

SOBORNOST

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*American Carpatho-Russian
Orthodox Diocese*

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES



Wed: Reader Vespers 6:30 PM

Saturday: Confession 4:30 PM | Vespers 5 PM

Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM | Sunday School 9:30 AM

~ Divine Liturgy 10 AM ~

**November 24, 2024 – 22nd Sunday After Pentecost
(10th Sunday of Luke) | Great-martyr Catherine of
Alexandria**

During the reign of the impious Emperor Maxentius, there lived in the city of Alexandria a maiden named Catherine. She was of royal lineage, very beautiful and tall, and had reached the age of eighteen. She was also most learned, having studied all the writings of the Hellenes, and had acquainted herself with the authors of antiquity: Homer, Virgil, Aristotle, Plato, and others. It was not, however, only the philosophers that she had read: she knew well the books of the physicians Asclepius, Hippocrates, and Galen. Moreover, she had entirely mastered the arts of rhetoric and dialectic and knew many languages, so that all were amazed at her learning. Numerous rich men of noble birth came to ask her hand of her mother, who held the Christian faith secretly because of the great persecution raised up against the faithful at that time by Maxentius. Catherine's mother and relatives often counseled the maiden to marry so that the royal inheritance passed down from her father would not fall into the hands of strangers and thus be lost to her family, but the wise Catherine loved virginity greatly and did not wish to be married. She answered those who urged her, "If you wish me to enter into

wedlock, find me a youth who possesses the four things which I have (as you well know) in greater measure than all other maidens, not one that is inferior to me and unworthy of my hand. Look about for a young man who is of noble lineage, wealthy, handsome, and learned; if he is lacking in one of these things, he is not worthy of me."

Unable to find such a youth, Catherine's relatives said, "Although the sons of emperors and great princes are highborn and wealthier than she, not one is as handsome or as wise." Said Catherine, "I do not desire a bridegroom who is uneducated."

Now the spiritual father of Catherine's mother, a holy man who ever sought to please God, lived in a secret place outside the city. Taking her daughter with her, Catherine's mother went to visit him and to receive good counsel concerning this matter. Seeing that the maiden was beautiful and modest and that she spoke with prudence and wisdom, he made it his purpose to bring her to know Christ, the King of heaven. He said, "I know a wondrous Youth Who is infinitely greater than you in every way. His countenance is brighter than the rays of the sun, and it is by His wisdom that all things are governed, both in the material world and the spiritual. His riches are spread throughout the whole world yet never fail, and He is unimaginably illustrious."

Thinking that the elder was speaking of some earthly prince, the maiden's heart was troubled. The expression on her face changed, and she asked him if what he had said was true. He assured her that he had spoken the truth and that the Youth possessed so many other gifts that it was impossible to tell of them all. "Whose Son is the Youth Whom you praise thus?" asked the maiden.

The elder replied, "He has no father on earth, for He was born in a manner surpassing nature, from the most noble, holy, and pure of virgins. It was because of her surpassing purity and holiness that she was deemed worthy to bear Him as her Son. Immortality has been bestowed upon both her soul and body, and she has been translated above the heavens, where the angels revere her as the Queen of all creation."

"Is it possible for me to see the Youth of Whom you relate such wondrous things?" asked Catherine. "If you do as I say," the elder replied, "you will be deemed worthy to behold His radiant countenance." Then Catherine said to him, "I see that you are a wise and venerable elder; therefore, I believe that you speak the truth. I am prepared to do whatever you say, if only I may see Him Whom you praise."

The elder gave Catherine an icon of the most holy Theotokos holding the divine Infant in her embrace, and said, "This is the image of the Virgin Mother of the Child of Whom I have told you such marvelous things. Take it to your home, lock

the doors of your room, and fervently pray till dawn to her who is depicted on it, beseeching her to permit you to behold her Son. Her name is Mary. I believe that if you call upon her with faith, she will hearken unto you and grant you the desire of your heart."

The maiden took the holy icon and returned home. That night, she shut herself in her room and prayed as the elder had instructed her. While praying, she fell asleep from weariness and beheld in a dream the Queen of the angels holding the holy Child as on the icon. He shone with light brighter than the rays of the sun, but Catherine could not see His face, which He turned away toward His Mother. Wishing to behold His countenance, Catherine moved to the other side of the room, but Christ again turned His face away. After He had done this thrice, the holy Virgin said to Him, "Behold, my Child, how fair and virtuous is Your handmaiden Catherine!"

To this He replied, "No, she is black and unsightly. I cannot bear to look upon her." "Is she not more learned than any scholar, wealthy, and of exceedingly noble birth?" asked the most holy Theotokos. "I say to you, Mother, that she is a foolish pauper and baseborn, and I will not look at her until she forsakes impiety," said Christ. Then the Lord's most blessed Mother said to Him, "I beseech You, sweetest Child, do not disdain her whom You have created. Show her what she must do to delight in Your glory and to see Your most radiant face, which angels desire to behold." "Let her return to the elder who gave her the icon," said Christ, "and do as he says. Then she will see Me, and find grace in My sight."

Catherine awoke, marveling at what she had seen and heard in the dream. The next morning, she went with a number of her maids to the cell of the holy elder and fell down in tears at his feet. She told him what she had seen in the dream and asked him what she must do to gain the love of Him Whom she so desired. The godly elder spoke to her at length of the mysteries of the true Christian faith, beginning with the creation of the world and our forefather Adam and continuing up to the Second Coming of the Master Christ. He told her of the ineffable glory of paradise and the terrible and eternal torments of hell, and she, being a learned and wise maiden, straightway understood and believed with her whole heart. Then she received Holy Baptism at the elder's hands, and he instructed her to pray fervently to the most holy Theotokos as before.

Having thus put off the old man and clothed herself with the robe of the renewal of the spirit, Catherine returned home and passed the night in fasting and tearful prayer until she again fell asleep. Once more, she beheld the Queen of heaven holding the divine Infant, Who looked upon Catherine calmly and with great compassion. The Mother of God asked her Son, "Is this maiden acceptable to You, my Son?"

Christ answered, "She pleases me greatly, for she is now as fair and delightful as she once was black and unsightly, as wealthy and wise as she was formerly poor and foolish. I truly love her, and wish to take her as My bride forever."

Catherine fell to the floor and cried, "O most glorious Master, I am unworthy to behold Thy kingdom! I ask Thee only to number me among Thy servants!" Offering her hand to the maiden, the most holy Theotokos said to her Son, "Give her, my Child, a ring as a token of Your betrothal to her, granting her a place in Your kingdom."

