

Due to copyright restrictions, these works may not be further reproduced,
beyond printing out a single copy for personal non-commercial use.

READER'S TYPIKA ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

(15th Sunday after Pentecost & the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross)

*Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross;
The Great-Martyr Eustathios and His Family*

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us, and save us.

Reader: Amen.

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (*Thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*Thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Leader: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

All: Amen.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*12 times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O come, let us worship and fall down before God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before the Very Christ, our King and our God.

THE FIRST ANTIPHON: PSALM 102

Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all that He hath done for thee, Who is gracious unto all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thine infirmities, Who redeemeth thy life from corruption, Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion, Who fulfilleth thy desire with good things; thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's. The Lord performeth deeds of mercy, and executeth judgement for all them that are wronged. He hath made His ways known unto Moses, unto the sons of Israel the things that He hath willed. Compassionate and merciful is the Lord, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy; not unto the end will He be angered, neither unto eternity will He be wroth. Not according to our iniquities hath He dealt with us, neither according to our sins hath He rewarded us. For according to the height of heaven from the earth, the Lord hath made His mercy to prevail over them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from

us. Like as a father hath compassion upon his sons, so hath the Lord had compassion upon them that fear Him; for He knoweth whereof we are made, He hath remembered that we are dust. As for man, his days are as the grass; as a flower of the field, so shall he blossom forth. For when the wind is passed over it, then it shall be gone, and no longer will it know the place thereof. But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity, even unto eternity, upon them that fear Him. And His righteousness is upon sons of sons, upon them that keep His testament and remember His commandments to do them. The Lord in heaven hath prepared His throne, and His kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, all ye His angels, mighty in strength, that perform His word, to hear the voice of His words. Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts, His ministers that do His will. Bless the Lord, all ye His works, in every place of His dominion.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

And again: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy Name; blessed art Thou, O Lord.

THE SECOND ANTIPHON: PSALM 145

Reader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the Lord in my life, I will chant unto my God for as long as I have my be-ing. Trust ye not in princes, in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return unto his earth. In that day all his thoughts shall perish. Blessed is he of whom the God of Jacob is his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, Who hath made heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is therein, Who keepeth truth unto eternity, Who executeth judgement for the wronged, Who giveth food unto the hungry. The Lord looseth the fettered; the Lord maketh wise the blind; the Lord setteth aright the fallen; the Lord loveth the righteous; the Lord preserveth the proselytes. He shall adopt for His own the orphan and widow, and the way of sinners shall He destroy. The Lord shall be king unto eternity; thy God, O Sion, unto generation and generation.

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE HYMN OF JUSTINIAN

Choir: Only-begotten Son and Word of God, who art im-mortal, who for our salvation willed to be incarnate of the Holy Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, and without change became man; and wast crucified, O Christ our God, and trampled down death by death; who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit: save us.

THE BEATITUDES IN TONE SIX

In Thy kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.

For the Resurrection in Tone Six

Verse 12: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Remember me, my God and Saviour, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom and save me as Thou alone lovest mankind.

Verse 11: Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Through the wood of the Cross Thou hast saved again Adam who was beguiled by the tree and the thief as he cried aloud: Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom.

Verse 10: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

O Giver of life, having broken the gates and chains of hell, Thou, Saviour, hast made all men rise crying aloud: Glory to Thy Resurrection.

Verse 9: Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Do Thou Who hast by Thy burial and Thy Resurrection despoiled death, and filled all things with joy, remember me as Thou art compassionate.

For the Feast¹ in Tone Eight

Verse 8: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

As that Wood is exalted which was sprinkled with the Blood of the incarnate Word of God, sing praises, ye powers of the Heavens, celebrating the restoration of mortals. Ye people, worship the Cross of Christ, whereby resurrection hath been granted to the world unto all the ages.

Verse 7: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

As that Wood is exalted which was sprinkled with the Blood of the incarnate Word of God, sing praises, ye powers of the Heavens, celebrating the restoration of mortals. Ye people, worship the Cross of Christ, whereby resurrection hath been granted to the world unto all the ages.

Verse 6: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

Ye earthborn stewards of grace, with due reverence exalt with your hands the Cross whereon Christ our God stood, and the spear that pierced the Body of God the Word. Let all the nations behold the salvation of God, glorifying Him unto the ages.

Verse 5: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Be glad, ye faithful Christian kings, who have been chosen by divine decree. Receiving from God the precious Cross, glory in this triumphal weapon, for thereby the tribes of the enemy that audaciously seek war are scattered unto the ages.

For St. Eustathios and his family² in Tone Four

Verse 4: Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

O glorious Eustathius, thou didst long after Christ when He appeared to thee, and wast entirely filled with longing to appear as a fair Martyr adorned in the purple of thy blood.

Verse 3: Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in the heavens.

