

SOBORNOST

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE

SERVICES

Wednesday: Lay Vespers 6:30 PM

Saturday: Vespers 5 PM

Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10 AM

**May 21, 2023 – 6th Sunday of Pascha | Sunday of the
Blind Man**

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

"When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." (Jn. 9:6)

The blind man of today's Gospel reading not only had an eye ailment that deprived him of the ability to see, but he was congenitally blind. That means he was eyeless. That is, not only did he not have the sense of sight, but he had no eyes at all. So the Lord did both. On the one hand, He created eyes and on the other hand, He gave him the power of sight. However, the way of Christ's creative energy in this case, shows some truths that we want to emphasize with today's short sermon.

Reading the Gospel passage we are faced with an act of creation that proves that Christ, as one of the Persons of the Holy Trinity, is God and the creator of men. The way in which the Lord worked miracles clearly reveals the way man was created by the Triune God.

According to the divinely inspired account of the Old Testament, "God created man from the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Exactly the same we see happening in the present



case. "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay."

With the Clay He Used, He Showed That He is the One who Created Adam.

Then we notice that He not only created the eyes or opened them, but "received sight". And of course it was not the clay nor the pool water that gave him the ability to see, but "the power that came out of His mouth, and having formed them He opened his eyes" (Theophylact of Bulgaria).

Thus, from this action of Christ, His Divinity is proved, that it was through Him the world was made. This is what the evangelist John says, enlightened by the Holy Spirit: "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:3-4).

On the other hand, the great truth is presented that the body is a direct creation of God and that it comes from the earth. Therefore the value of the human body lies in the fact that it is the result of God's direct creative energy and that it has the soul within it. The human body is clay, soil, but soil that has in it the energy of God or the logoi, as the Holy Fathers emphasize. These logoi give value to the human body. Thus the illumined Christians, those who have reached the state of theoria, see in creation and in man the logoi of God, that is why they do not reach the miserable state of deifying created things or to be offended by them in various ways.

It is Worth Noting That the Birth of a Man is a New Creation.

The Lord emphasized the truth: "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (John 5:17). According to the Fathers, there are no natural created laws that act in nature, but spiritual logoi. That is, the very presence of God creates and directs everything. Creation lives "through sharing in God's creative, foreknowing and life-giving energy." Sacred Chrysostom teaches that the hand of God, who created Adam, this same hand "is now with them again stretching out and reconciling". Therefore, the birth of a new man is an extension of God's creative energy and is in fact an energy of the logoi: "You shall increase and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28). This truth is repeatedly presented in Holy Scripture. For example, for the Prophetess Anna, the mother of the Prophet Samuel, it is said that "the Lord shut up her womb" (1 Samuel/Kings 1:5-6). And when it pleased the Lord, He opened her womb. That is, God opens the womb when He wants and closes it when He wants. Of course, this is incomprehensible to today's people, but we must think in a biblical way. Sacred Chrysostom observes: "That which is born has its beginning from above, from the providence of God, and neither female nature, nor intercourse, nor any other self-sufficient

action does". That is why it is a great sin when God gives the blessing to a woman to bear a child in the world and she refuses ... She hinders the creative energy of God.

The Miracle of the Man Blind From Birth Also Shows the Purpose of Christ's Coming Into the World.

He came to recreate and reform the human race. Thus Christ through His incarnation not only brought light to the world, but "also formed the eyes". With Holy Baptism all the senses of the human body become senses of the Body of Christ. Man unites with Christ and acquires meaning in his life. As the goldsmith takes a raw piece of gold, puts it in the furnace, where it is cleaned of impurities, and then places it in various molds and gives it shape, the same is done with man through Holy Baptism. "Our formless and vague life" takes on "form and limit" (Nicholas Cabasilas).

