I was a public provocation to depravity, not, I swear to you, for the sake of money”, for she did what she did without payment, but “fulfilling my own desire”. As she disclosed to him, she had an insatiable desire and irrepressible yearning to wallow in her filthy life, and her way of thinking was a disgrace to human nature.

Because of her immoral life and carnal desire, she followed the pilgrims going to Jerusalem to venerate the Precious Cross. She did not do so in order to venerate the Precious Cross, but so as to have many lovers willing to satisfy her passion. She describes very realistically how she embarked on the ship. As she herself disclosed, there was no form of lewdness, mentionable or not, that she did not teach those wretched travelers in the course of the journey. She expressed her

surprise that the sea endured her depravities and the earth did not open its mouth and swallow her up, so many souls did she ensnare. In the course of this journey she was not content just to corrupt her young fellow-travelers, but also defiled many others, both inhabitants of the city and foreigners. When she arrived in Jerusalem during the feast of the Precious Cross she went round the streets “hunting for young men”.

She was brought to a sense of profound repentance, however, by a miraculous event. As she was going into the Church to venerate the Wood of the Precious Cross, some sort of power prevented her from proceeding. Then she stood before an icon of the Holy Mother of God, showed great repentance, and sought guidance and help from the Mother of God. With her help she entered the Church this time without hindrance and venerated the Precious Cross. Then, having thanked the Holy Mother of God, she heard a voice urging her to go to the desert on the other side of the Jordan. She asked the Mother of God for her assistance and protection, then made her way to the desert, after first passing by the Monastery of St John the Baptist beside the River Jordan and partaking of the Most Pure Mysteries. For forty-seven years she lived in the desert without ever meeting anyone.

For the first seventeen years in the desert she wrestled fiercely to vanquish her thoughts and desires, essentially to overcome the devil who was making war on her through memories of her former life. As she confessed herself, for seventeen years she lived in the desert “fighting with irrational desires as if with wild beasts”. She often desired different sorts of food and drink, as well as “immoral songs”, and she had many thoughts urging her to fornication. However, whenever a thought arose in her, she would fall to the ground, water the earth with her tears, and not get up “until such time as that sweet light shone around me, and drove away the thoughts that were troubling me”. She prayed continuously to the Holy Mother of God, who was her guarantor in the life of penitence that she was leading. Her clothing became torn and wore out, and from then on she was naked. She was burnt by the intense heat and trembled with the freezing cold, and “many times I fell down and stayed there barely breathing and motionless”.

After a hard struggle, through the grace of God and the constant protection of the Holy Mother of God, she was freed from thoughts and desires. Then the rational and passible parts of her soul were transformed, and even her body was deified. She herself informed Abba Zosimas of this with great humility.

Because of the high spiritual state St Mary had reached, she had received from God the gift of discernment. By means of this gift she not only knew Abba Zosimas's name, but also his deeds. She even saw what he was thinking.

She was naked, but her body had overcome its natural needs. She said, “I am a woman and naked, as you see, and the shame of my body is uncovered”. Her body was nourished by the grace of God: “I am fed and covered by the word of God Who upholds all things”. In her case, as in the case of other saints, we observe that the energies of the body are suspended. This suspension of bodily energies came about because her soul received the energy of the Triune God, and this divine energy was transmitted to her body as well. “The grace of the Spirit, she said, is sufficient to sustain the essence of the soul intact”.

During this first encounter Abba Zosimas saw St Mary of Egypt while she was praying. She had unceasing prayer, and Abba Zosimas actually saw her lift her eyes to heaven, spread out her hands and “begin to whisper a prayer, but her words could not be distinguished”. At one point, while he was sitting watching fearfully, “he saw her raised about a foot above the ground and praying while suspended in the air”.

When Orthodox theology speaks of the deification of man it means the deification of his thoughts, his desires and his body: the deification of his complete psychosomatic organism. This is clearly demonstrated in the life of St Mary of Egypt.