O glorious Eustathius, thou didst long after Christ when He appeared to thee, and wast entirely filled with longing to appear as a fair Martyr adorned in the purple of thy blood.

Verse 2: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Thou didst run to follow in the divine footsteps of Christ, O Martyr, and becoming a partaker of His sufferings and His Kingdom, thou wast crowned with all thy household.

Verse 1: Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Employing now the words of Gabriel, O all-blameless Virgin, we cry to thee: Rejoice, only blessed Mother; rejoice, thou gate bearing the Sun or Righteousness.

THE SUNDAY EISODIKON

Verse: O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.

Choir: Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead; who sing to Thee. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Apolytikia:

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SIX

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades

¹ From 8th Ode of the Canon of the Feast (cf. St. Sabbas' Typikon).

² From 6th Ode of Matins canon.

captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTKION OF ST. EUSTATHIOS AND HIS FAMILY IN TONE FOUR

*(**Be quick to anticipate**)*

Thy Martyrs, O Lord, in their courageous contest for Thee * received as the prize the crowns of incorruption and life from Thee, our immortal God. * For since they possessed Thy strength, they cast down the tyrants * and wholly destroyed the demons' strengthless presumption. * O Christ God, by their prayers, save our souls, since Thou art merciful.

APOLYTIKION OF THE HOLY CROSS IN TONE ONE

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting to Thy people victory over all their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross preserve Thy community.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE IN TONE ONE

*(**The soldiers standing guard**)*

When Christ God had been born for our sakes from the Virgin, thou faith-fully didst follow Him, keeping His statutes and heeding His sacred laws, O august Mary Magdalene. Hence, as we today observe thy holy remembrance, we receive the loosing of our sins and transgressions through thy holy prayer(s) for us.

THE TRISAGION HYMN

Holy God, Holy mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us. (*thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Holy Immortal have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us.

THE APOSTOLOS & THE GOSPEL

PROKEIMENON, IN TONE 6

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. (*Ps.27:9a*) {*twice*}

Verse: Unto Thee, O Lord, will I cry; O my God, be not silent unto me. (*Ps.27:1a*)

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

APOSTOLOS FOR THE SUNDAY AFTER THE CROSS:

Reader: The reading is from the Epistle of St. Paul's to the Galatians §203 (2:16-20)

Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.

ALLELUIA, IN TONE 6

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Verse 1: He that dwelleth in the help of the Most High shall abide in the shelter of the God of heaven. (*Ps.90:1*)

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Verse 2: He shall say unto the Lord: Thou art my helper and my refuge. He is my God, and I will hope in Him. (*Ps.90:2*)

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

GOSPEL FOR THE SUNDAY AFTER THE CROSS:

Reader: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark §37 (8:34-9:1)

Choir: Glory the Thee O Lord, Glory to Thee.

Reader: The Lord said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God come with power."

Choir: Glory the Thee O Lord, Glory to Thee.

Then we sing the following, in tone 6

Choir: Remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.

- Remember us, O Master, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.
- Remember us, O Holy One, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.

The heavenly choir praiseth Thee and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Verse: Come unto Him, and be enlightened and your faces shall not be ashamed.

The heavenly choir praiseth Thee and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

The choir of Holy angels and archangels, with all the heavenly hosts praiseth Thee and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

THE SYMBOL OF FAITH

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets;

And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

Leader: Remit, pardon, forgive, O God, our offenses, both voluntary and involuntary, in deed and word, in knowledge and ignorance, by day and by night, in mind and thought; forgive us all things, for Thou art good and the Lover of mankind.

All: Amen

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Leader: O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

All: Amen.

Kontakia:

KONTAKION OF THE RESURRECTION IN TONE SIX

Having raised up all the dead out of the dark abysses by His life-bestowing hand, Christ God, the Giver of Life, hath bestowed the Resurrection upon mortal nature; for He is the Savior and Resurrection and Life of all, and the God of all.

KONTAKION OF ST. EUSTATHIOS AND HIS FAMILY IN TONE TWO

*(**Thou soughtest the heights**)*

The Passion of Christ * thou verily didst emulate* and drankest His cup * with faith; and thou didst then become * a partaker and joint-heir of His glory, O wise Eustathius; * and since He is God of all things, * He sent thee divine forgiveness from on high.

KONTAKION OF THE HOLY CROSS IN TONE FOUR

*(**Thou Who wast raised up**)*

Do Thou, Who of Thine own good will was lifted up upon the Cross, O Christ our God, bestow Thy bounties upon the new Nation which is called by Thy Name; make glad in Thy might those who lawfully govern, that with them we may be led to victory over our adversaries, having in Thine aid a weapon of peace and a trophy invincible.