All of this shows that Christ is not just the leader of our faith, but our Life. He has given us life, sustains us in life, and gives us the taste and experience of eternal life. Our blindness stops when we live sacramentally in the Church. Those outside the Church are blind and unable to interpret the issues of life. Christians are truly enlightened, since they are united with the "Light of the world" and have eyes to see the eternal Light. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

Today's Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 16:16-34

As we were going to prayer, it happened that we encountered a certain girl who had a spirit of divination and who produced much profit to her masters by fortune telling. As she followed Paul and us, she cried out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us a way of salvation!" And she did this for many days. But Paul, becoming greatly annoyed, turned back and said to the spirit, "In the Name of Jesus Christ, I order you to come out of her!" And the spirit came out that very moment. When her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. Having brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These Jewish men are causing unrest in our city! They teach customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or observe!" When the crowd also rose up against them, the magistrates had them stripped and flogged. After giving them a severe flogging, the magistrates had them thrown into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a command, he threw them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. But when it was about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly, there was a great earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once, all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds

were loosened. The jailer, awoken from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, began to draw his sword and he was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" Having asked for lights, the jailer rushed in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. He brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household!" Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all those who were in his household. Late as it was, the jailer washed their wounds and was immediately baptized, he and his entire household. He took them into his house and set food before them. He was filled with joy for believing in God, along with his entire household.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 9:1-38

At that time, as Jesus was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but [it was] in order that the works of God might be revealed in him. I must do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva and anointed the blind man's eyes with the mud. He then said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). And so, the man went away, washed, and came back seeing. At this, the neighbors and those who saw that he had been blind before said, "Is this not the man who sat and begged?" Others were saying, "It is he!" Still others were saying, "He looks like him." The man said, "I am he!" Therefore, the people asked him, "How were your eyes opened?" He answered, "A man called Jesus made mud, anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash.' And so, I went away and washed, and I received sight." Then they asked him, "Where is he?" The man replied, "I do not know." They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It was a Sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Again, the Pharisees also asked the man how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and I see!" At this, some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was division among them. Therefore, they asked the blind man again, "What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet!" The Jews did not believe [the report] about this man, that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of this man who had received his sight. They asked the parents, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and

that he was born blind. But how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. He is of age. Ask him! He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone would confess Jesus as Christ, this person would be expelled from the synagogue. Therefore, his parents said, “He is of age. Ask him!” And so, they called the man who had been blind a second time, and they told him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner!” At this, the man answered, “I do not know if he is a sinner. One thing I do know: that though I was blind, now I see!” Again, they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You do not also want to become his disciples, do you?” Then they insulted him and said, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered them, “How amazing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners; God will listen to anyone who is God-fearing and who does his will. Since the world began, it has never been heard of that anyone opened the eyes of someone born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born completely in sins, and do you teach us?” And they threw him out. Jesus heard that they had thrown out the man born blind, he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” The man answered, “Who is he, Sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking with you.” Then the man said, “Sir, I believe!” and he expressed adoration to Jesus.

Homily on the Sixth Eothinon Gospel - Luke 24:36-53

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

Today's Eothinon Gospel is a continuation of the events that took place last Sunday, as we heard. That is, the two disciples, who were going to Emmaus and recognized the Risen Christ, hastened to the other disciples and informed them of all that took place. And at that time, Christ Himself appeared in their midst, without them expecting it. Therefore, in today's Gospel we hear about the appearance of the Risen Christ to His disciples, as well as His Ascension into the heavens. These are two great events of importance for the whole world.

In His appearance to His disciples described today we can highlight three points. One is that the disciples were surprised by the unannounced appearance of Christ. They saw Him in their midst, without any procedure, which is why they believed him to be a ghost, which frightened them. Christ calmed them down by granting them His peace. This was an amazing and new experience for them and it was natural and human for them to be frightened.

When we say that Christ resurrected we mean that Christ as God resurrected human nature, the body which He received from His All-Holy Mother. Therefore, we have a resurrection of the body, for neither God died, nor did the soul of Christ die. Yet the Body of the Risen Christ was different from His body before He resurrected. It was the same body, but without the so-called natural blameless passions. Christ urged them to touch Him, which signifies that it was the same body, without the properties of corruption and death. Because the disciples once again doubted, Christ asked them for some food to show them He had an actual body, but without the properties of corruption and death. Of course, the body of Christ had no need for food, but Christ ate, according to condescension and *economia*, in order to bring them to belief. And the Fathers say that the food He ate did not enter His digestive system which He did not have, but it was consumed by His divinity. Christ only did this for the disciples to believe that He was not a ghost.

