

# THE PARISH NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2017

The Nativity of the Mother of God Russian Orthodox Church  
617 Sand Creek Road, Albany NY (518) 869-3932

A parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad [www.albanyrocor.org](http://www.albanyrocor.org)

Rector: Protopriest Alexis Duncan ; Protopriest Michael Fritz

Protodeacon: Fr. Michael Soloviev

## CHURCH SCHOOL CLASSES MONTH OF NOVEMBER

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5<sup>th</sup> - 9AM

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19<sup>th</sup> - 9AM

(Adult classes will be held at the same time)

All parents are requested to have their children present for class BEFORE 9am so the class may promptly start on time.

**PLEASE NOTE: HOURS AND LITURGY BEGIN AT 9:30 AM**

## NOVEMBER NAMESDAYS

1	John Gonyea		Michael Roscoe
	John Schuler		Michael Frantsov
	Joel Nikiforov		Misha Sinkevich
2	Artem Cherkezov		Michael Hauf
5	Reader James Pupillo		Michael Rudko
8	Dimitri Nikiforov		Gabreilla Fritz Mabb
	Dmitri Bradley		Gabriella Welsh
	Dmitri Andrushkevich	24	Vincent Parella
11	Anastasia Parella	25	John Miller
14	Julianna (Isabella) Henry	29	Matthew Dragon
21	Fr. Michael Fritz		Matthew Hauf
	Dea. Fr. Michael Soloviev		
	Reader Michael Welsh		
	Michael Miller		
	Michael Borscok		

Wishing everyone celebrating their Namesday in November Many Years!

\*\*\*\*\*

## COFFEE HOUR HOSTESSES NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 5<sup>th</sup> - Maria Hauf; Nina Pasheda; Mariy Andrushkevich

NOVEMBER 12<sup>th</sup> - NO COFFEE HOUR - Wedding

NOVEMBER 19<sup>th</sup> - BROTHERHOOD

NOVEMBER 26<sup>th</sup> - Anastasia Gonyea; Paula Markessinis

**TASTE OF RUSSIA**  
**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>**

As most of you know, the Taste of Russia is the Sisterhood's biggest fundraiser of the year, and we are asking for EVERYONE'S help. Thanks to all of the volunteers over the summer months, all of the vareniki have been made, and the Golubtzi were made last week. This does not mean we are done - far from it. **There is a sign-up sheet in the Church Hall.** EVERYONE is requested to please sign up for at least one aspect of the Festival - Women, Men and older Children. If you are unaware of the aspects of the festival, please see the listing below. As you can see - it is a lot of work and we need EVERYONE'S help.

**WE NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE TASTE OF RUSSIA:**

**HALL SET-UP:** We need help to set-up the Hall for the Festival. Set-up will begin on FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. We could really use men for this task. Please contact Tasia Fedorov for more info.

**GREETERS:** We will need older children (7 years and older) - in RUSSIAN COSTUMES, to greet our visitors when they arrive. Hand out our booklets and answer any general questions (such as: where the bathrooms are and where to pick-up pre-paid orders, etc.)

**KITCHEN HELP:** Junia Dragon has volunteered to coordinate the kitchen. She will need two helpers to make sure the food is hot and ready to serve.

**FOOD LINE COORDINATOR:** We need someone to help organize the food line and to ensure that we have enough people to man all of the food stations during the entire event. On average we need 7 people to man the food table at all times.

**BAKED GOODS TABLE** - We have enough volunteers for the Baked Goods table - please sign up for another aspect - thank you.

**FROZEN FOODS COORDINATOR:** We need someone who will work the frozen foods booth to help with PRE-PAID order pick up.

**ARTS & CRAFTS COORDINATOR:** Natasha Smelova will coordinate our Arts and Crafts Booth and will need an assistant throughout the entire day.

**BOOK STORE:** Tania Taylor will Coordinate the running of the church Bookstore.

**GRILLING COORDINATOR:** We are considering changing up the menu a little this year and are going to make Chicken Shish-ka-bobs (SHASHLIK) and we will need people to bring their gas grills to the hall for the day and to cook all of the chicken shish-ka-bobs.

**TALLIERS:** We have enough Talliers & Cashiers - thank you

**GENERAL RUNNERS:** We need someone to be a "General Runner" for the day. Clearing tables of trash, returning the trays to the kitchen so they can be washed and returned to the food line. Taking out the trash. Making sure there is Coffee and Milk at the Coffee station, etc.

**ENTERTAINMENT:** We need our youth to please coordinate entertainment for the Taste of Russia. Be it a singing group, dancing group, piano playing, accordion playing. These are some suggestions. If someone would PLEASE take over the entertainment aspect of the Festival and come up with some type of program - that would be AWESOME.

**TOURS OF THE CHURCH:** Usually Father Michael Fritz and SubDeacon Eugene take care of the tours. If you are interested in assisting them, please contact Father Michael Fritz.

**HALL CLEAN UP :** This is VITAL. After people have been working all day, it is unfair to expect them to do the Clean-up of the Hall. The tables need to be re-arranged for our Coffee Hour the next day. Extra tables and chairs set up. Bathrooms cleaned. Floor swept and mopped as needed (The floor should be completely mopped after the Coffee Hour on Sunday).

**REMEMBER** - this may be a fundraiser run by the SISTERHOOD, but we need our men involved as well. There are heavy pans to be lifted in the kitchen, trash to be removed, hall to be set-up and cleaned after the event.

**BUT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL:** Advertise this event to your family and friends. Post it on Facebook, put fliers up at work, your local libraries, grocery stores, wherever they allow you to advertize. The Taste of Russia is only as successful as we make it. Without advertizing, people will not come, without people - we will make no money. **SO PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD.**

**We need EVERYONES help, even for only a few hours on the day of the Taste of Russia, please come, support you Church and Parish and make this event a HUGE success.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT PARISH FEASTDAY  
UTICA, NEW YORK**

The Parish in Utica. NY will be celebrating its Parish Feastday on SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5<sup>th</sup>. Bishop Jerome will be celebrating the Hierarchical Liturgy. The parishioners of the Utica parish have always been very supportive of our parish, attending our Feastday celebrations and other fundraising events. We hope that some of our parishioners will reciprocate and visit the Utica Parish for their feastday.

\*\*\*\*\*

**CONGRATULATIONS TO KATIA & BAPTISTE LYON**

Katia and Baptiste's baby girl, Anaëlle, was born on October 18th 2017 at 3:16pm; weighing in at 9 lbs 2 oz (4.230kg), 20 in (51 cm). Mom and baby are doing well. Congratulations to parents and grandparents. May the Lord's blessing be upon you all.

\*\*\*\*\*

## COFFEE HOUR HOSTESSES

**ATTENTION PLEASE**> If it is your Coffee Hour, please ensure that the kitchen is clean. All dishes, pans, utensils are washed and PUT AWAY. All trash removed from the kitchen and hall. Kitchen floors swept, vacuumed and mopped. The bathrooms also need to be cleaned - trash removed, sinks wiped down, toilets cleaned. It is your responsibility to get people to break down the tables and chairs. The hall floor MUST be swept and ideally the entire floor should be mopped. If the entire floor cannot be mopped - then at least mop any dirty spots and food spills. We do not have anyone assigned to clean the hall. It is ALL of our responsibility to take care of the hall to the best of our ability – and please do not adopt the theory of “**SOMEONE ELSE WILL DO IT**”. THANK YOU!