The Master Christ then gave Catherine a most beautiful ring, saying, "Look, today I choose you to be My betrothed for all eternity. Take care to keep this trust inviolate, and promise yourself to no earthly bridegroom." With this, He became invisible, and the vision came to an end. When the maiden awoke, she saw on her right hand a wondrous ring and felt such joy and gladness that from that hour her heart was a prisoner of divine love. So great was the change which came upon her that she gave heed no more to worldly things, thinking only of her beloved Bridegroom day and night. For Him alone did she long, and her thoughts were ever with Him, whether she was awake or asleep.

At that time the impious Emperor came to Alexandria. Full of blind zeal for his lifeless gods, he was himself, as it were, without heart or mind. Wishing to celebrate a splendid feast in honor of the gods, he sent word to every nearby city and land, commanding the people to bring sacrifices and to come worship together. A multitude of people assembled, some bringing oxen, others sheep, while the poor among them brought birds or something else of the kind. When the morning of the vile festival dawned, the foolish Emperor offered 130 bullocks in sacrifice, his princes and nobles less, and the common folk whatever they could. The whole city was filled with the sound of animals being slaughtered and the stench and smoke of sacrifice. All the people were restless and disturbed, and the air itself was utterly defiled. The right-believing and virtuous Catherine saw how the souls of men were being deceived and led to perdition, and her heart was grievously wounded, because she felt deep compassion for them. Stirred up by divine zeal, she took some of her servants and went to the temple where the useless oblations were being offered. As she entered it, the gaze of all was caught by her indescribable beauty, which testified to the comeliness of her soul. "Tell the Emperor," she said, "that I have something of great importance to say to him."

The Emperor commanded that Catherine be brought before him. Entering his presence, she prostrated herself, rendering him due homage. Then she said boldly, "Know, O Emperor, that you have been led astray by the demons, for the idols you serve are lifeless and subject to corruption. Great is the shame of the blind, foolish

men who worship such vile things! Accept the words of your wise philosopher Diodorus, who says that your gods were once impious men and that because of the notable deeds they worked during their lifetime, the people raised up pillars and statues in their honor. Later generations were unaware of the intention of their forefathers, who erected these things only as memorials. Counting the statues as worthy of reverence, the people began to worship them as gods. Know also that the famed Plutarch of Cheroinea considered that your gods were not divine, and reviled them. Believe the words of your teachers, O Emperor, and do not make yourself guilty of the perdition of many souls. In this way you may escape the eternal torment that awaits you. Come to know the one, true God, Who is ever-existent, unoriginate, and immortal, and became man in the last times for our salvation. By Him kings reign and nations are ruled, and the whole world is sustained. He created and upholds all things by His word, for He is the almighty and all-good God, Who has no need of your sacrifices and takes no delight in the slaughter of innocent beasts but commands only that we steadfastly keep His commandments."

Hearing this, the Emperor was greatly enraged, remaining speechless for a long time. Unable to reply to Catherine's words, he said only, "Leave us now to offer sacrifice, and we will hear you at another time." After his vile festival had come to an end, the impious Emperor commanded that Catherine be brought to his palace. He said to her, "Tell us, maiden, who you are, and repeat what you said before."

"I am the daughter of one of the previous emperors," the saint replied, "and my name is Catherine. Formerly I was engaged in the study of rhetoric, philosophy, geometry, and the other sciences, but now I have abandoned these things as vain and useless and have betrothed myself to the Master Christ, Who said through the prophet, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and do away with the understanding of the prudent."

The Emperor marveled at Catherine's wisdom, and seeing how fair she was, imagined that she was not the daughter of mortal parents but some goddess born to the deities whom he worshiped. He could not believe that a maiden of such indescribable loveliness could be the child of earthly parents, and wounded by her beauty, began to speak lustful words to her. The saint perceived that the Emperor's thoughts had turned to iniquity, and said to him, "The demons whom you revere as gods lead you astray and tempt you with foolish desires. But I know that I am mere dust and earth. God has created me in His image and likeness, adorning me with comeliness so that the people might marvel at the bounty of the Creator, Who has deigned to bestow wisdom and beauty upon what is corruptible and worthless."

Catherine's words annoyed the Emperor, who said, "Say no evil of the gods, for their glory is immortal!"

"If you wish to dispel the darkness and gloom of the deception that has ensnared you, understand that your gods are nothing, and come to know the true God. The mere sound of His name or the sight of His Cross traced in the air suffice to drive away and destroy your gods. If you wish, I shall prove to you the truth of my words," declared Catherine.

Afraid to be overcome and put to shame by the maiden's bold and wise words, the Emperor replied, "It is not proper for the Emperor to dispute with women. Instead, I will assemble learned philosophers to debate you. Thus you will learn how groundless are your speculations and accept our beliefs."

The Emperor commanded that the holy virgin be kept under close guard and immediately sent the following decree to every city in his dominions: "The Emperor Maxentius to all the learned philosophers and orators in the lands under my rule: Hail! Come to me, all you who serve the most wise god Hermes and call upon the Muses as patrons of erudition, and stop the mouth of a certain learned maiden who has appeared as of late and mocks our gods, calling their histories myths and fables. Come, that you may display your knowledge of the wisdom of the ancients, be acclaimed by men, and receive from me gifts as rewards for your labors!"

Fifty chosen rhetoricians, skilled in debate and mighty in declamation, assembled in Alexandria. The Emperor addressed them thus: "Prepare yourselves diligently and carefully to contend with the maiden and to prevail in dispute with her concerning the gods. Do not be slack in your efforts because it is with a woman that you debate, but make every effort to overcome her as though she were the mightiest of opponents and the wisest of orators. Display all your learning, for I have tried her and found her to be wiser than Plato; strive your best in debate against her, sparing no exertion. If you prevail over her, I will bestow upon you rich gifts, but if you are vanquished, you shall be rewarded only with a bitter death."

One of the most learned and renowned of the orators answered the Emperor, saying, "Have no fear, O Emperor, for although the maiden may possess a keen mind, it is not possible that she has attained the highest degree of learning or perfection in rhetoric. Command her to stand before us, and you will see her quickly put to shame by the mere sight of such an assembly of philosophers and rhetoricians."