This is an example of how our bodies will be after they are resurrected, which will take place at the Second Coming of Christ. Souls will enter back into bodies, which they had been separated from at death, and all the bodies will resurrect and will be different. All those bodies which in this life also possessed the energy of the Holy Spirit, will shine and radiate.

The second point is that Christ developed that which the prophets in the Old Testament said, and He reminded them of those things He told His disciples as long as He lived with them, before His Crucifixion. Then the Lord enlightened their minds that they may understand the Scriptures. This means that we must read Holy Scripture and the patristic writings. In this way God will bless and enlighten our minds to enter the deeper meaning of what we read and hear. Reason can understand things externally, but an enlightened mind has another sense and gives another interpretation. The interpretation of Holy Scripture is not a matter for smart people, but for people who have the All-Holy Spirit within them.

And the third point is that Christ gave them a command to become witnesses of the Resurrection, as well He assured them they would receive the All-Holy Spirit and with His power they would convey the message of the Resurrection of Christ to the entire world.

The Saints through the ages are witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ, since they saw the Risen Christ, they recognized Him, joined themselves to Him, and with the power of the Holy Spirit they became witnesses of His Resurrection. To this category belongs Saint Paraskevi, along with Saint Panteleimon. May we have their intercessions to personally experience these events and become witnesses of the Resurrection of Christ. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

A Word From the Holy Fathers

While our Lord Jesus Christ was going about among men on earth in the body He had assumed from us for our sake, He healed many people who were physically and spiritually blind. If we consider the transition from unbelief to faith, from ignorance to the knowledge of God, as a restoration of sight to the mind, it is impossible to count how many blind people received their sight through the Lord's Incarnation. Only He who numbers the hairs of our head knows how many they were. If, however, we look at those whose physical eyes were healed, we shall find that they too were many. Some were healed by Christ through a word alone, others by His touch; several just by drawing near and falling down before Him; a few were anointed with spittle of clay. When Jesus drew near to the Sea of Galilee, Matthew tells us, "great multitudes came to him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others" (Mat. 15:30), and when they cast them down at His feet He healed them, so that the crowds wondered and glorified Him when they saw the dumb speaking, the lame walking, the maimed made whole, and the blind able to see.

At the time of His marvelous entry into Jerusalem, sitting upon a donkey's foal in accordance with the prophecy (Zech. 9:9) and hymned by the children as God, Matthew tells us that Christ healed all the blind and lame people who came to Him. When He came to Bethsaida, as Mark recounts, they brought a blind man to Him and besought Him to heal him. The Lord led him out of the town, and having spit on his eyes and put His hands upon him, He enabled him to see dimly. Then when He had put His hands on him again He gave him clear vision (Mk. 8:22-26). On the other hand, when the Lord, as Luke says, drew near to Jericho, He healed the blind man sitting by the wayside begging, just with a word, saying, "Receive your sight," when the man asked for healing (Luke 19:35-43). According to Mark, as He was leaving Jericho, He restored the eyes of another blind man, Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, replying to his plea for sight with the words, "Let it be according to your faith" (Mk. 10:46-52). In Jerusalem, as John relates, He saw a man who was blind from his birth, and without even being asked, moved by His own goodness, He spat on the ground and made clay, anointed the eyes of the blind man and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." And he went and washed, and came back seeing (Jn. 9:1-7)....

Leaving aside those who cannot be enumerated, we can count six blind men who were healed. I doubt if any blind person in Judaea or the surrounding areas in those days remained sightless. That is why Isaiah, prophesying as Christ's representative, said that he was sent by the Father and His Spirit "to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind" (Is. 61:1 LXX).

Why does the prophet speak of “preaching restoration of sight,” rather than “giving it,” as this is what actually happened? Because the Lord's principal reason for coming to earth was not to open men's physical eyes, but the eyes of their souls, which receive their sight through the preaching of the gospel. So it was only right that the prophet should say that the Lord would preach recovery of sight to the blind.