\*\*\*\*\*

## PARENTS

Please tidy up after your children. If your children have played with any of the toys from the “Toy Area” during Coffee Hour, please make sure the toys are put away at the end of the day. It is frustrating for the Coffee Hour hostesses to have to pick up toys that are scattered around the hall before they can sweep and mop the floors. Also, please ensure that any riding toys and balls used outside are placed on the lawn and NOT left in the driveway or parking lot. THANK YOU!

\*\*\*\*\*

## RADA KNIFE SALE

The Sisterhood will be sponsoring a Rada Knife sale. We are requesting that EACH family in church take a catalog or two to collect orders from their co-workers, family and friends. It is a very easy, profitable fundraiser that does not involve hours and hours of work. All orders must be placed by the Taste of Russia (**November 18<sup>th</sup>**). We also request that all Payments accompany the order form. Checks may be made payable to St. Olga’s Sisterhood. We will also be taking orders at the Taste of Russia, and will have some sample knives available for sale on that day.

\*\*\*\*\*

## PLAYGROUND

The contractor will begin excavating and drilling the holes for the playground this week (Oct 23-27). On **Saturday OCTOBER 28** we need to complete building the playset - so the concrete can then be poured.

We are requesting that ALL parishioners who are able to help on Saturday please be at the hall by 9:30 am. **ESPECIALLY THE PARENTS OF CHILDREN**. The playset has many pieces and is quite complicated - so we will need EVERYONES help. Once the playset is **COMPLETELY** constructed - and level - then the concrete may be poured.

Once the concrete has set - we will need help once again to lay down the landscaping fabric; spread 3 inches of #1 stone - another layer of landscaping fabric - and then the final touch of playground certifiable mulch.

We are now in the home stretch and pray that the parish will unite to get this job completed before the snow flies. If you have any questions please contact Natalie Smelova.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **YOLKA LUNCHEON.**

Before we know it, the Feast of the Nativity will be upon us and soon after the Yolka. In previous years several members of the Sisterhood have stepped up to the plate to organize and prepare the Yolka Luncheon. Well, most of those ladies children are now grown and no longer of "Yolka" participation age. For that reason, we are asking our MOTHERS OF CHILDREN to please take the responsibility of the Yolka Luncheon. If you are interested, please contact RaeLynn (Anastasia) Gonyea. It will entail setting up the hall, decorating the tables, preparing the food and clean-up after the Yolka (just like a Coffee hour - but usually for more people). The Sisterhood purchases the meat to be served on that day, the hostesses would be responsible for preparing the side dishes. Also, the dessert table is usually ALL donations, so no need to worry about baking desserts. PLEASE, PLEASE consider taking over the Yolka Luncheon, and give us "Old" Ladies a break.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **THANKSGIVING DAY**

In Our Orthodox Life

This American holiday is of course not a Church feast for Orthodox Christians. However, since there is a relatively long-standing tradition in our country of remembering and giving thanks on this day, it is an excellent opportunity for us to take some time to remember the many gifts and benefits that God has provided for us in our lives over the past year. With the proliferation of network news, radio talk programs, the internet and other forms of mass communication that we are bombarded with each day, it is easy for us to become cynical and forget God's blessings upon us. So let us each one, in our families, in the homes of our relatives or friends, wherever we find ourselves on this day - give thanks to God for all things! And let us make the effort to continue this thanksgiving each and every day!

\*\*\*\*\*

## **HAVE NEWS TO SHARE or a PRAYER REQUEST???**

Have news to share?? Something to sell? Something to give away?? Are you or someone you know sick - and are requesting prayers?? Someone going on a trip and requesting prayers?? Whatever the news may be - and you want to share it with the parish, please contact Tasia Fedorov via e-mail ([tasbf@aol.com](mailto:tasbf@aol.com)) and I will try my best to include it in the next issue of the Church Newsletter.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS**

If you Clean the Church, are a Coffee Hour Hostess, Help with Tables and Chairs, Mop the Floor, are a Member of the Church Council, a Church Auditor, Treasurer, Sisterhood President, Serve in the Altar, Direct the Choir, Sing in the Choir, Bake Prosphora, Teach Sunday School, do the Gardening, Prepare the Services, Flower Committee, Launder Vestments and towels, Sew, Polish Silver or do any of the many, many tasks associated with keeping our Church running smoothly - THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU. If you are not involved - seriously think about getting involved in some way, shape or form. Everyone is proud of our beautiful Church, now please get involved in its care and upkeep.

## 2017 St. Herman Conference in Novo Diveevo

Registration Open - [sthermanconference.com](http://sthermanconference.com)

We are very pleased that the women's monastery of Novo Diveevo in Nanuet, NY has agreed to host the 2017 St. Herman Conference. The parish of the Protection of the Mother of God in Nyack, NY has graciously offered to offer their facilities for events and meals. The theme of the conference will be the 100 year commemoration of the beginnings of the terrible persecutions of the Orthodox Church in the former Soviet Union. This commemoration brings to mind the tragedy of the last century but also allows for a renewed strength and preparedness for young people facing monstrous events in our troubled world.

Our guest speaker will be the Very Reverend Archpriest Viatcheslav Kharinov, the rector of the Joy of All Who Sorrow Church on Shpalernaya Street in St. Petersburg, Russia. Fr. Viatcheslav is an instructor and spiritual father of the St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy as well as an expert in the New Martyrs of Russia. He is a renowned speaker and researcher with a spellbinding knowledge of the martyrs.

Additionally the Reverend Priest Gennady Titov of St. Petersburg has been the lead researcher on the life and glorification of the Blessed Matrona Bosonozhsky of St. Petersburg. Material is currently being gathered for her glorification and Fr. Gennady will share the latest information on her life. She was a fool for Christ who lived on the eve of the godless revolution and was an acquaintance of St. John of Kronstadt.

Also the conference will host numerous workshops and discussion groups led by clergy and expertise on various subject important to young adults. The conference is open to all 16 years and older. The registration fee includes all lodging (quad occupancy), meals and local transportation.

The conference will begin with a travel day of Friday December 22 with registration beginning in the hotel at 3:00 pm. Airport pickup is available only at Newark International Airport on the 22nd between the hours of 10:00 am and 10:00 pm. The conference will conclude with a morning check-out on Wednesday December 26th. Again, delivery to the Newark Airport will be available only between the hours of 8:00 am and 2:00 pm on the 26th.

**The deadline for registration is Sunday, December 10th.** An early registration before December 1st will realize a savings of \$50.00 per registrant.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **PRAYERS REQUESTED**

Please pray for all of the victims of the natural disasters that have been happening around the world; hurricanes in Texas and Florida and the Islands; Earthquakes in Mexico; Fires that have destroyed parts of California. Many people have lost their lives, their homes, everything. Pray to give the survivors strength so they can cope, not lose faith and rebuild their lives.

O Gracious God Who created the earth and all that is in it, Thou didst give us so many blessings; Indeed, Thou didst fill the world with so much beauty, bounty and no end of wonders! We ask Thee now to save Thy people from nature's fury, from storm and flood and raging fire.