Hearing the philosopher's declaration, the Emperor grew calm and was filled with joy, hoping that the vile, boastful tongues of his orators would prevail over the divine wisdom of the meek maiden. He straightway ordered that the saint be brought before him, and a great multitude of people assembled in the arena, eager

to witness the debate. Before the messengers arrived, the archangel Michael came from heaven and said to the saint, "Fear not, O maiden chosen by the Lord! The Lord shall add to your wisdom even greater wisdom, and you will prevail in debate over fifty orators. Through you they and many others shall come to believe and receive the crown of martyrdom."

When the messengers arrived, they took Catherine and led her before the Emperor and the philosophers, to be made a spectacle unto all. The vainglorious philosopher who answered the Emperor immediately began to boast before Saint Catherine and asked, "Is it you who shamelessly and foolishly reviles our gods?"

"It is I," the saint answered meekly. "But I do not revile them shamelessly and foolishly as you say. I speak the truth gently and lovingly, proclaiming that your gods do not exist."

"The great poets refer to our divinities as 'the most high gods,'" said the orator. "How then can you insolently blaspheme the deities that have bestowed upon you wisdom and permitted you to taste of their sweet gifts?"

Catherine replied, "It was not your gods but my God, Who alone is true, that vouchsafed me wisdom; for He is Himself Wisdom and Life. He who fears Him and keeps His divine commandments is indeed a true philosopher. However, the deeds of your gods and the stories that are told of them are truly worthy of laughter and ridicule, and are full of deceit. But tell me, which of your great poets called your deities gods, and what did they say concerning them?"

The orator answered, "First of all, the most wise Homer prayed to Zeus, exclaiming, 'O most glorious Zeus, great god, and you other immortal gods!' The renowned Orpheus likewise gave thanks unto Apollo, crying, 'O son of Leto, who looses your arrows from afar! Mighty Phoebus, who looks down upon all and rules over mortals and immortals, O sun that soars on wings of gold!' Thus do the most eminent and celebrated of the poets refer to the gods, speaking of them as immortal. Therefore, do not be deceived, nor worship the Crucified One as God, for the wise men of old never called Him a god, nor indeed did they know of Him."

"But did not your Homer say in another place that Zeus, the greatest of your deities, was a liar and a wicked deceiver, and that other gods, Hera, Poseidon, and Athena, would have bound him had he not fled?" said Catherine. "Your books are full of similar things which show your gods to be disreputable. Although it is not fitting that vain, disrespectful inquiry be made concerning the Crucified One (since He is the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, sun, moon, and stars, and the whole race of man), yet because you say that none of the teachers of antiquity confess Him to be God, I shall bring forth testimony to refute you, thus confirming the truth. Hear how the most wise Sybil witnesses to His divine

Incarnation and saving Crucifixion: 'In the latter times One shall come Who will take on flesh, but without sin. He shall destroy the corruption of the incurable passions by the boundless omnipotence of His divinity, and the unbelieving people will hate Him. Upon a high place shall He be hung, as though He were worthy of such a death.' Hear also how your Apollonius, compelled by Christ's power, speaks the truth, although unwillingly, confessing Him as the true God. He says, 'He Who dwells in the heavens constrains me to speak. He is the triune light, the God Who undergoes suffering (although His divinity does not suffer), for He is both mortal according to the flesh and a stranger to corruption. He is at once God and a man Who endures all things at the hands of mortals: the Cross, revilement, and burial.' Thus spoke Apollonius concerning the true God, Who is coeternal and of one essence with Him Who begot Him. He is the source, the root, the fount of every blessing; He it is that brought the world from nothingness into being and continues to uphold it. Consubstantial with the Father, He became man for our sake and walked on the earth, instructing, teaching, and benefiting men. He also submitted to death for us, to abolish our former condemnation and to vouchsafe us the sweetness and blessedness that were once ours. Then, having opened for us the gates of paradise, closed by evil, He rose on the third day and ascended into heaven, from whence He came. He sent down the Holy Spirit upon His disciples, and they went about preaching His divinity, in which you also, O philosopher, ought to believe, so that you may become His true servant. For He is merciful and summons all who have sinned, saying, Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Believe, then, your own teachers and gods, Plato, I say, Orpheus, and Apollonius, who although unwillingly, plainly confessed Christ to be God."

Hearing the wise Catherine say these things and much else besides, the philosopher was amazed and fell silent. The Emperor saw that his champion had been vanquished and left speechless, and commanded the other rhetoricians to enter into dispute with the holy virgin, but they refused, saying, "We are unable to withstand the truth. If the most learned of our number was overcome and silenced, what can we hope to accomplish?"

The Emperor was moved to wrath and ordered that a great fire be prepared in the middle of the city to burn alive all the philosophers and orators. When they learned of the sentence pronounced upon them, they fell at the saint's feet, beseeching her to pray for them to the one true God so that He might forgive them the sins they had committed in ignorance and deem them worthy of Holy Baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The saint responded joyfully, "Truly you are blessed, for you have abandoned darkness and come to know the true Light! Having forsaken an earthly emperor,

subject to corruption, you have come unto the King of heaven, Who knows no corruption. Believe firmly that the fire with which the impious threaten you shall serve as your Baptism and be a ladder leading you up to heaven. In that fire you will be cleansed of every defilement of flesh and spirit, and you will be presented pure and radiant as the stars before the Lord of glory, Whose beloved friends you shall become."

While saying this, Saint Catherine traced over each of the philosophers and orators the sign of Christ's sacred Cross. Full of hope and gladness, they went joyfully to their martyrdom. It was the seventeenth day of the month of November when the soldiers cast them into the fire. That evening, pious Christians collected their bodies, which remained whole: even their hair was untouched by the fire. Many turned to the truth because of this miracle, and the relics were reverently buried in a fitting place.

The Emperor could think of nothing but how he might bring Saint Catherine to accept his impious beliefs. Unable to accomplish this through philosophic debate, he sought to lead her astray by flattery and deceit, saying, "Hear me, my good daughter. As a loving father I counsel you to worship the great gods, especially Hermes, the patron of eloquence, who has bestowed upon you the gift of understanding the mysteries of philosophy. The gods are my witnesses that I will divide my empire with you and you shall live with me in unceasing happiness."

But the wise saint understood his deceit and wicked intentions and said to him, "Lay aside your wiles, O Emperor, and cease to play the fox. I have already told you that I am a Christian and have betrothed myself to Christ. He alone is my Bridegroom, Guide, and the Adornment of my virginity. I prefer the robe of martyrdom to the imperial purple." "You compel me to dishonor you and to cover your fair body with many wounds even against my will," warned the Emperor. "Do as you wish," the saint replied, "for fleeting dishonor will gain for me glory eternal. Moreover, it is my hope that a great multitude of people will come to believe in Christ through me, and that many will abandon your palace for the mansions of heaven."