The Lord Himself exhorts us to seek after spiritual things, saying, “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for that food which endures to everlasting life” (Jn. 6:27), but He also promises to provide for our bodily needs if we pursue what is good for our souls, telling us, “Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you” (Lk. 12:31). He acts in the same way with regard to men's sight. Having, in His love for mankind, bowed the heavens and come down to earth in order to enlighten the eyes of our souls and give sight to our understanding through preaching the gospel, He also healed physical eyes that could not see. The recovery of spiritual sight and the healing of physical blindness have much in common.... The blind men who had followed Christ received perfect enlightenment not only of their bodies, but also of their souls.

Let us too, brethren, follow the light which illumines both soul and body. Let us make our way towards His brilliance, and let us walk honestly as in the day of the Lord. Let us glorify Him with good works, and cause those who see us to give Him glory. Let us flee from the darkness which is opposed to the light, that is, the devil, the patron of sin. As the Sun of all righteousness, integrity, peace, compassion, long-suffering, love, and all the virtues, this light makes those who devote themselves to Him partakers of the light. The opposing darkness, however, being evil, makes those who approach it immoral, adulterous, malicious, merciless, disorderly, rapacious, and full of all kinds of wickedness. How do you think we can distinguish between believers and unbelievers, the illuminated and the unenlightened, that is to say, between those baptized as Christians and belonging to Christ, and those who are unbaptized and in the devil's ranks? Is it not by their words? Is it not by their deeds? Is it not by their ways?

So if someone speaks, acts, and behaves exactly like the unbaptized, even though he says he has received baptism in Christ, it is obvious that he belongs among that group of people of whom the apostle said “they profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit. 1:16). With whom do you think we should rank such people who simultaneously confess, and deny God? With the believers? But they disown God by their actions. With the unbelievers? But their tongues profess their faith. This is truly an extraordinarily difficult dilemma to resolve. The Psalmist and prophet, however, had already found the answer to the problem, saying, “you, O

Lord, render to every man according to his work“ (Ps. 62:12). The Lord himself made it clear that anyone who heard his sayings and did not do them was a fool. Paul, the apostle called from heaven, said, “to those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, the Lord will render eternal life: but tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man which does evil“ (see Rom. 2:6-9). Also, “for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified“ (Rom. 2:13). And, “you make your boast of the law, but through breaking the law, you dishonor God” (Rom. 2:23).

Paul told the Jews that “circumcision truly profits, if you keep the law: but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision is made uncircumcision” (Rom. 2:25), so it is not at all out of keeping for me to say to you, that faith is profitable, if you behave conscientiously, purify yourself through confession and repentance, and put into practice the undertakings made to God at baptism; but if you disobey your conscience and set aside your promises, your faith becomes unbelief. Why do we believe that, having been baptized, we shall be saved? Clearly, because we have heard the Lord saying, “he who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). Since He who is the truth spoke of these two things, believing and being baptized, it is impossible for anyone who does not want to be baptized to be saved, even if he says he believes; nor can someone who does not believe be saved, even if he has been baptized. Perhaps somebody will say that everyone who has been baptized believes? He will hear from the apostle, “show me your faith by means of your works” (James 2:18). That is why the Lord links faith with holy baptism, uniting by means of faith the keeping of his commandments with baptism. He said the words to his disciples, “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15), then He continues, “he who believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

What does the Lord tell us in the gospel preached by his messengers, and what must those who obey it believe? Whoever has Christ's commandments, and acts upon them and keeps them, he it is who loves Christ; that salvation is obtained through patience and the straight and narrow way of life; that, unless our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. These are the teachings Christ commanded His disciples to proclaim.

A believer is a person who strives to keep the divine commandments; but anyone who does not try to keep them, and does not consider it a loss to fail to do so, will not stand among the baptized, even if he says he has received baptism. “The Lord of that servant shall cut him asunder,” it says, “and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites” (Mat. 24:50,51). So far, this is set before us as a threat, since the Lord, in His love for mankind, waits for us to repent. But He has cut the Jews asunder as a lesson to us. Instead of kinsmen with himself, and with Abraham, He

made them strangers, telling them “you are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do” (John 8:44) and, “if you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham” (John 8:39). Everybody knows they were of Abraham’s race. So if acting and behaving in an alien way can annul physical family ties and deprive sons according to blood of their sonship, how can our dissimilarity to the Lord in our works and way of life fail to alienate us, who are not of the same race as Christ according to the flesh, from our adoption as God’s sons, and put us on the enemy's side?