## Role of Family in Salvation

*Excerpts from a sermon of Archbishop Sergius (Korolev) of Prague (1881-1952).*

The issue of salvation is the main issue in the history of humankind as well as in the life of each individual. Salvation is true happiness. Everything else is based on our salvation. In this sense, happiness is in our own hands. It is achieved by defeating sin. The immediate environment for struggle against sin is the family as well as all those living around us. We look at the environment and situation of our life as if it was something accidental, and we don't view our family as the path given to us by God for our salvation. Life in a family seems to be something that happened by chance, and the most important aspect of family life evades our attention. According to the Apostle, family is a small church. It can especially help an individual in achieving the main goal of life. In family people look for happiness. But what do we mean by happiness? People usually give unclear answers to this question. This means that we

don't take from this God-given state that which is the most essential.

Both sinful and spiritually right life take place inside a person and the environment is a means using which the person must look inside. We already mentioned that sin is a separating force. I will explain it with an example from everyday life. Let's say two people offended and insulted one another; did not want to make concessions and went their separate ways.

That's an unhappy situation. This tells us that we must fight against sin for the sake of our own happiness, because anger is an unhappy part of our life. A

human being is created with a desire for happiness and must and can learn to fight for his happiness against unhappiness, i.e. against sin in the environment which is especially close to him, close to him in the flesh. Powers of sin and holiness are in a person as if it were in a state of equilibrium. Depending on

how we touch a person, the power of good or the power of evil begin to act in him and in the world around him. We always need an environment that

would cleanse our inner world and would enable us indeed to come to know ourselves.

Outside environment, being a chance interaction of people does not serve this purpose.

When faced with strangers, a person hides his unrighteousness, drives it inside and tries to look good. A person is ashamed of what others might think of him, ashamed of the opinion of society and therefore does not show his true self. It is only in the family environment, to which we are accustomed, that the source of evil lurking in us begins to show up. In this respect a family environment is a necessary tool for self-understanding. No wonder that we are often afraid of this family atmosphere.

Running away from it, we are interested in many things and entertain ourselves in various ways, just to escape from the environment that helps us to learn more about ourselves.

Why does the family appear to be the environment most conducive to salvation? Because in the family a person directly opens up his feelings, but when outsiders are present he hides his inner world. In society a person controls himself, he hides his irritation, tries to show himself other than he really is. He shows his outward, not his inner character. But in the family he is not trying to hide his condition, he will show it,

won't be ashamed to display his sinfulness by word or deed. And his hidden sinful world is open before the family, before his relatives and before the person himself. Thus, in a family environment, a person who pays attention to his own salvation can easier understand his sins and what separates him from others. It is important, however, that this realization of one's inner world should lead one to fight against sin.

## SAINTS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

October 19/November 1st

† Righteous John, Wonderworker of Kronstadt (1908).

"Saint John of Kronstadt was a married priest, who lived with his wife in virginity. Through his untiring labours in his priestly duties and love for the poor and sinners, he was granted by our Lord great gifts of clairvoyance and miracle-working, to such a degree that in the last years of his life miracles of healings — both of body and of soul — were performed countless times each day through his prayers, often for people who had only written to him asking his help. During his lifetime he was known throughout Russia, as well as in the Western world. He has left us his diary *My Life in Christ* as a spiritual treasure for Christians of every age; simple in language, it expounds the deepest mysteries of our Faith with that wisdom which is given only to a heart purified by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Foreseeing as a true prophet the Revolution of 1917, he unsparingly rebuked the growing apostasy among the people; he foretold that the very name of Russia would be changed. As the darkness of unbelief grew thicker, he shone forth as a beacon of unquenchable piety, comforting the faithful through the many miracles that he worked and the fatherly love and simplicity with which he received all. Saint John reposed in peace in 1908." (Great Horologion)

Holy Prophet Joel (8th c. BC)

His name means "The Lord is God." He is counted second among the "minor Prophets." The Old Testament book of his prophecies, which bears his name, includes his prophecy of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Joel 2:28), which was quoted by the Apostle Peter (Acts 2:17).

October 20/November 2

Holy Great Martyr Artemius (362)

He came from a noble family, and was appointed military Governor of Alexandria and Egypt by the Emperor Constantine the Great. Some years later, the Emperor Julian the Apostate strove to restore pagan idolatry as the official religion of the Empire. He also entered into a war with Persia, and established Antioch as his headquarters for pursuing the war. In Alexandria, Artemius received an order to come to Antioch with the military forces under his command. Artemius reported to the apostate Emperor just in time to see him ordering the cruel execution of two pious Christians, Eugenius and Macarius. Fearlessly, St Artemius immediately denounced the Emperor, telling him to his face that his anti-Christian policy was of demonic origin. The enraged Emperor instantly had Artemius stripped of all official rank and thrown into prison. The following day, he had Artemius brought before him and promised him high Imperial office if he would only renounce Christ and worship the idols. When Artemius forcefully refused to do this, he was publicly tortured to death. A pious noblewoman secretly recovered the Saint's relics and took them to Constantinople, where they were venerated and wrought many miracles for several centuries.

St Jonah, Bishop of Manchuria (1925) (October 7 OC)

October 21/November 3

St Hilarion the Great of Palestine (371)

He was born in Palestine to pagan parents who sent him to Alexandria to be educated. There he learned of the Christian faith and was baptized. Hearing of the fame of St Anthony the Great, he met the great "Father of monks," and determined to devote himself to the ascetical life. For the rest of his life he traveled from place to place, engaging in the most austere life of solitude, prayer and fasting. But wherever he went, his holiness shone like a beacon, and he became known to the people, who flocked to him for counsel, nurture and healing. He would then flee to another place and begin again. His travels took him to Egypt, Libya, Sicily, and finally Cyprus, where he reposed at a great age. As he lay on his

deathbed, he cried out 'Go forth, O my soul. What do you fear? Go forth! Why are you disquieted within me? You have served Jesus Christ for almost seventy years and do you fear death?' Speaking these words, he died.

**October 22/November 4**

**St Abercius, Bishop of Hierapolis, Wonderworker and Equal to the Apostles (167)**

He was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia of Asia Minor, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, a persecutor of Christians. During a pagan festival, Abercius was instructed by an Angel to throw down the idols of Apollo and other pagan gods. When his work was discovered, the people of the city were outraged; but instead of hiding, the bishop went to the marketplace and openly confessed the Christian faith. The people grew angrier still, but when Abercius healed three possessed men they were amazed and listened to him more closely. He preached the Faith with such power that the entire city and surrounding countryside became Christian.

These miracles reached the ears of the Emperor, whose daughter was suffering from demonic possession. The Emperor summoned Abercius to Rome, where he was enabled to cast out the spirit and perform several other miracles. The Empress offered him a large reward of gold for healing her daughter, but he would not accept it. On his way home, he was instructed in a vision to travel to Syria. He travelled first to Antioch and surrounding cities, then as far as Mesopotamia, proclaiming Christ and teaching the faith everywhere he went. No other bishop of his time travelled so widely in the service of the Gospel; for this reason he is called Equal to the Apostles.

After several years he returned to Phrygia, where he lived the remainder of his life in peace, shepherding his flock.