God looked down from the heights as the saint said these things, and brought her prophecy to pass. The Emperor became very angry and commanded that Catherine be stripped of her purple robe, left naked, and beaten mercilessly with leather straps. For two hours the servants lashed the martyr upon the shoulders and belly until the whole of her virginal body was covered with stripes. The wounds left her as unsightly as she was fair and comely before, and the ground was dyed red with blood that flowed like a river from them, but the saint endured with such bravery that those who beheld her could only marvel. After this, that beast ordered that

Catherine be cast into prison, permitting her neither food nor drink while he pondered how to put her to death.

Augusta, the Emperor's wife, conceived a strong admiration for Saint Catherine and greatly desired to meet her, having heard report of Catherine's virtue, wisdom, and courage. After she saw Catherine once in a dream, her heart was so filled with love for her she could no longer sleep. When the Emperor was compelled to leave the city because of some matter and was not to return for several days, a convenient opportunity was presented the Empress to achieve her desire. Augusta told her secret to one of the great princes, a general by rank and faithful friend of the Emperor named Porphyrius, who was a prudent man. She said, "Several nights ago, I beheld in a dream Catherine, who was seated in the midst of a multitude of youths and fair virgins clad in white garments. Such was the radiance of her face that I could not bear to gaze upon her. She sat me down beside her and placed on my head a golden crown, saying, "The Master Christ sends you this crown." Since that time I have been filled with such desire to see her that my heart can find no rest. Therefore, I entreat you to help me find a way to meet her secretly." Porphyrius answered, "I will do as you say, my lady."

When night fell, the General took two hundred soldiers and went to the prison with the Empress. They gave money to the guard and were permitted to enter the saint's cell. The Empress was amazed by the radiance of Catherine's face, which shone with divine grace, and straightway falling at her feet, tearfully said to the martyr, "I count myself truly fortunate and blessed, because I have been deemed worthy to see you! With boundless desire I wished to behold you, and to hear your sweet tongue speak. Now that I have satisfied my longing, I shall not grieve if I am deprived of my life and the Empire of which I am mistress. How my heart and soul rejoice, illumined by the light of your fair countenance! You are blessed and deserving of praise for having cleaved unto a Master Who has bestowed upon you such gifts!"

"You also are blessed, O Empress," said Catherine, "for I see angels holding a crown above your head. This crown will be given you in three days, after you endure only a few torments, and you shall depart unto the true King to reign forever." "But I fear torture, and I especially fear my husband, since he is a cruel, heartless man," exclaimed Augusta. The saint replied, "Take courage, for Christ will dwell in your heart and come to your aid. No torment will touch your soul, and your body will suffer pain merely for a short time. Then you will rest forever."

Porphyrius asked, "What gifts does Christ bestow upon those who serve Him? I also wish to believe in Him and to become His soldier." Said the saint, "Have you never read or heard what is written in the Christian Scriptures?" "From my youth I have served in the army," answered Porphyrius. "Military affairs have been my

sole concern." The saint declared, "No tongue can tell of the good things the most blessed God, Who loves men, has prepared for those who love Him and keep His commandments." Porphyrius was filled with boundless joy, and he, the two hundred soldiers, and the Empress believed in Christ. All reverently kissed the martyr and then departed.

The merciful and man-loving Christ did not forsake His holy bride but took thought for her like a father concerned for his child. Every day He sent a dove that brought her food. The Judge of the contest also appeared to her Himself in great glory, accompanied by all the hosts of heaven. He urged her to take courage and filled her with boldness, saying, "Fear not, My beloved bride, for I am with you, and no torment shall overcome you. By your patience you will lead many to Me, for which you shall be deemed worthy of numerous crowns." Having consoled her with these words, the Lord departed.

The next morning, the Emperor sat upon his judgment seat and commanded that Catherine be brought before him. She shone with such spiritual grace and sweet light that all those present were astonished by the radiance of her beauty. The Emperor also marveled greatly and supposed that her body had not grown feeble and her face remained beautiful after so many days because someone had given her food while she was imprisoned. He wished to punish the guard, but Saint Catherine, who did not desire that anyone suffer unjustly for her sake, confessed the truth, saying, "Know, O Emperor, that it was not the hand of man that gave me food. My Master Christ, Who cares for His servants, fed me."

The Emperor again sought to tempt Catherine with flattery, saying, "O maiden fair as the sun, more beautiful than Artemis herself, you were born to reign, my daughter! Come, I entreat you, and sacrifice unto the gods so that you may rule with us, living out your days in great felicity. I do not wish to destroy your beauty with torments." "I am earth and dust," answered the saint. "Beauty wilts like a flower, vanishing like a dream before some slight illness or old age, or destroyed utterly by corruption after death. Therefore, O Emperor, take no thought for my beauty."

As the saint was speaking, the Eparch Khursaden, a cruel man and a merciless persecutor, wishing to gain Maxentius' good will, said, "I know a torture, O Emperor, that will enable you to prevail over this maiden. Command that four wooden wheels be fixed to a single axle, and have spearheads and other sharp weapons of iron driven through their rims. Order two wheels turned to the right and two to the left. Have the maiden tied down beneath them, and the turning wheels will tear apart her flesh. But first show the wheels to her! Having seen them, I believe she will consent to obey you. If she refuses, then deliver her to a cruel death."

The Emperor was pleased with the Eparch's counsel and ordered that the wheels be prepared. The saint was led to the place of torture, and the wheels were spun before her with great force so that she would be frightened. The persecutor said to her, "Do you see the torments prepared for you? Bitter will be your death, if you do not worship the gods!" "I have told you many times that I intend to remain a Christian. Waste no more time and do as you wish," the saint replied.

Seeing that he could neither frighten her nor turn her from Christ, the Emperor commanded that Catherine be tied down and the wheels turned vigorously, so that her members would be severed by the sharp instruments and she would perish cruelly. But as soon as the torture began, an angel descended from heaven and loosed the saint from her bonds, preventing her from being injured. The wheels he broke into pieces, which flew in every direction from the force of the blows, killing numerous unbelievers. Seeing this glorious rescue, the crowd cried out, "Great is the God of the Christians!" Anger darkened the Emperor's mind, and he became crazed, unable to think of anything but new torments for the martyr.