The Lord who loves us found fit to tell us these things, and we, who are subject to the same passions, as yourselves, dare to say them, in order that we may not act in such a way, suffer the same punishment, and make ourselves liable to the judgment reserved for those who are finally rejected. Not only can we avoid this here and now by repenting, but through the fruits of repentance, we can also stand with the Son of God, and become like him, who is able to turn the unworthy into the worthy, and to make us through himself sons of the heavenly Father, and heirs and fellow heirs of His and His Father’s glory and kingdom.

May we attend to this in Christ our Lord himself, to whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages of ages. Amen.

– St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 30*

Saints Constantine and Helen, Equals to the Apostles

As the earthly Sovereigns had the earthly crown in common, so now they have in common the crown celestial. On the twenty-first Constantine died with his mother.

This great and renowned sovereign of the Christians was the son of Constantine Chlorus (the ruler of the westernmost parts of the Roman empire), and of the blessed Helen. He was born in 272, in (according to some authorities) Naissus of Dardania, a city on the Hellespont. In 306, when his father died, he was proclaimed successor to his throne. In 312, on learning that Maxentius and Maximinius had joined forces against him, he marched into Italy, where, while at the head of his troops, he saw in the sky after midday, beneath the sun, a radiant pillar in the form of a cross with the words: "By this you shall conquer". The following night, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in a dream and declared to him the power of the Cross and its significance. When he arose in the morning, he immediately ordered that a labarum be made (which is a banner or standard of victory over the enemy) in the form of a cross, and he inscribed on it the Name of Jesus Christ. On the 28th of October, he attacked and mightily conquered Maxentius, who drowned in the Tiber River while fleeing. The following day, Constantine entered Rome in triumph and was proclaimed Emperor of the West by the Senate, while Licinius, his brother-in-law, ruled in the East. But out of malice, Licinius later persecuted

the Christians. Constantine fought him once and again, and utterly destroyed him in 324, and in this manner he became monarch over the West and the East. Under him and because of him all persecutions against the Church ceased. Christianity triumphed and idolatry was overthrown.

In 325 he gathered the First Ecumenical Council in Nicea, which he himself personally addressed. In 324, in the ancient city of Byzantium, he laid the foundations of the new capital of his realm, and solemnly inaugurated it on May 11, 330, naming it after himself, Constantinople; since the throne of the imperial rule was transferred thither from Rome, it was named New Rome, the inhabitants of its domain were called Romans, and it was considered the continuation of the Roman Empire. Falling ill near Nicomedia, he requested to receive divine Baptism, according to Eusebius (*The Life of Constantine*, Book IV, 61, 62), and also according to Socrates and Sozomen; and when he had been deemed worthy of the Holy Mysteries, he reposed in 337, on May 21 or 22, the day of Pentecost, having lived sixty-five years, of which he ruled for thirty-one years. His remains were transferred to Constantinople and were deposited in the Church of the Holy Apostles, which has been built by him (see *Homily 26 on Second Corinthians* by Saint John Chrysostom).

As for his holy mother, Helen, after her son had made the Faith of Christ triumphant throughout the Roman Empire, she undertook a journey to Jerusalem and found the Holy Cross on which our Lord was crucified (see Sept. 14). After this, Saint Helen, in her zeal to glorify Christ, erected churches in Jerusalem at the site of the Crucifixion and Resurrection, in Bethlehem at the cave where the Savior was born, and another on the Mount of Olives whence He ascended into Heaven, and many others throughout the Holy Land, Cyprus, and elsewhere. She was proclaimed Augusta, her image was stamped upon golden coins, and two cities were named Helenopolis after her in Bithynia and in Palestine. Having been thus glorified for her piety, she departed to the Lord being about eighty years of age, according to some in the year 330, according to others, in 316. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Saint Gurias, First Archbishop of Kazan

Saint Gurias (in the world Gregory Rugotin) was the first archbishop of the Kazan diocese, established in 1555. He was born in the town of Radonezh outside Moscow into the family of a courtier. From his youth, Gregory was pious, humble and gentle, and he preserved his chastity. His parents were not wealthy, and so from his early years he had to serve Prince Ivan Penkov as steward of his estates. The prince was so pleased with him that he entrusted him with the management of the entire house. But this power of attorney did not last long. Other servants of the

prince, out of envy of Gregory, accused him of improprieties with the prince's wife. Irritated by the false slander, the prince ordered Gregory to be put in a dungeon, purposely arranged in a deeply dug hole. This undermined his health, but it also intensified and deepened his religious fervor. In prison, he wrote a small booklet to teach children how to read and write. He donated the proceeds from his primer to the needy.