**October 23/November 5**

**† Holy Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord and First Bishop of Jerusalem (63)**

His Hebrew name is Jacob. He was a close kinsman of Christ, and was therefore called, according to the Jewish usage of the time, his "brother." Some accounts say that he was a child of Joseph by his first marriage; others accounts say that he was the son of Joseph's brother Cleopas and his wife Mary, who was first cousin of the Theotokos. He took the Nazirite vows of one completely consecrated to God according to the Law, and from a young age he was called "the Just" by his people. He is called James the Lesser in Scripture (Mark 15:40) to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, who is called the Greater. The Apostles appointed him first Bishop of Jerusalem. It was he who presided at the earliest Council of the Church in Jerusalem, where he resolved the problem of how gentile converts should be received into the Church (see Acts 15). He wrote the New Testament Epistle, addressed primarily to Jewish converts to the Faith, that bears his name. About the year 62, he ascended to the peak of the Temple in Jerusalem on Passover, and there bore witness to Christ so effectively that the people cried out "Hosanna to the Son of David." At this, the Scribes and Pharisees, fearing that all the people would be converted to Christ, cast him down to the ground. By God's grace, he survived long enough to rise, kneel and pray, like his Master, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." He was then clubbed to death by one of the scribes.

**October 24/November 6**

**Holy Martyr Arethas and those with him (524)**

'These Martyrs contested for piety's sake in the year 524 in Najran, a city of Arabia Felix (present-day Yemen). When Dhu Nuwas, ruler of the Himyarite tribe in south Arabia, and a Judaizer, took power, he sought to blot out Christianity, especially at Najran, a Christian city. Against the counsels of Arethas, chief man of Najran, the city surrendered to Dhu Nuwas, who immediately broke the word he had given and sought to compel the city to renounce

Christ. Led by Saint Arethas, hundreds of martyrs, including women, children, and babes, valiantly withstood his threats, and were beheaded and burned. After the men had been slain, all the free-born Christian women of Najran were brought before the tyrant and commanded to abjure Christ or die; yet they rebuked the persecutor with such boldness that he said even the men had not insulted him so contemptuously. So great was their faith that not one woman was found to deny Christ in all Najran, although some of them suffered torments more bitter than most of the men. In alliance with Byzantium, the Ethiopian King Elesbaan liberated Najran from Dhu Nuwas soon after and raised up churches in honour of the Martyrs. Najran became a place of pilgrimage until the rise of Islam a century later. At the end of his life King Elesbaan, who was also called Caleb, retired into solitude as a hermit; he sent his crown to Jerusalem as an offering to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. He also is commemorated on this day as a saint. Saint Arethas' name in Arabic, Harith, means "plowman, tiller," much the same as "George" in Greek.' (Great Horologion)

Ethiopia is still a Christian nation, surrounded by Islamic states. The late Emperor Haile Selasse's name means, in Ethiopian, "Power of the Trinity."

**October 25/November 7**

**Holy Martyrs Marcian and Martyrius (346)**

Both lived in Constantinople and were disciples of the Patriarch St Paul the Confessor (November 6), murdered in exile by the Arians. During the reign of the Arian Emperor Constantius, They fearlessly confessed that the Son of God is of one essence with the Father and is truly God. For their confession they were beheaded by the Arians and buried outside the city. Soon afterward, miracles began to be wrought at their tomb; and St John Chrysostom later built a church over it.

**St Tabitha of Joppa**

She was restored to life by the Apostle Peter (Acts 9:39-40), and afterwards died in peace.

**October 26/November 8**

**† Holy, Glorious and Great Martyr Demetrius the Outpourer of Myrrh (306)**

He was a native of Thessalonica, born of noble parents. His wisdom and distinction in battle earned him rapid advancement in the service of the Empire: in time he was appointed commander of all the Roman forces in Thessaly, and Proconsul of Hellas. Despite these worldly honors, Demetrius put his Christian faith before all, and by his words and example brought many pagans to faith in Christ.

When the Emperor Maximian, a persecutor of Christians, came to Thessalonica he appointed games and public sacrifices to celebrate his recent victory over the Scythians. Some jealous pagans used the visit to denounce Demetrius to the Emperor. Maximian had Demetrius cast into a fetid cell in the basement of some nearby baths. Maximian had brought with him a huge barbarian of tremendous strength named Lyaios, who fought many men in the arena and defeated them all, to the entertainment of the Emperor and the crowds. A young Christian named Nestor determined to show the people that the only true strength is in Christ: he visited Demetrius in his cell and asked for his blessing to challenge Lyaios to combat. The Martyr made the sign of the Cross over Nestor and sent him to the arena with his blessing. Nestor, a young boy, cried out before the Emperor 'God of Demetrius, help me!' and quickly killed the mighty Lyaios, to the astonishment of the crowd. The infuriated Emperor had Nestor slain with his own sword, and sent soldiers to Demetrius' cell, where they killed him with their spears. Demetrius' servant, a believer named Lupus, retrieved the body of Demetrius and buried it with honor. He kept the Saint's ring and blood-stained tunic, and through them worked several miracles and healings. When the Emperor heard of this, he had Lupus, too, beheaded.

October 27/November 9

Holy Martyr Nestor, Companion of St Demetrius (306)

See St Demetrius, commemorated yesterday, October 26.

St Procla, the wife of Pontius Pilate.

When Pilate was about to judge Christ, Procla attempted to dissuade him, saying "Have nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." Pilate ignored her warning. (See Matthew 27). St Procla reposed in peace

Our Venerable Father Demetrius of Basarabov (Romania) (13th c.)

He was born early in the thirteenth century to a peasant family in the village of Basarov, then part of Bulgaria. Even in childhood, he gave himself to fasting and prayer. Once, walking across a field, he accidentally stepped on a bird's nest in the grass, killing the young birds. He was so filled with remorse that he went barefoot for three years, winter and summer, in penance. When he was grown he joined a monastery and, after a few years of community life, received a blessing to dwell in a cave near the River Lom. After many years of solitary struggle, he reposed in his cave. Three hundred years passed, during which all memory of the simple ascetic was lost. Then, one Spring the river flooded the cave and carried off Demetrius' body, which had lain incorrupt in the cave for centuries. The body was carried downstream and buried in gravel. Another hundred years went by, and the Saint appeared in a dream to a paralyzed girl, telling her to ask her parents to take her to the river bank, where she would be healed. The family, along with many clergy and villagers, went to a spot where some local people had earlier seen an unexplained light. They dug and soon unearthed the still-incorrupt and radiant body of St Demetrius, by which the girl was instantly healed. A church was built in the village of Basarabov to honor the precious relics, and through the years the Saint worked many miracles there.

In 1774, during the Russian-Turkish war, General Peter Saltikov ordered the holy relics taken to Russia so that they would not be desecrated by the Turks. When the relics came to Bucharest, a pious Christian friend of the General begged him not to deprive the country of one of its most precious saints; so the General took only one of the Saint's hands, sending it to the Kiev Caves Lavra. Saint Demetrius' body was placed in the cathedral of Bucharest, where it has been venerated ever since. Every year on October 27, a three-day festival is held in the Saint's honor, attended by crowds of the faithful.