Learning what had occurred, the Empress came out of her chamber and began to revile the Emperor, saying, "Truly, you are a fool, imagining you can do battle with the living God and torturing His handmaiden unjustly!"

The Emperor was not accustomed to hear his wife say such things and became furious, more like a beast than a man. Leaving Saint Catherine, he turned his wrath upon his wife, forgetting the natural bonds of love for her. He commanded that a large crate be brought and filled with lead so that it could not be moved, then had his wife's breasts placed over the edge of the crate and its top nailed down. The Empress' breasts were pressed down with such force that they were torn off, but the blessed Augusta was happy to bear for the true God the indescribable pain. As she endured this mutilation, she prayed to the Lord, asking that He send her help from on high. Her blood flowed like a river, and all who stood nearby were filled with pity: they could not help but feel compassion for their Empress as she suffered such bitter, unendurable torment. However, the merciless blood-drinker had no pity on his spouse and ordered that her head be cut off with the sword. Augusta rejoiced upon hearing the sentence and begged the saint, "Pray for me, handmaiden of the true God!" "Go in peace to reign with Christ forever!" Catherine answered.

The blessed Empress was beheaded outside the city on the twenty-third day of November. General Porphyrius took her body by night and buried it reverently. The very next morning, Porphyrius and his soldiers, who had come to believe in Christ, went before the Emperor and declared, "We also are Christians, soldiers of the great God!"

Plunged into grief, the Emperor sighed from the bottom of his heart and lamented, "Woe is me! I have perished, for I have lost the wondrous Porphyrius!" Then he turned to the soldiers and said, "Have you also gone astray, my beloved soldiers, abandoning the gods of your fathers? What evil have the gods done you that you have forsaken them?" They answered him not a word, and only Porphyrius replied, saying, "Why do you remain silent before the head and converse with the feet? Address yourself to me!" "You, wicked man, are the cause of their perdition!" cried the Emperor.

Unable to speak any longer because of his anger, the Emperor commanded that Porphyrius and his soldiers be beheaded. Thus they fulfilled the prophecy Saint Catherine made before the Emperor, saying that many from his palace would believe in Christ God.

The Emperor had Catherine returned to the judgment seat, and entreated her, "You have brought much sorrow and bitterness upon me, leading astray my wife and causing my brave General, the main strength of my army, to perish. Many other evils have befallen me through you, and I ought to show you no mercy and put you to death. But I forgive you, since it would be a pity to slay so fair and wise a maiden. Do my will, beloved: sacrifice unto the gods, and I will make you my Empress. I will never cause you to grieve or do anything without taking counsel with you. You will live with me in joy such as no empress before has known."

The liar said much more, hoping to lead astray Christ's chosen bride, but his deceitful words failed to sunder her from Christ, to Whom she was firmly bound with the bonds of true love. Seeing that neither flattery, nor promises, nor threats and tortures could prevail over her whose will was stronger than adamant, the Emperor pronounced his sentence, condemning her to be beheaded outside the city. The soldiers led her to the place of execution, and many people followed her, men and women alike lamenting the approaching death of the fair and wise maiden. Noblewomen cried after her, weeping, "O most lovely and radiant maiden! Why are you so hard of heart, preferring death to sweet life? Why do you bring to an untimely and needless end the bloom of your youth? Would it not be better to obey the Emperor and to enjoy the good things of this life, rather than to die a wretched death?"

"Cease your useless weeping," the saint replied. "You should rejoice instead, for I will soon behold my beloved Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, my Creator and Saviour. He is the adornment of martyrs, their crown and glory, and summons me to reign with Him and to rejoice for endless ages amid the ineffable good things of paradise. Do not weep for me but for yourselves: because of your unbelief, you shall be condemned to unending tortures in the fires of hell."

When she reached the place of execution, Catherine prayed thus: "O Lord Jesus Christ my God, I thank You that You have set my feet upon the rock of patience and have guided my steps. Stretch forth now Your hands, which You once stretched out upon the Cross, and receive my soul, which I have offered in sacrifice for the sake of Your love. Remember, O Lord, that I am flesh and blood, and do not permit the cruel inquisitors to bring to light before Your dread judgment seat the sins I have committed in ignorance, but wash them in my blood. Make my body, wounded by torments and condemned to beheading, invisible to the eyes of Your enemies who persecute me. Look down also from the heights, O Lord, upon the people who stand here, and guide them to the light of Your knowledge. Grant whatever they request to those who, through me, come to call upon Your holy name, if their petitions would be to their benefit, that they may hymn Your majesty unto the ages."

Completing her prayer, Catherine said to the executioner, "Do as you have been commanded." He raised his sword, and when he cut off the martyr's head, milk flowed from her neck instead of blood. Such of the faithful as were worthy beheld how an angel came at that moment and reverently took her relics away, leaving them on Mount Sinai. Unto Christ God, Who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit in one godhead, be glory unto the ages. Amen. – St. Dmitri of Rostov (*from chrysostompress.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18 EOB

Brethren, see with what large letters I write to you with my own hand! It is those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh who are trying to compel you to be circumcised; and it only so that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. Even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. As for me, I shall find glory in nothing, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. In Christ Jesus, circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; only a new creation is significant. To those who live by this rule, may there be peace and mercy upon them, and on the Israel of God. From now on, let no one cause me any trouble, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus branded on my body. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 13:10-17 EOB

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day. Behold, there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten herself up. When Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity!" He laid

his hands on her and immediately, she stood up straight and glorified God. However, the ruler of the synagogue was indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. He said to the crowd, "There are six days in which people should work! Therefore, come on those days and be healed, not on the Sabbath day!" Then, the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each one of you free his ox or his donkey from the stall on the Sabbath, and lead it out to water? Should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham who was bound by Satan for eighteen years, be freed from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame and all the people rejoiced over all the glorious things that were done by him.

Homily on the Gospel for the Tenth Sunday of Luke

By St. Luke, Metropolitan of Simferopol

This Gospel narrative shows us the great mercy, love and divine power of Jesus Christ, directed towards the benefit of an unfortunate woman. At the same time, we also see the evil, foolish hypocrisy of the synagogue leader.

What is hypocrisy, which the Lord so threateningly rebuked? A hypocrite pretends to be something other than what he really is. A hypocrite is one who wears a mask of piety, being in his soul devoid of all piety, who expresses love and loyalty to his neighbor, speaks kind, nice, flattering words to him, but in his soul harbors hatred for him, plotting against him with malice. The hypocrite hides from those around him all the evil, black movements of his soul, all the bad thoughts and speaks to his neighbors, pretending to have a loving, pure heart. Hypocrisy is common to so many of us.