At this first meeting, when St Mary had revealed her whole life to Abba Zosimas, she asked him to come the following year on Holy Thursday to a particular place on the bank of the River Jordan, close to an inhabited area, to give her Holy Communion after many years of profound repentance that had transformed her being. “I now desire this with the unquenchable longing of love,” she told him. She had an irresistible longing to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Abba Zosimas returned to the monastery without telling anybody what exactly had happened to him, as was in any case the rule in that monastery. He continuously besought God, however, to count him worthy to see “that dear face” again the following year. He was vexed at how slowly time passed, wishing that whole year could be a single day.

The next year, as St Mary had foretold to him, an illness prevented Abba Zosimas from leaving the monastery for the desert like the other fathers at the beginning of Great Lent, and he had to remain in the monastery. When the other fathers of the monastery returned on Palm Sunday, he prepared to go to the place that the Saint had indicated to him, to give her Holy Communion.

On Holy Thursday he took with him the Body and Blood of Christ in a small chalice, as well as a few figs and dates and some soaked lentils, and left the monastery to meet St Mary. As she was late arriving at the agreed place, the Abba

prayed to God in tears not to deprive him, on account of his sins, of the opportunity to see her again.

After fervent prayer, he saw her coming from the other side of the Jordan. She made the sign of the Cross, stepped onto the water of the river “and walked on the surface of the water, coming towards him”. The Saint asked him to say the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, then she greeted him and partook of the life-giving Mysteries. After that she raised her hands to heaven, sighed tearfully and said, “Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace according to Your word: for my eyes have seen Your salvation”.

After entreating him to come again the following year to the stream where he had met her the first time, she asked him to pray for her. The Abba touched the Saint's feet, sought her prayers, and let her leave, “lamenting and mourning” because he did not dare “detain the one whom nothing could hold back”. She left in the same manner as she had come, walking on the water of the River Jordan.

A year later, in accordance with the Saint's request, the Abba hastened to reach “that wonderful sight”. After walking for many days he reached the place. Like “an expert hunter”, he looked for “that sweetest prey”, God's Saint, but could not see her anywhere. Then he began to pray contritely to God, “Show me, Lord, Your inviolate treasure, that You have hidden in this desert. Show me, I beseech You, the angel incarnate of whom the world is unworthy”. For Abba Zosimas St Mary was an untouchable treasure that the world was unworthy to possess, an angel in human form. As he prayed in these words, he saw “the Saint lying dead, with her hands placed as was fitting, and lying in such a way as to face towards the East”. He also found a written message from her, saying, “Abba Zosimas, bury the body of humble Mary in this place, returning dust to dust, and pray always to the Lord for me, who died on the first day of the Egyptian month of Parmoute, which the Romans call April, on the same night as the saving Passion, after partaking of the divine and mystical supper”.

The Saint had departed this life on the same day as she received Holy Communion, having covered in one hour a distance that Abba Zosimas took twenty days to travel the previous year. St Sophronios writes, “The same route along which Zosimas had journeyed for twenty laborious days, Mary traversed in one hour, and immediately departed to God”. Her body had acquired other properties: it had been transfigured.

After he had wept profusely and recited the psalms appropriate to the occasion, Abba Zosimas “said the funeral prayers”. Then, with deep contrition and “moistening the body with tears”, he turned his attention to burying her. Because the earth was hard, however, and he was getting on in years, he was unable to dig

and found himself in a dilemma. At that point “he saw a large lion standing by the body of the Saint, licking her feet”. The Abba was afraid, but the lion itself “showed its good intentions towards him not only by its gestures, but by its whole disposition”. The lion itself was urging and encouraging the Abba by its movements and its behaviour to proceed with her burial. Emboldened by the lion's meekness, the Abba asked it to dig the grave itself so that St Mary's body could be buried, as he could not do it himself. The lion obeyed. “While he was still speaking it immediately dug a trench with its front legs, large enough for the body to be buried”.

The burial of the Saint took place with the Abba praying and the lion “standing by”. Afterwards both of them departed, “the lion went back into the depths of the desert like a lamb. Zosimas returned, blessing and praising Christ our God”.

St Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem, finishes by saying that he wrote this life “as best he could” and “preferring nothing to the truth”.

The life of St Mary of Egypt shows how an immoral woman can become a god by grace, how a human being can become an angel incarnate, and how Christian hope can replace the despair that comes from the devil. In the person of St Mary of Egypt we see someone who sought sensual pleasure and chased after men for her own satisfaction. By the grace of God, however, she was able to be sanctified to the point that saints chased after her to receive her blessing and to venerate her revered body. Even wild animals honored her.