October 28/November 10

St Dimitri (Demetrius) of Rostov (1709)

Born near Kiev, he was raised in piety and, at the early age of eleven, entered the Ecclesiastical Academy of Kiev. At the age of seventeen he was professed as a monk. A few years later he was ordained to the priesthood. Despite his constant desire to retire into a life of asceticism and solitude, his many gifts were needed by the Church and, much against his will, he spent most of his life engaged in writing and other labors. The Abbot of the Lavra of the Kiev Caves, knowing his scholarly abilities, called him to compile a Russian-language Lives of the Saints, a work to which he devoted himself tirelessly for twenty-five years.

This compilation was not a dry exercise for him; he approached each Saint's life with prayer, and was often granted visions. The holy Martyr Barbara appeared to him in his sleep in 1685; when he asked her to intercede for him to the Lord, she chided him for praying "in the Latin Way," that is, for using short prayers. Seeing his distress at being so rebuked, she smiled and said "Do not be afraid!"

St Demetrius was elevated to the episcopal throne (of Metropolitan of Tobolsk and Siberia) in 1701, but asked to be transferred due to ill health, and because the Siberian see would not allow him to continue his research. So he was appointed to the Diocese of Rostov in 1702; he received a divine revelation that he would end his years there. He completed his

monumental Lives of the Saints in 1705; thereafter he devoted his energies to the care of his flock, the education of priests, and many spiritual writings, including several addressed to the schismatic "Old Believers," pleading with them to rejoin the canonical Church.

Despite his poor health, he maintained a life of strict prayer and fasting, and encouraged his faithful, in his sermons and writings, to do the same. He predicted his own death three days beforehand. The Synaxarion concludes: "the holy Bishop fell at the feet of his servants and chanters, and asked their forgiveness. Then, with an ardent prayer on his lips, he shut himself in his cell. The next morning, 28 October 1709, they discovered him dead upon his knees. The relics of Saint Demetrius were found incorrupt in 1752 and they wrought many healings. He was formally glorified by the Church in 1757.

**October 29/November 11**

**Holy Virgin Martyr Anastasia of Rome (256)**

She lived in Rome during the reigns of the Emperors Decius and Valerian. At an early age she left all to embrace a life of unceasing prayer, entering a small monastery in Rome, directed by a nun named Sophia. For her Christian faith, she was seized and brought before the governor Probus and, when she boldly confessed Christ and refused to honor the idols, was subjected to a series of vicious tortures, under which she died. An angel led Sophia to retrieve her holy relics, which are now venerated at the monastery of Grigoriou on Mt Athos.

We are sometimes told that monasticism developed in the Church after Christianity became accepted and grew more worldly. The story of St Anastasia is one of many evidences in the lives of the Saints that what we now call monasticism was present from the earliest days of the Church.

**October 30/November 12**

**Holy Martyrs Zenobius and his sister Zenobia (~290)**

These two holy ones were brother and sister, living the city of Aegea in Cilicia. When their parents died, they gave all their possessions to the poor. Zenobius, a physician, gave his healing services for free to all who came to him, often relying more upon the holy Name of Jesus than upon medicines. In time, he became Bishop of Aegea. During the persecutions under the Emperor Diocletian, Zenobius was arrested and brought before the governor Lysias, who demanded that he deny Christ and worship the idols. When Zenobius refused, he was subjected to torture. Zenobia, hearing of this, rushed to be with him and openly rebuked the governor. The two were then tortured together and finally beheaded, faithful to their Lord to the end.

**October 31/November 13**

**Holy Apostles Stachys, Apelles, Amplias, Urban, Narcissus and Aristobolus.**

They are numbered among the Seventy. All six are mentioned by St Paul in the sixteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. Stachys was appointed Bishop of Byzantium by the Apostle Andrew, and reposed in peace in AD 54. Apelles became Bishop of Heraclea in Asia Minor. Amplias and Urban were made Bishops in Macedonia by St Andrew; both died as Martyrs. Narcissus became Bishop of Athens and died a Martyr. Aristobolus became Bishop of Britain, where he reposed in peace.

**November 1/14**

**† Holy and Wonderworking Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian of Asia (3rd c.)**

Three pairs of Unmercenary Physicians (Anargyri) named Cosmas and Damian are commemorated (today, on October 17, and on July 1); The two commemorated today lived near Ephesus in Asia. They were of noble birth and well-educated in all the branches of higher learning; but they turned away from worldly knowledge to practice medicine without charge for anyone who sought their help, caring for the rich as well as poor, and even for

animals. They used none of the secular tools of medicine, but relied only on the Name of Christ, by which they were enabled to perform countless healings. Both reposed in peace.  
Holy New Martyr Helen of Sinope (18th c.)

She was a maiden of fifteen who lived with her parents in the Christian enclave of Sinope in Pontus during the 1700s. One day, as she went to the marketplace, she passed by the house of the local Pasha (governor), who, seeing her beauty, was seized by lust for her. He ordered his servants to bring her to him, and made two attempts to defile her; each time, however, he was prevented by a mysterious power that kept him from her like an invisible wall. Determined to have his way for her, he kept her prisoner in his house; but she was able to slip away and run home to her parents' house.

Enraged that his prey had escaped, the Pasha called together the leaders of the Christian community and promised that, unless Helen were handed over to him, all the Christians in the town would be massacred. Grief-stricken and fearful, the leaders persuaded Helen's father to return the girl to the palace. The vile Pasha made several more attempts to rape the Saint, but once again he was restrained as if by an invisible wall as she recited the Six Psalms and all the prayers that she knew by heart. Realizing that he was powerless against her, the Pasha had her thrown in the common jail, then ordered that she be tortured to death. The executioners subjected the maiden to several cruel torments before killing her by driving two nails into her skull and beheading her. They then put her body in a sack and threw it in the Black Sea.

Some Greek sailors followed a heavenly light to the place where the sack had sunk, and divers retrieved the Saint's relics, which immediately revealed themselves as a source of healing for many. Her body was taken to Russia; her head was placed in the church in Sinope, where it continued to work miracles, especially for those who suffered from headaches. When the Greeks were driven from Sinope in 1924, refugees took the head with them. It is venerated today in a church near Thessalonika.

### November 2/15

#### Holy Martyrs Acindynus, Pegasus, Aphthonius, Elpidophorus and Anempodistus of Persia (376)

Acindynus, Pegasus and Anempodistus were courtiers to King Shapur II of Persia. When the king began a fierce persecution of Christians, the three withdrew from court to a private house and, fearless of their own safety, openly exhorted their fellow-Christians to stand firm in their faith. For this they were arrested and brought before their former lord, who subjected them to many cruel tortures, from which they emerged miraculously unscathed. Seeing this, one of the king's soldiers, named Aphthonius, embraced the Faith and was immediately beheaded. The former courtiers were then put to further tortures, but their only effect was to convince Elpidophorus, a distinguished nobleman, and seven thousand other Persians to faith in Christ. All were beheaded, but not before receiving holy Baptism. The trials of the three continued, but once again they were preserved, and even the king's mother was led to the true faith. Finally they were killed (the account does not say how), receiving the crown of martyrdom along with the king's mother and twenty-eight others.