The hypocrisy of the leader of the synagogue consisted in the fact that, being one of the teachers of the people, he portrayed himself as a bearer of all piety and righteousness, but in his soul he was not at all like that, on the contrary, he was ruthless and callous, as his speech showed toward the healing of the unfortunate woman. He cared only about observing the letter of the law, and the spirit of the law about love for one's neighbor was alien to him. And it was necessary for the Lord to rebuke him in front of the people!

It may be puzzling that Jesus Christ, Who forbade us, ordinary Christians, from calling our neighbor even a fool, Who said that if we call someone a fool, we are subject to fiery hell (see Matt. 5:22), Himself often spoke harsh words, as in this case. He repeatedly called the scribes and Pharisees "hypocrites and serpents, brood of vipers" (see Matt. 7:5; 12:34 etc.).

Once, when Jesus Christ was in Judea, He was warned that Herod was seeking his destruction, and they advised him to leave Judea as quickly as possible. How did the Lord answer? He calmly said: "Go tell that fox: today and tomorrow I work,

and on the third day I will finish" (see Luke 13:32). He rebuked the king as a fox! And one day he said terrible words to the greatest apostle, His friend Peter: "Get behind Me, Satan, because you think not about the things of God, but about the things of men" (Matthew 16:23).

The Gospel says that the Lord sometimes became angry, that He drove out the cattle traders from the Jerusalem temple and scattered the money laid out on the money changers' tables. One day He made a scourge from ropes and drove the merchants out of the temple (see John 2:14-16). So terrible was the wrath of the Son of God sometimes. How to understand this apparent contradiction in Jesus Christ, which cannot exist in the Son of God, for with Him everything is "yes"- "yes" or "no"- "no" (see Matthew 5:37). The explanation is simple: we need to distinguish between what Christ forbids and what He Himself did; we need to distinguish between words of abuse and words of rebuke. For when we call our neighbor a fool, a madman, then we express contempt for our brother, we humiliate him. The Lord strictly forbade such abuse, such exaltation over one's neighbor.

And with harsh words - "serpents, brood of vipers, foxes" - Jesus Christ rebuked people worthy of this (see Matt. 23:33). Rebuke, in contrast to warfare, is commanded to us as a matter of course in the Holy Scriptures: "Do not participate in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead rebuke" (Eph. 5:11). Saint Paul commands the Apostle Timothy: "Rebuke those who sin before everyone, so that others also may fear" (1 Timothy 5:20) and "Preach the word, be persistent in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and edification" (2 Tim. 4:2).

Since we are commanded to expose evil deeds, we do not dare and should not silently and indifferently pass by wickedness. However, the Lord, speaking harsh words, did not degrade human dignity, but only denounced hypocrisy for its deceit, for "the father of lies is the devil" (see John 8:44).

There is holy anger commanded to us from God, with which we must flare up when we see a desecration of a shrine. Jesus Christ fell with holy and fiery wrath against the wicked selling in the temple of God. The same anger prompted the great saint and wonderworker Nicholas of Myra, when discussing the Arian heresy at the First Ecumenical Synod, to strike Arius in the face.

The Lord's harsh, accusatory words are fully justified. Didn't Herod deserve the title of fox? What is characteristic in the behavior of this animal? The cunning with which she deceives both the hunter and her prey is known. By calling Herod this way, Jesus Christ legitimately accused him of cunning and a tendency to betray.

Why did the Lord call the Apostle Peter Satan? Because Peter, having heard from Jesus Christ that He must be betrayed and crucified for the salvation of the human race, began to dissuade Him from such a terrible death and ask Him to take pity on Himself. Wasn't this the work of Satan? Was it not Satan who needed to keep Christ from the sacrifice on Golgotha? Satan himself then spoke through the mouth of the apostle, which is why the Lord spoke such a threatening word to him.

The pastors of the Church, according to the covenant of the Apostle Paul, are obliged to publicly rebuke sinners; this is considered their duty. Therefore, now I will convict you, God's given flock to me, of one grave and universal sin of ours - the sin of judging our neighbors. Who among you is free from this sin? How many of you are afraid with all your soul of the Gospel words: "Judge not, lest you be judged. Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not feel the plank in your own eye? Hypocrite! First take the plank out of your own eye" (Matthew 7:1, 3, 5)?

And we are always busy not only with the smallest knots, but even with specks in the eyes of our brothers, and we condemn everyone from morning to night and from night to morning, even our loved ones. We condemn both priests and bishops, without fear of an answer before God, without fear of the words of Christ: "Judge not, lest you be judged."

They also judge me, your archpastor! It's not so much you who are judging - perhaps such a condemnation can be heard from you as an exception - but they are judging very harshly in Kirsanov and Morshansk. Those who judge me are those whom I have the right to call cursed - wandering monks and nuns, who convince the people that I am not a real bishop, that they do not need to obey, that I am deprived of the grace of God.

What am I being judged for? For the fact that I alleviate the suffering of many of our unfortunate brothers who shed their blood for us, for the fact that I save from death many, many who stand not with one, but with both feet in the grave. The Lord helps me remove them from the grave. The Lord gave me great surgical art and depth of knowledge, and according to the behest of two late Patriarchs - Tikhon and Sergius - I do not dare to stop my surgical activity. The late Patriarchs demanded this from me.

And these cursed ones, who know everything better than the Patriarchs, say: "What kind of bishop is this who today serves in church, celebrates the Liturgy, and tomorrow goes to shed human blood?" This is the extent to which human condemnation reaches, this is what lies people are capable of! May we not be guilty of such a terrible sin of condemnation, from which it is extremely difficult to get rid of, for this sin has become so ingrained in our hearts that we cannot get rid of it on our own.

What should we do? Let us learn from the Apostle Paul, who instructs us: "My brothers, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10), for only by the might of the Lord's power can we get rid of the terrible sin of condemnation. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; because our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spirits of wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:11-12).

Just as there are nine ranks in the radiant countenance of the angels, so Satan has principalities, powers, rulers of the world, spirits of wickedness in high places. And our fight against sin is a fight against them. This is the purpose of our life. "For this purpose take on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:13). Like soldiers going to war, put on the whole armor of God.

"Stand yourselves therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness." Only with this armor will you protect yourself from the arrows of the evil one and the condemnation of your neighbors. "And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; and above all, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the fiery arrows of the evil one." With the shield of faith, hot, fiery faith, you can extinguish these arrows of the evil one. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (see Eph. 6:14-17). With this sword you will cut off all the "spirits of wickedness in high places" (see Eph. 6:12).