Through her repentance and her profound humility, and because by grace she overcame her body's subjection to suffering and death, St Mary of Egypt offers consolation to us all. On the other hand, she also humbles those who are proud of their ascetic achievements. She not only tamed the ferocious beasts within her, her irrational passions, but also transcended all the limits of human nature and even pacified wild animals in the created world.

This is the purpose of Christ's incarnation and the wealth it bestows, as preserved within the Church. Through revelational theology and life in Christ, man can be completely transformed. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 9:11-14 EOB

Brethren, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, he entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation. It was not through the blood of goats and calves but through his own blood that he entered into the Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. Indeed, if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer (sprinkling those who have been defiled) could sanctify to restore the

purity of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to offer divine service to the living God?

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Mark 10:32-45 EOB

At that time, Jesus took the Twelve [aside] and began to tell them about the things that were going to happen to him. “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him to death and deliver him to the Gentiles. They will mock him, spit on him, scourge him, and kill him. On the third day, he will rise again.” James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Jesus and said, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we will ask!” He replied, “What do you want me to do for you?” They answered, “Grant to us that we may sit, one at your right hand, and one at your left hand, in your glory.” But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking! Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They replied, “We are able!” Jesus said to them, “You shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and you shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with! However, to sit at my right hand and at my left hand is not mine to give, but it is for whom it has been prepared.” When the ten heard this, they became upset with James and John. Jesus called them, and told them, “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you! Whoever wants to become great among you shall be your servant. Whoever of you wants to become first among you shall be slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Brethren and fathers, Lent is already galloping past and the soul rejoices at the imminence of Pascha, because by it it finds rest and is relieved of many toils. Why did this thought sound for me in advance? Because it is as if our whole life directs its reason contemplating the eternal Pascha. For this present Pascha, even though it is great and revered, is nevertheless, as our fathers explain, only a type of that Pascha to come. For this Pascha is for one day and it passes, while that Pascha has no successor. From it *pain, grief and sighing have fled away*; (Is. 35:10) there everlasting joy, gladness and rejoicing; there the sound of those who feast, a choir of those who keep festival and contemplation of eternal light; where there is the blessed breakfast of Christ and the new drink of which Christ spoke, *I shall not drink of the fruit of this vine, until I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my*

Father. (Mat. 26:29) Of this he spoke to his disciples when he was about to ascend to heaven, I am going to prepare a place for you and, if I go, I will prepare a place for you. I am coming again and I will take you to myself, so that where I am you maybe also. And where I am going you know, and the way you know. (John 14:2) And a little further on, On that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. (John 14:20) And elsewhere, Father, I wish that where I am they may be with me also, so that they may see my glory, which you gave me, because you loved from before the foundation of the world. (John 17:24) But because this concerns not only the Apostles, but also ourselves, he also said, I do not ask this only for them, but also for those who through their word believe in me, so that all may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, that they may also be one in us. (John 17:20-21) What could be more comforting than these words? What could be more appealing? What soul can they not soften? What heart not prick with compunction, even should someone say that the human heart is a nature of stone? With thoughts like these the saints bore all that they bore, considering afflictions as joys, constraints as freedoms, struggles as delights, harsh training as relaxation, deaths as lives. I beseech you, my brother, should not we also, since we have the same aim and seek the same Pascha, bravely and courageously bear our present condition, not falling, not succumbing to despondency, but rather roused with greater fervor watching for the wicked serpent who works to deceive us by the passions, transforming himself into an angel of light, and altering things from what they are; show dark as light, bitter as sweet. This was how he ensnared our forefather, bewitching his sight and depicting as beautiful what was not, and as a result through food casting him out of Paradise. But let us, who have learned by experience what a deceiver he is, not leave the paradise of God's commandments, nor, when he indicates to us that the fruit is beautiful, let the eye of soul or body be directed there, otherwise we are being caught in the snare. But let us flee by every means from looking. What the is the fruit which seems beautiful? The love of the flesh, the evil lust of every one of the destructive passions. If we avoid experiencing them, my brothers, we shall be saved and pass over to age on age, with all the Saints in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory and might with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

– St. Theodore the Studite, *Catechesis* 66

An Interpretation of the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian

The great prayer of Ephraim the Syrian ends with an extremely important petition: "Yes, Lord King, grant me to see my own offenses, and not to condemn my brethren, for You are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen."