### November 3/16

#### Holy Virgin Martyr Winefride of Treffynnon (Holywell), Wales (7th c.)

"Saint Winefride (in Welsh, Gwenfrewi) was a maiden of noble birth who lived in North Wales in the seventh century. The niece and spiritual daughter of Saint Beuno (21 April), she entered the Monastery of Gwytherin after his death, where she lived under the spiritual direction of Saint Eleril. The son of a neighbouring chieftan, Caradoc by name, seized by an unchaste passion, pursued her and struck off her head with a sword. The spot where her head fell became known as Treffynnon or Holywell, because of the appearing of a healing spring for those who would take its waters with faith. Holywell remains a great place of

pilgrimage in Britain to this day." (Synaxarion)

**November 4/17**

**Our Holy Father Joannicius the Great, hermit on Mt Olympus (846)**

He was born in Bithynia of peasant stock. He worked as a swineherd, then became an officer in the Imperial army, where he served with such distinction in the war against the Bulgars that the Emperor Constantine VI wanted to take him into his personal service. "But the sight of massacres and horrors of war had brought home to him the vanity of this life. He asked leave of the Emperor to retire from the service, in order to wage unseen warfare in the ranks of the angelic army" (Synaxarion). In the coming years he traveled widely, sometimes living as a hermit, sometimes living in monasteries, more than once founding a monastic community. Wherever he went he lived in stillness, solitude and strict asceticism. He was famed for his spiritual counsel, his prophecies, his many miracles of healing ailments bodily and spiritual, and for his friendship with animals. Once a monk who doubted the Saint's miracles was eating at table with him when a large bear burst in upon them. Joannicius called the bear and it came and lay at his feet; he then told it to lie at the feet of his frightened guest and said "At their creation, the animals looked with veneration on man, who is made in the image of God, and he had no fear of them. We are afraid of them now because we have transgressed God's commandments. If we love the Lord Jesus and keep his commandments, no animal will be able to do us any harm." The monk departed greatly edified.

In the last years of Joannicius' life, when he was about ninety years old, the Emperor Theophilus sought his counsel on the veneration of icons. The Saint's answer was pointed: "Whoever refuses due honor to the images of Christ, of the Mother of God and of the Saints, will not be received into the Kingdom of Heaven, even if he has lived an otherwise blameless life."

Once Joannicius traveled to Constantinople to aid the Patriarch in some matters concerning the order of the Church. When he returned to his hermitage, he found that some jealous monks had set it on fire. Knowing who they were, he nevertheless addressed them kindly and invited them to share with him some food that he had managed to salvage from the fire. He did not attempt to rebuild his hermitage, but, taking the fire as a sign of his impending departure from this life, he traveled to the monastery of Antidion, where he had first entered into the monastic life and there, having predicted the day of his death, he reposed in peace. At the moment of his death, the monks of Mt Olympus saw a pillar of fire ascending from the earth to the sky.

The Saint's relics have been the source of many miracles. His skull is kept and venerated at the Monastery of the Pantocrator on Mt Athos. The widely-used prayer "My hope is the Father; my refuge is the Son; my shelter is the Holy Spirit; O Holy Trinity, glory be to Thee!" is attributed to St Joannicius.

**November 5/18**

**Our Holy Father Gregory the Confessor, Patriarch of Alexandria (early 9th c.)**

This much-loved shepherd of the Church at Alexandria was unanimously elected to the Patriarchate by the Bishops and people of that city. Though meek and humble, he was a fierce defender of holy Orthodoxy, which was then under attack by the Emperor Leo the Armenian (813-820). For his fearless defense of the holy Icons, Gregory was arrested at the Emperor's orders and brought in chains to Constantinople. Brought before Leo, the holy Patriarch told him clearly that he was a heretic and an enemy of the Church. The enraged Emperor had Gregory scourged, then sent into exile, where he reposed three years later.

November 6/19

**Paul the Confessor, Archbishop of Constantinople (~350)**

A native of Thessalonica, he rose from secretary to Alexander, Patriarch of Constantinople (commemorated August 30), to deacon, then succeeded St Alexander as Patriarch around 337. For his virtue and his zeal for Orthodoxy he was hated by the Arians, who were still powerful in the Empire. The Arian Emperor Constantius, learning of Paul's election, exiled him and made the Arian Eusebius Patriarch in his place. St Paul went to Rome, where he joined St Athanasius the Great in exile. Furnished with letters from Pope Julius, he was able to ascend the Patriarchal throne once again upon the death of Eusebius. But once again the Arians were able to put one of their party on the Patriarchal throne: Macedonius, who even went beyond the Arian heresy and denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Once again the legitimate, Orthodox Patriarch found himself in exile in Rome. In succeeding years St Paul stood firm for Orthodoxy while complex political and military intrigues swirled around him, with the Orthodox Constans, Emperor of the West (and Constantius' brother) supporting him while Constantius continued to oppose him. For a time Constans was able to enforce Paul's place on the Patriarchal throne, but when he died, Constantius banished St Paul to Cucusus on the Black Sea. There, while he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy in the house where he was kept prisoner, the Arians strangled him with his own omophorion. His relics were brought back to Constantinople by the Emperor Theodosius the Great.

November 7/20

**Saint Willibrord, first Bishop of Utrecht and Apostle of Holland (739)**

He was born in Northumbria in England around 638. At the age of seven he was sent to the monastery at Ripon for education under St Wilfrid (April 24), the abbot. At the age of twenty he traveled to Ireland to live among the holy monks of that land; he spent twelve years there as the spiritual child of St Egbert (also April 24). In 690 St Egbert sent Willibrord as head of a company of twelve monks to take the Gospel to the pagan lands around Frisia. The holy missionary first went to Rome to receive the blessing of Pope Sergius, then with his fellow-monks preached the Gospel throughout Holland and Zeeland. In 695 Pope Sergius consecrated Willibrord Archbishop of Utrecht, instructing him to organize the Church throughout that area. As Archbishop, Willibrord continued to labor tirelessly for the spread of the Gospel in those pagan lands; his missionary travels took him as far as Denmark. He reposed in peace in 739 at Echternach Monastery (located in present-day in Luxembourg), having served for forty-four years as a bishop and for most of his life as a monastic. His tomb soon became a place of pilgrimage.

November 8/21

**† Synaxis of the Chief Captains of the Heavenly Host, Michael and Gabriel, and of the other Bodiless Powers of Heaven**

The holy Scriptures, from beginning to end, are filled with mentions and descriptions of the Heavenly Host: not to believe in angels is not to believe in the Bible. In the heavens they behold the face of God, eternally hymning His glory. They are intimately involved with mankind as well: an angel is appointed guardian over every nation, and over every individual Christian. The Archangels Michael and Gabriel, whom we especially commemorate today along with all the other bodiless powers, have served as messengers to man. "Michael" means "Who is like God?"; "Gabriel" means "God is mighty." Gabriel especially was appointed to announce the coming of Christ in the flesh.

There is no reckoning the number of the Heavenly Host, though we know that they are a great multitude. They are ranked in nine orders, called Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim, Dominions, Powers, Authorities, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. "Angel" means "herald" or "messenger" and is properly applied only to those who serve as messengers

from God to man; but the name is often applied to the entire host of bodiless powers.

Though bodiless, the angels are finite in knowledge, extension and power. The angel Lucifer, once the highest of them all, desired to be like God Himself, and was cast forever from the presence of God, along with countless others who followed him. These we now know as Satan and the demons. (Needless to say, they are not commemorated today).