And if you are always armed as the holy Apostle Paul says, if you are soldiers of Christ, ardent defenders of the faith, then the kindled arrows of the evil one will bounce off you like from a stone wall. So, warriors of Christ, go ahead to fight the evil one, the wiles of the devil, and the spirits in the heavens! Amen. (*trans. John Sanidopoulos*)

Homilies on the Lord's Prayer, also Known as the "Our Father"

by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

(*continued from last week*) "For Yours Is The Kingdom And The Power And The Glory Unto The Ages. Amen."

The Lord's Prayer, known as the "Our Father", which we have now interpreted every Sunday for the past two months this summer, begins with the salutation of God as Father, it continues with seven requests made to God, and it ends with the firm faith in God as King and in His power. "For Yours is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory unto the ages. Amen." This means that to Him belongs the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory forever.

The rationale of this conclusion gives man courage. For since God is King and has great power, and since man has such an affectionate Father and powerful Ruler and Lord of the world, this means that we can conquer the evil devil with the power of God and we will be glorified with the God of Glory.

And as a seal to this faith of the one praying He includes also the word "amen", which is a Hebrew word and is translated into the words "verily" or "truly". When the word "amen" is used in worship it indicates a confirmation of the people to the prayer and blessing of the priest, and is thus interpreted as "so be it", or "may it take place". In the Apocalypse of John the Theologian, Christ also characterizes Himself as the "Amen", which means He is the true Lord who keeps His promises. "Thus says the Amen, the faithful and true witness" (Rev. 3:14).

Let us take a look at these three words - "kingdom", "power" and "glory". The word "kingdom" refers to the political system of that time, in which the dominant position was held by the King/Emperor, who had an army and absolute sovereignty in the Kingdom. Christ is also considered a King, but His Kingdom is of another kind and origin. Characteristic is the discussion between Pilate and Christ on this subject. To Pilate's question if He was the King of the Jews, Christ flatly replied: "My Kingdom is not of this world" (Jn. 19:36). He did not say that His Kingdom was not in the world, but that it does not have its origin in this world. It is a spiritual kingdom associated with the reception of the Grace of God and the vision of the glory of God.

The word "power" also has a spiritual dynamic, it is the sovereignty of love and the energies of the Holy Spirit, and it has no relation with worldly power imposed by weapons and secular rule. It is the power of the Cross, which externally appears as weak, but it is that which abolishes both worldly power and authority. Also, this power is the power of the Holy Spirit, which is why Christ told His disciples that they would receive power with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). And with this power they defeated all worldly power.

The word "glory" is related to the uncreated energy of God. With the appearance of the angel to the shepherds on the day Christ was born "the glory of the Lord shined around them" (Lk. 1:8). The glory of Christ is His divinity and this is why glory shines in the hearts of Christians "to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). Those who partake of this glory of God are glorified, and not just honored, but they shine with the Grace and energy of God.

When one has such a Father Who has a kingdom, power and glory and rules the entire world, but also loves humanity, they cannot be disturbed, they cannot be disappointed, even if they are found in the most difficult situations and endure the greatest temptations.

The Lord's Prayer, the "Our Father", is a powerful prayer, and it has spiritual meaning precisely because it was taught to us by Christ. It has great value, because it shows the love and glory of God, and from us who pray we can ask for spiritually good things, the transformation of our existence, our relationship and communion with God, the victory against temptations and the evil one, the remission of our sins.

We must often pray with the words of this prayer. Besides, it was given to us from Christ with this command: "Therefore, pray this way" (Matt. 6:9). And we must pray with attention, a concentrated mind, faith in God and hope in the fact that God is listening to us, is protecting us and loves us. It is a prayer that begins with the invocation of God as Father and ends with the doxology of His Kingdom, power and glory.

However, when we pray with attention and devotion we must at the same time struggle to feel that we are not orphans. For it is terrible to pray to God the Father and to feel at the same time that we do not have a Father and that we are alone and unprotected in the world. Nor should we feel that we are the "only children" of God.

When we pray with this Lord's Prayer and in the "spirit" which we analyzed in these short sermons, then we will see miracles in our lives, our existence will be reborn and we will be made worthy to enter the Kingdom of God, into the glory of Paradise and eternal life. *(Translated by John Sanidopoulos)*

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Our Lord Jesus Christ resurrected Adam, since He is the very Life and the Resurrection of the earth-born, for whose sake the descendants of Seth are granted divine adoption through hope, and are called the children of God. It was because of this hope that they were called sons of God, as is evident from the one who was first called so, the successor in the choice. This was Enos, the son of Seth, who as Moses wrote, first hoped to call on the Name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26).

In this manner, the choice of the future Mother of God, beginning with the very sons of Adam and proceeding through all the generations of time, through the Providence of God, passes to the Prophet-king David and the successors of his kingdom and lineage. When the chosen time had come, then from the house and posterity of David, Joachim and Anna are chosen by God. Though they were childless, they were by their virtuous life and good disposition the finest of all those descended from the line of David. In prayer they besought God to deliver them from their childlessness, and promised to dedicate their child to God from its infancy. By God Himself, the Mother of God was proclaimed and given to them as

a child, so that from such virtuous parents the all-virtuous child would be raised. So in this manner, chastity joined with prayer came to fruition by producing the Mother of virginity, giving birth in the flesh to Him Who was born of God the Father before the ages.

Now, when Righteous Joachim and Anna saw that they had been granted their wish, and that the divine promise to them was realized in fact, then they on their part, as true lovers of God, hastened to fulfill their vow given to God as soon as the child had been weaned from milk. They have now led this truly sanctified child of God, now the Mother of God, this Virgin into the Temple of God. And She, being filled with Divine gifts even at such a tender age, ... She, rather than others, determined what was being done over Her. In Her manner She showed that She was not so much presented into the Temple, but that She Herself entered into the service of God of her own accord, as if she had wings, striving towards this sacred and divine love. She considered it desirable and fitting that she should enter into the Temple and dwell in the Holy of Holies.

Therefore, the High Priest, seeing that this child, more than anyone else, had divine grace within Her, wished to set Her within the Holy of Holies. He convinced everyone present to welcome this, since God had advanced it and approved it. Through His angel, God assisted the Virgin and sent Her mystical food, with which She was strengthened in nature, while in body She was brought to maturity and was made purer and more exalted than the angels, having the Heavenly spirits as servants. She was led into the Holy of Holies not just once, but was accepted by God to dwell there with Him during Her youth, so that through Her, the Heavenly Abodes might be opened and given for an eternal habitation to those who believe in Her miraculous birthgiving.