The condemnation of our brethren is our deepest universal habit. The condemnation of our neighbors is what we are always busy with, and we leave off the most important of all our deeds - the consideration of our own transgressions. No one has such a custom: from the beginning of the day until the very night, we think about everything, do everything, but we don't do the important thing - considering our own heart. No one does this, except for a very small number of people who have dedicated themselves to God, they have this most important, primary occupation: they look for the impurities of sin in their own hearts. When they find it, they easily and quickly get rid of it, because when they find any impurity in their hearts, they become disgusted and try their best to get rid of it. When they see sins, they will repent and be cleansed of them.

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul to us: "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Rom. 14:10). When we condemn others, we do not remember, we do not notice that we ourselves are guilty of the same. And we know that there is a judgment of God not only for the sins we have committed, for which we in turn condemn our neighbors, but also for the condemnation itself: "Do you really think, man, that you will escape the judgment of God by condemning those who do such things and doing the same yourself?" (Rom. 2:3) The Lord leads you to repentance, and not to condemnation of others. Don't worry about others.

Remember how they brought to the Lord a woman taken in adultery and asked: "Teacher, Moses ordered such sinners to be stoned. What do you think?" The Lord Jesus Christ did not immediately answer. He sat in the courtyard of the temple and wrote something with his finger in the sand. And only when they asked Him a second time, He gave the most amazing answer that He could give: "He who is without sin among you, cast the first stone." With great shame, bowing their heads, the scribes and Pharisees, who considered themselves righteous, began to disperse one after another. And Jesus wrote in the sand, and finally raised His head and asked her: "Where are your accusers? Nobody has condemned you. And I do not condemn you. Go and sin no more" (John 8:4-11).

What an amazing prohibition of condemnation, how clearly the Lord said that one should think first of all and most of all about one's own sins. He who is without sin, let him cast the first stone. We are not without sin, which means that we do not dare to throw a stone of condemnation at others, yet we throw stones constantly, every day and every night we throw stones of condemnation: "Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.... For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Rom. 14:4, 10). We need to think about this

judgment on us, about ourselves, and not be concerned with other people's sins. See how holy and important this law is.

What should we do if we see a person who obviously sins and deserves condemnation? Even then one should not condemn, one should rather put the barrier door on one's lips, not condemn the sinner, but pity him, remember that his answer is heavy before God, and silently offer up a short prayer: Lord, forgive him. And then the demon of condemnation will flee immediately, for demons flee from prayer. If we condemn, the demon will remain, and another time we will condemn, and we will condemn without end.

Where does the spirit of condemnation come from? From pride, from the fact that many consider themselves superior and better than others. Often there is condemnation from envy: we envy those who have received spiritual gifts, sometimes even just pious people, and envy leads to condemnation. They condemn from malice, from hatred. And there is very little love, but there is a lot of anger and hatred in our hearts. This malice, this hatred prompts us to condemn our neighbors, closes our eyes to our own sins and shortcomings.

We condemn a person very often and without any envy. It often depends on an ingrained habit of judgment. Judgment, like everything else, becomes our habit if we constantly condemn. Anything that is often done becomes our skill. If someone has envy, if hatred owns the heart, the habit of condemning will take root, it will always, incessantly, tirelessly condemn.

his habit must be eradicated, not allowing it to grow in us. You must catch yourself in every condemnation, condemn yourself for every condemnation. Having condemned ourselves once or twice, we will learn to refrain and stop judging others, and focus our spiritual gaze on our own heart. Therefore, let us fulfill what we ask in the prayer of Ephraim the Syrian: Yes, Lord King, grant me to see my own offenses, and not to condemn my brethren, for You are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen.