### November 9/22

† **Our Father among the Saints Nectarius (Nektarios), bishop of Pentapolis, Wonderworker, and founder of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity on Aegina (1920).**

"Saint Nectarius was born in Selyvria of Thrace on October 11, 1846. After putting himself through school in Constantinople with much hard labour, he became a monk on Chios in 1876, receiving the monastic name of Lazarus; because of his virtue, a year later he was ordained deacon, receiving the new name of Nectarius. Under the patronage of Patriarch Sophronius of Alexandria, Nectarius went to Athens to study in 1882; completing his theological studies in 1885, he went to Alexandria, where Patriarch Sophronius ordained him priest on March 23, 1886 in the Cathedral of Saint Sabbas, and in August of the same year, in the Church of Saint Nicholas in Cairo, made him Archimandrite. Archimandrite Nectarius showed much zeal both for preaching the word of God, and for the beauty of God's house. He greatly beautified the Church of Saint Nicholas in Cairo, and years later, when Nectarius was in Athens, Saint Nicholas appeared to him in a dream, embracing him and telling him he was going to exalt him very high.

### November 10/23

**Holy Apostles of the Seventy Olympas, Rodion, Erastus, Sosipater and Quartus**

All of these Apostles were among the Seventy, and all are mentioned by St Paul in Romans 16. Saints Olympas and Rodion followed St Peter to Rome and were beheaded under Nero around the year 54. The other three reposed in peace after serving the Church as bishops: St Sosipater as Bishop of Iconium; St Erastus (described by St Paul as city treasurer of Corinth) as Bishop of Paneas (Caesarea Philippi); St Quartus as Bishop of Beirut. Quartus is said to have converted most of the citizens of Beirut to faith in Christ before his repose.

### November 11/24

**Holy Martyr Menas (~304)**

This holy Martyr was an Egyptian and a soldier during the reigns of Diocletian and Maximian. Though he was known for his valor in combat, he renounced his soldier's rank when his legion was ordered to seize Christians in north Africa. Fleeing to the mountains, he dwelt there for some time in silence and solitude, devoting his days to prayer. In time, he presented himself at a pagan festival, denounced the idols and declared himself a Christian. For this he was handed over to the governor of the city, who subjected him to horrible tortures and finally had him beheaded. Some faithful retrieved part of his relics and gave them honorable burial near Lake Mareotis, about thirty miles from Alexandria. The church built over his tomb became a place of pilgrimage not only for countless Egyptians but for Christians all over the world: evidence has been found of journeys to his shrine from as far away as Ireland.

### November 12/25

**Our Father among the Saints Martin, Bishop of Tours (397)**

This holy and beloved Western Saint, the patron of France, was born in Pannonia (modern-day Hungary) in 316, to a pagan military family stationed there. Soon the family returned home to Italy, where Martin grew up. He began to go to church at the age of ten, and became a catechumen. Though he desired to become a monk, he first entered the army in obedience to his parents.

One day, when he was stationed in Amiens in Gaul, he met a poor man shivering for lack of clothing. He had already given all his money as alms, so he drew his sword, cut his soldier's cloak in half, and gave half of it to the poor man. That night Christ appeared to him, clothed in the half-cloak he had given away, and said to His angels, "Martin, though still a catechumen, has clothed me in this garment." Martin was baptised soon afterward. Though he still desired to become a monk, he did not obtain his discharge from the army until many years later, in 356.

He soon became a disciple of St Hilary of Poitiers (commemorated January 13), the "Athanasius of the West." After traveling in Pannonia and Italy (where he converted his mother to faith in Christ), he returned to Gaul, where the Arian heretics were gaining much ground. Not long afterward became Bishop of Tours, where he shone as a shepherd of the Church: bringing pagans to the faith, healing the sick, establishing monastic life throughout Gaul, and battling the Arian heresy so widespread throughout the West. Finding the episcopal residence too grand, he lived in a rude, isolated wooden hut, even while fulfilling all the duties of a Bishop of the Church.

His severity against heresy was always accompanied by love and kindness toward all: he once traveled to plead with the Emperor Maximus to preserve the lives of some Priscillianist heretics whom the Emperor meant to execute.

As the holy Bishop lay dying in 397, the devil appeared to tempt him one last time. The Saint said, "You will find nothing in me that belongs to you. Abraham's bosom is about to receive me." With these words he gave up his soul to God.

He is the first confessor who was not a martyr to be named a Saint in the West.

## November 13/26

### † Our Father among the Saints John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople (407)

This greatest of Christian orators is commemorated not only today, but as one of the Three Holy Hierarchs (with St Basil the Great and St Gregory the Theologian) on January 30.

He was born in Antioch to pious parents around 345. His mother was widowed at the age of twenty, and devoted herself to rearing her son in piety. He received his literary and oratorical training from the greatest pagan teachers of the day. Though an illustrious and profitable career as a secular orator was open to him, he chose instead to dedicate himself to God. He lived as a monk from 374 to 387, eventually dwelling as a hermit in a cave near Antioch. Here his extreme ascetic practices ruined his health, so that he was forced to return to Antioch, where he was ordained to the priesthood. In Antioch his astonishing gifts of preaching first showed themselves, earning him the epithet Chrysostomos, "Golden-mouth", by which he became universally known. His gifts became so far-famed that he was chosen to succeed St Nectarius as Patriarch of Constantinople. He was taken to Constantinople secretly (some say he was actually kidnapped) to avoid the opposition of the Antiochian people to losing their beloved preacher. He was made Patriarch of Constantinople in 398.

Archbishop John shone in his sermons as always, often censuring the corrupt morals and luxurious living of the nobility. For this he incurred the anger of the Empress Eudoxia, who had him exiled to Pontus in 403. The people protested by rioting, and the following night an earthquake shook the city, so frightening the Empress that she had Chrysostom called back. The reconciliation was short-lived. Saint John did not at all moderate the intensity of his sermons, and when the Empress had a silver statue of herself erected outside the Great Church in 403, accompanied by much revelry, the Patriarch spoke out against her, earning her unforgiving anger. In 404 he was exiled to Cucusus, near Armenia. When Pope Innocent of Rome interceded on his behalf, the imperial family only exiled him further, to a town called Pityus near the Caucasus. The journey was so difficult and his guards so cruel that the frail Archbishop gave up his soul to God before reaching his final place of exile, in 407. His last words were "Glory be to God for all things."

Saint John Chrysostom is the author of more written works than any other Church Father:

his works include 1,447 recorded sermons, 240 epistles, and complete commentaries on Genesis, the Gospels of Matthew and John, the Acts of the Apostles, and all the Epistles of St Paul.

His repose was on September 14, but since that is the date of the Exaltation of the Cross, his commemoration has been transferred to this day.