After two years Gregory's innocence was recognized, and he was allowed to go free. Recognizing his salvation as the providence of God, he renounced the world and directed his path to the monastery of St. Joseph of Volokolamsk, known for its strict monastic rule. There he was tonsured with the name Gurias. In 1543, he was chosen by the brethren as abbot of this monastery. He administered it for almost nine years, and then he resigned as abbot and lived for two years as a simple monk.

Before becoming bishop, Saint Gurias directed the Trinity Selizharov Monastery in the Tver Diocese for one year. He was chosen by lot to the new See of Kazan, and consecrated archbishop on February 3, 1555. Assisted by Saint Barsanuphius (April 11), Saint Gurias devoted himself to missionary activity, and converted many Mohammedans to the Christian faith. In his eight years as bishop there, he organized two schools for the education of Christian and pagan children, organized four monasteries, and directed the building of the (stone) the Annunciation Cathedral Church and ten more city churches.

In 1561 the Saint fell grievously ill and could no longer perform the divine services himself. On feast days they carried him into the church, and he either sat or lay down, since he did not have the strength to walk or even stand.

Shortly before his death on December 5th 1563, he received the great schema from Saint Barsanuphius, and he was buried in the Savior-Transfiguration Monastery. On October 4, 1595, the incorrupt relics of the holy hierarchs Gurias and Barsanuphius were uncovered. Saint Hermogenes, Metropolitan of Kazan (May 12), was present at the uncovering of their relics, and he described this event in the lives of these saints. (*adapted from johnsanidopoulos.com and tatmitropolia-ru*)

Also Commemorated Today

New Hieroconfessor Schema-monk [Heraclius](#) (1936)

St. [Constantine](#) (1205) & his children Sts. Michael and Theodore, w/w of Murom
Uncovering of the relics of Blessed Andrew of Symbiksk (1998).

Venerable [Cassian](#) the Greek, monk, of Uglich (1504).

Synaxis of the Hieromartyrs of Kerel

Synaxis of the Hieromartyrs of Ufa

Venerable Agapitus, abbot of Markushev (Vologda) (hieromartyr, w/w) (1578).

The Meeting of the "Vladimir" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos

Honor list of Icon of the Mother of God "Virgin of Tenderness" from [Pskov-Pechersk](#) (1524), Zaonikievsky (1588), [Krasnogorsk](#), or Chernogorsk (1603), [Oransk](#) (1634).
St. Basil, bishop of Ryazan (1295).
St. Hospicius of Trier (Gaul) (c. 580).
New Martyr Pachomius of Patmos (Mt. Athos) (1730) (Greek).
Hieromartyr Secundus and those with him in Alexandria (356).
St. Cyril, bishop of Rostov (1262).
St. Helen of Dechani, Serbia (1350).
St. Barrfoin, monk (6th c)
Martyrs Ansuinus (priest), Ageranus, Genesisius, Bernard, Sifiard, Rodron and Adalaric (youth) of Bèze (Burgundy), slain by the Vikings (888)
St. Awen, sister of St. Benedict (Brittany)
St. Gollen of Wales (7th c)
St. Isberga, nun of Aire (France) (c. 800)
Martyr Secundinus of Cordoba (Spain)(c. 306)
St. Theobald, Archbishop of Vienne (1001)
Hieromartyrs Timothy, Polius and Euty chius, deacons of Mauretania Caesariensis (N. Africa) (c. 300)
Hieromartyr Valens, bishop of Auxerre and three boys (France)(unk)

Social Team for May 28

Team 5 – 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 & Marlina 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, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & family, Nicholas Pavlik, Weston Perry & family, John Reece, Mary Reed, Marge Rusnak, Rose Song, Fr. Nectarios & Ia, 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.)