So it is, and this is why She, from the beginning of time, was chosen from among the chosen. She Who is manifest as the Holy of Holies, Who has a body even purer than the spirits purified by virtue, is capable of receiving ... the Hypostatic Word of the Unoriginate Father. Today the Ever-Virgin Mary, like a Treasure of God, is stored in the Holy of Holies, so that in due time, (as it later came to pass) She would serve for the enrichment of, and an ornament for, all the world. Therefore, Christ God also glorifies His Mother, both before, and also after His birth.

We who understand the salvation begun for our sake through the Most Holy Virgin, give Her thanks and praise according to our ability. And truly, if the grateful woman (of whom the Gospel tells us), after hearing the saving words of the Lord, blessed and thanked His Mother, raising her voice above the din of the crowd and saying to Christ, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts You have sucked" (Luke 11:27), then we who have the words of eternal life written out for us, and not only the words, but also the miracles and the Passion,

and the raising of our nature from death, and its ascent from earth to Heaven, and the promise of immortal life and unfailing salvation, then how shall we not unceasingly hymn and bless the Mother of the Author of our Salvation and the Giver of Life, celebrating Her conception and birth, and now Her Entry into the Holy of Holies?

Now, brethren, let us remove ourselves from earthly to celestial things. Let us change our path from the flesh to the spirit. Let us change our desire from temporal things to those that endure. Let us scorn fleshly delights, which serve as allurements for the soul and soon pass away. Let us desire spiritual gifts, which remain undiminished. Let us turn our reason and our attention from earthly concerns and raise them to the inaccessible places of Heaven, to the Holy of Holies, where the Mother of God now resides.

Therefore, in such manner our songs and prayers to Her will gain entry, and thus through her mediation, we shall be heirs of the everlasting blessings to come, through the grace and love for mankind of Him Who was born of Her for our sake, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory, honor and worship, together with His Unoriginate Father and His Coeternal and Life-Creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

– St. Gregory Palamas *Homily 52.10-16*

Saint Pourçain, Abbot of Miranda

Saint Pourçain (Portianus) lived at the end of the 5 and in the first half of the 6th century. Of modest origin, the young Pourçain apparently worked as a pigherder - hence his name Portianus - and was the slave of a Visigothic master. Faced with the incessant insults and ill-treatment of the latter, Pourçain sought refuge with the monks of the convent by the name of Mirandense. But Mongulfus came to claim his slave from the abbot.

The latter accepted on condition that Pourçain be given decent treatment to avoid God's wrath. However, Mongulfus did not keep his promises, and came what was to happen; he became blind (then a common manifestation of God's displeasure). Mongulfus understood his error and returned to entrust his slave to the convent, hoping to obtain the favor of the Almighty. Pourçain then imposed his hands on the eyes of his former master, making the sign of the cross, and Mongulfus recovered his sight. Pourçain then remained at the convent of which he was the abbot until his repose in 533. He fearlessly opposed the Merovingian king Thierry of Austrasia, in order to obtain the freedom of the Auvergne slaves. We are told, “his death was as edifying as his life.” (*adapted from nominis.cef.fr*)

Also Commemorated Today

Great-martyr [Mercurius](#) of Caesarea in Cappadocia (259). (25th - Greek)
Martyr [Mercurius](#) of Smolensk (1238).
Venerable [Mercurius](#), the Faster of the Kievan Caves, far caves (14th C).
New Hieromartyr [Eugraphus](#) (1919).
New Hieromartyrs Eugene and Michael priests, Virgin-martyr Anyisia (1937).
New Hieromartyrs Alexander, Alexis, John, Cornelius, & Metrophanes priests (1937).
New Hieroconfessor [Nicetas](#), priest of Kharkov (1985)(old calendar)
Martyrs Augusta ([Faustina](#)) the Empress, Porphyrius, and 200 soldiers at Alexandria with Great-martyr Catherine (305).
Abba [Karion](#) of Scetis
Venerable [Mastridia](#) of Alexandria (1060).
Martyr [Chrysogonos](#) at Aquileia (c. 300)
Ven. [Mark](#) of Trigleia (Tirilye) in Bythinia (unk)
Martyr [Theodore](#) of Antioch (c. 361)
Venerable [Simon](#), abbot of Soiga Monastery (Vologda) (1561).
Martyr Philothea of Romania (1060).
St. [Gregory](#), founder of the monastery of the Golden Rock in Pontus.
Martyr [Alexander](#) at Corinth (360).
Venerable Luke, steward of the Kiev Caves (13th c.).
St. [Hermogenes](#), bishop of Agrigentum (9th c.).
St. [Protasius](#), bishop of Milan (343)
Venerable [Romanus](#) of Bordeaux (382)
Venerable Protasius, hermit of Auvergne (6th c.) (Gaul).
Martyr [Marinus](#) of Maurienne (731)
St. Minver, virgin of Cornwall.
Maryrs [Philemenus](#), [Christopher](#), [Eugene](#), [Procopius](#), & another [Christopher](#) (Greek).
St. [Malchus](#) of Chalcis in Syria (5th c.).
St. [Nicodemus](#) the New, Fool-for-Christ of [Philokalos](#) in Thessalonica (ca. 1305).
St. [Colman](#) of [Cloyne](#), Bishop (MacLenini) (c. 600)
St. [Kenan](#) of Damleag, Bishop (Cianan, Kea, Kay, Quay) (c. 500)
Martyrs [Marianus](#) and Anianus in Rot (8th c.) (Bavaria)
St. [Eanfleda](#) of Whitby, Widow (Enfleda) (c. 700)
St. [Bieuzy](#) of Brittany, Martyr, follower of St. Gildas (7th c)
Martyrs [Crescentian](#), Cyriacus, Largus, and Smaragdus of Rome (c. 309)
Martyr [Felicissimus](#) of Perugia (c. 303)
Martyr [Firmina](#) at Amelia in Umbria (c. 303)
Martyrs [Flora](#) and Mary of Cordoba (851)
Hieromartyr [Leopardinus](#), abbot of St. Symphorian in Vivaris (7th c.)(France)

No Social Team for December 1 - Light Fare Only

Feel free to bring something to share. 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, Tina Crull, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, Helen P. Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Johnson family, 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 & the Holy Land, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)