### November 14/27

#### † Holy Apostle Philip

He was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and a diligent student of the Law and the Prophets. When he first met Jesus, he followed Him right away and told Nathanael, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote" (John 1) After Christ's Ascension, Philip was chosen to proclaim the Gospel in Asia (the western province of Asia Minor). He traveled with Bartholomew (commemorated June 11) and his sister Mariamne, all of them joyfully enduring great sufferings and persecutions in the Lord's service. In Hierapolis in Phrygia, they healed the Governor's wife of an eye affliction, and she believed in the Lord. The Governor was so infuriated by this that he had Philip crucified upside-down. At the moment he gave up his soul to God, the ground opened, swallowing up a great many pagan priests and the Governor. Many of the surviving pagans, terrified, believed in Christ and were baptized by Bartholomew. Saint Bartholomew went on to preach the Gospel in many places; Mariamne traveled to the Jordan River, where she reposed in peace.

Among the Slavic peoples, the Nativity Fast is often called Filipovka since it commences immediately after this feast.

### November 15/28

#### Beginning of the Nativity Fast

#### Our Venerable Father Paisius Velichkovsky (1794)

He was born in Ukraine in 1722, one of the many children of a priest. He attended the Ecclesiastical Academy in Kiev, but was disappointed by the worldliness, love of ease and western theological climate that he found there.

After four years he left the school and embarked on a search for a spiritual father and a monastery where he could live in poverty. He eventually found wise spiritual guides in Romania, where many of the Russian monks had fled after Peter the Great's reforms. From there he traveled to the Holy Mountain. Spiritual life was at a low ebb there also, and Plato (the name he had been given as a novice) became a hermit, devoting his days to prayer and reading the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers. After four years, a visiting Elder from Romania tonsured him a monk under the name Paisius, and advised him to live with other monks to avoid the spiritual dangers of taking up the solitary life too soon. A few brethren from Romania arrived, seeking to make him their spiritual father, but as he felt unworthy to take on this task, all of them lived in poverty and mutual obedience. Others joined them from Romania and the Slavic countries, and in time they took up the cenobitic life, with Paisius as their reluctant abbot.

In 1763 the entire community (grown to sixty-five in number) left the Holy Mountain and returned to Romania. They were given a monastery where they adopted the Athonite rule of life. Abbot Paisius introduced the Jesus Prayer and other aspects of hesychasm to the monastic life there: before this time, they had been used mostly by hermits. The services of the Church were conducted fully, with the choirs chanting alternately in Slavonic and Romanian. The monks confessed to their Elder every evening so as not to let the sun go down on their anger, and a brother who held a grudge against another was forbidden to enter the church, or even to say the Lord's Prayer, until he had settled it.

The monastic brotherhood eventually grew to more than a thousand, divided into two monasteries. Visitors and pilgrims came from Russia, Greece and other lands to experience

its holy example.

St Paisius had learned Greek while on Mt Athos, and undertook to produce accurate Slavonic translations of the writings of many of the Fathers of the Church. The Greek Philokalia had been published not long before, and St Paisius produced a Slavonic version that was read throughout the Slavic Orthodox world. (This is the Philokalia that the pilgrim carries with him in *The Way of a Pilgrim*).

The Saint reposed in peace in 1794, one year after the publication of his Slavonic Philokalia. The Synaxarion summarizes his influence: "These translations, and the influence of the Saint through the activity of his disciples in Russia, led to a widespread spiritual renewal, and to the restoration of traditional monastic life there which lasted until the Revolution of 1917."

### November 16/29

#### † Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

He was a Galilean, the son of Alphaeus, and was originally named Levi. He was a tax-collector (an occupation despised by the Jews of Palestine) until he met the Lord, who said to him, "Follow me." From that day he was one of the disciples.

After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Apostle was appointed to bring the Gospel to his fellow Jews, for whom, according to the Church's tradition, he wrote down the Gospel for the first time, in the Aramaic language, eight years after the Ascension. Some years later, this book was translated into Greek by St James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem. No copy in the original language has survived.

Later, St Matthew traveled to Parthia and the city of Hierapolis (on the Euphrates river) to proclaim the Gospel to the pagans there. One tradition holds that he reposed in peace in that region at a great age. Another tradition holds that he was martyred by a king of that region, who later repented and was baptized, taking the name Matthew. The king then cast down the idols and established the Christian faith in his realm.

When St Matthew is portrayed in icons, the likeness of a man is shown with him, one of the four living creatures spoken of in the first chapter of Ezekiel. St Irenaeus writes that the man symbolizes Christ's Incarnation.

### November 17/30

#### Our Venerable Father Gregory the Wonderworker, Bishop of Neocaesarea (~275)

He was born to a prominent pagan family in Neocaesarea, where Christianity was at the time almost unknown. Nonetheless, Gregory found and embraced the faith of Christ at an early age. His parents educated him at the finest schools of the day in Athens, Alexandria, and Beirut; he and his brother spent five years studying under the great Origen, though, the Synaxarion is quick to note, "They possessed enough discernment, however, to avoid certain errors into which Origen was led by the excessive boldness of his speculations about the mysteries of God."

Refusing many tempting offers of worldly position, Gregory withdrew to the wilderness to live in asceticism. However, the Archbishop of Amasia, familiar with his holiness and ability, consecrated him Bishop of Neocaesarea against his will, and Gregory in obedience took up his see at about the age of thirty.

When he entered the city as bishop, it contained only seventeen Christians. Through the Saint's tireless and grace-filled preaching, and through the steady stream of miracles that he wrought there, he brought so many to the faith that when he died, only seventeen of the city's inhabitants were still pagans.

Bishop Gregory's countless miracles were so famed that he became known to all as the Wonderworker. Once, the Most Holy Mother of God appeared to him with Saint John the Theologian and revealed divine mysteries to him directly, a grace granted to very few. Even his detractors called him a second Moses. He reposed in peace in 275.

### Our Holy Mother Hilda, Abbess of Whitby (680)

A noble kinswoman of St Edwin, king of Northumbria (commemorated October 12), Hilda was baptized at a young age through the preaching of St Paulinus, one of the first missionaries sent from Rome to British Isles. At the age of thirty-three she renounced the world and entered monastic life. At first, she sought to enter a monastery near Paris in Gaul, but she was called back to her homeland by St Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne (August 31), who, discerning her already-apparent spiritual gifts, set her as Abbess of a small monastery. As her gifts of discernment and spiritual guidance became more widely-known, she led larger monasteries, finally establishing the Monastery of Whitby in 657. The Saint spent the next thirty-three years directing the Monastery, which became a beacon of Christian life throughout the British Isles and beyond. The Monastery was unusual by modern standards in that it comprised both a women's and a men's monastic house, with Mother Hilda as spiritual head of both. The community became a training-ground for priests and bishops who went on to spread the Gospel of Christ throughout Britain.

Commoners, kings and Bishop Aidan himself came regularly to her for spiritual counsel, and she was in her own lifetime regarded as the Mother of her country. For the last six years of her life she was afflicted with an unremitting burning fever, but she continued her holy work undeterred until her repose in 680. At the moment of her death, Saint Begu, in a different monastery, was awakened by a vision of Hilda's soul being borne up to heaven by a company of angels.

The Synaxarion concludes, "Saint Hilda, like her contemporaries Saint Etheldreda (23 June) and Saint Ebba (25 Aug.), belongs to that monastic company of women of royal birth who exercised a formative influence in the English Church of the seventh century, but she is also a rare example of a spiritual Mother, who received from God the gift of directing not only nuns but monks and bishops as well; for in the Lord Jesus there is neither male nor female, but a new creation (Gal. 3:28)."