- St. Luke of Simferopol (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Martyrs Polycarp of Alexandria & Amphianus and Edesius of Lycia

The Holy Martyr Polycarp was killed after he denounced the impious Emperor Maximian (305-313) for shedding the blood of innocent Christians in the city of Alexandria. As a devout Christian who was filled with zeal for God, he could not simply stand by when every day he saw many of the faithful being tortured because they refused to deny Christ. One day Saint Polycarp saw the ruler sitting in his chair and watching as the blood of Christians flowed like water. The Saint stood before him and questioned him saying, "Why have you so forgotten human

nature, you insatiable dog, that you cut down your relatives and fellow countrymen with swords like wood, because they proclaim the one true God and refute the error of idolatry; just as I do, who am a servant of Christ?" Because he angered the ruler by saying such things, Saint Polycarp was arrested and tortured. Finally, he was beheaded, dying with the name of Christ on his lips. By being cut down like a vine-branch, he offered much fruit to Christ, and received the crown of martyrdom.

The Holy Martyrs Amphianus (Apphianus) and Edesius (Aidesius) were brothers. They lived in the city of Patara (province of Lycia) in the family of the pagan governor. They went to the city of Beirut to study the pagan sciences. There they became ardent followers of Christ. The holy brothers left their pagan parents and went to Alexandrian Caesarea, where they found an instructor, Saint Pamphilius (February 16), and under his guidance they became accomplished in the spiritual life, spending their time in prayer and the study of sacred books. By decree of the emperor Maximian (305-313), a zealous pagan and cruel persecutor of Christians, all the inhabitants of Caesarea were required to offer public sacrifice. Many Christians, including Saints Amphianus and Edesius, had to hide in order to avoid sacrificing to idols.

When the city prefect of Caesarea was about to offer sacrifice to idols, Saint Amphianus boldly went into the temple, took the prefect's hand, and urged him to abandon his error and believe in Christ. By order of the governor, soldiers seized Saint Amphianus, fiercely beat him and then threw him in prison. Two days later they led him to trial, where they beat him with iron rods and burned his body with bundles of flax soaked in oil. The brave youth, steadfastly confessing his faith in Christ, was then thrown into the sea with a stone about his neck. Suddenly a storm arose, and the waves carried the martyr's body to shore, where it was buried by Christians. After a while they freed Saint Edesius and sent him to Alexandria. There he boldly denounced the governor Hierokles for his extreme cruelty towards Christians. Saint Edesius was tortured and then drowned. *(from oca.org)*

Also Commemorated Today

Venerable [Titus](#) the Wonderworker (9th c.).

Martyr [Polycarp](#) of Alexandria (4th c.).

Venerable Gregory, ascetic of Nicomedia (1290).

[St. George](#) of Mtskheta Monastery (9th c.) (*Georgia*).

St. Nicetius, bishop of Lyons (573) (*Gaul*).

Virgin-martyr [Theodora](#) of Palestine (*Greek*).

[St. Sabbas](#), archbishop of Crimea (11th c.).

Virgin Bronach (Bronanna) of Glen-Seichis (6th c.?)

St. Nennidh Lamghlann (Nennidhius Mundimannus 'of the clean hand'), priest (6th c.)

St. Conall, Bishop of Clonallan (6th c.)
Martyrs Amphianus, Victor, and 14 companions (unk)
Martyr-king Constantine II of Scotland (874)
Virgin-martyr Ebba the Younger, abbess of Coldingham in the Marshes (879)
St. Rufus of Glendalough
St. Abundius, Bishop of Como (469) (Italy)
St. Drogo, monk at Fleury-sur-Loire and Baume-les-Messieurs (10th c.)(France)
St. Lonochilus (Lenogisil), priest-monk in Maine (653)(France)
St. Agnofleda, virgin of Maine (638)
St. Musa, virgin (6th c.)(Rome)
St. Urban, bishop of Langres (c. 390)
St. Victor, bishop of Capua (554)(Italy)

Social Team for April 9

Team 5 is up next week - Cooper, M. Blaydoe, Roberta Corson, Mary V., Steven Watts. Thank you!

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri & Mt. Kenya, Bennett family, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Roberta Corson, Jon Church, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, Helen P. Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Helen, Brian, Luke and Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & family, Nicholas Pavlik, Weston Perry & family, John Reece, Mary Reed, Marge Rusnak, Rose Song, Fr. Nectarios & la, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the suffering people of Ukraine, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)