Leader: Lord, have mercy. *(12 times)*

O All-Holy Trinity, the consubstantial dominion, the indivisible Kingdom, and cause of every Good: Show Thy good will even unto me a sinner; make steadfast my heart and grant it understanding, and take away mine every defilement; enlighten my mind that I may glorify, hymn, worship, and say:

Choir: One is Holy, One is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

PSALM 33

Reader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth. In the Lord shall my soul be praised; let the meek hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my tribulations. Come unto Him, and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his tribulations. The angel of the Lord will encamp round about them that fear Him, and will deliver them. O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that hopeth in Him. O fear the Lord, all ye His saints; for there is no want to them that fear Him. Rich men have turned poor and gone hungry; but they that seek the Lord shall not be deprived of any good thing. Come ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach

you the fear of the Lord. What man is there that desireth life, who loveth to see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Turn away from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are opened unto their supplication. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, utterly to destroy the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their tribulations. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and He will save the humble of spirit. Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all. The Lord keepeth all their bones, not one of them shall be broken. The death of sinners is evil, and they that hate the righteous shall do wrong. The Lord will redeem the souls of His servants, and none of them will do wrong that hope in Him.

THE HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS³

It is truly meet and right to bless thee, O Theotokos, who art ever blessed and all-blameless, and the Mother of our God. More honourable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, thou who without corruption bearest God the Word and art truly Theotokos: We magnify thee.

READING(S)

THE AFTERFEAST OF THE UNIVERSAL EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Saint Helen, the mother of Saint Constantine the Great, when she was already advanced in years, undertook, in her great piety, the hardships of a journey to Jerusalem in search of the cross, about the year 325. A temple to Aphrodite had been raised up by the Emperor Hadrian upon Golgotha, to defile and cover with oblivion the place where the saving Passion had been suffered. The venerable Helen had the statue of Aphrodite destroyed, and the earth removed, revealing the Tomb of our Lord, and three crosses. Of these, it was believed that one must be that of our Lord, the other two of the thieves crucified with Him; but Saint Helen was at a loss which one might be the Wood of our salvation. At the inspiration of Saint Macarius, Archbishop of Jerusalem, a lady of Jerusalem, who was already at the point of death from a certain disease, was brought to touch the crosses, and as soon as she came near to the Cross of our Lord, she was made perfectly whole. Consequently, the precious Cross was lifted on high by Archbishop Macarius of Jerusalem; as he stood on the ambo, and when the people beheld it, they cried out, "Lord have mercy." It should be noted that after its discovery, a portion of the venerable Cross was taken to Constantinople as a blessing. The rest was left in Jerusalem in the magnificent church built by Saint Helen, until the year 614. At that time, the Persians plundered Palestine and took the Cross to their own country (see Jan. 22, Saint Anastasius the Persian). Late, in the year 628, Emperor Heraclius set out on a military campaign, retrieved the Cross, and after bringing it to Constantinople, himself escorted it back to Jerusalem, where he restored it to its place. [From tyoos.org]

* * *

THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR EUSTATHIUS AND THEOPISTE, HIS SPOUSE, AND THEIR TWO SONS AGAPIUS AND THEOPISTUS

The Holy Great Martyr Eustathius (Eustace) was named Placidus before his Baptism. He was a military commander under the emperors Titus (79-81) and Trajan (98-117). Even before he came

³ The Arabic Typikon has the usual Hymn. Alternatively (cf. St. Sabbas Typikon), we can sing the Megalynarion & Irmos of the 9th Ode of the Canon of the Feast, in tone 8: **Magnify, O my soul, the most precious Cross of the Lord. Thou art the mystical paradise, O Theotokos; for that thou, being untilled, didst bud forth Christ, by Whom was planted on earth the life-giving tree of the Cross. Wherefore, as we adore it being elevated, we magnify thee.**

to know Christ, Placidus performed acts of charity, helping the poor and destitute. Therefore, the Lord did not leave the virtuous pagan remain in the darkness of idolatry.

Once while hunting in a forest, he saw a stag which would stop now and then to look him right in the eye. Placidus pursued it on horseback, but could not catch up. The stag leaped over a chasm and stood on the other side facing him. Placidus suddenly saw a radiant Cross between its antlers. In surprise the military commander heard a voice coming from the Cross saying, "Why do you pursue Me, Placidus?"

"Who are You, Master?" asked Placidus. The Voice replied, "I am Jesus Christ, Whom you do not know, yet you honor Me by your good deeds. I have appeared here on this creature for your sake, to capture you in the net of My love for mankind. It is not fitting that one as righteous as you should worship idols and not know the truth. It was to save mankind that I came into the world."

Placidus cried out, "Lord, I believe that You are the God of Heaven and earth, the Creator of all things. Master, teach me what I should do." Again the Lord replied, "Go to the bishop of your country and receive Baptism from him, and he will instruct you."

Placidus returned home and joyfully recounted everything to his wife Tatiana. She in turn told him how the evening before, in a mysterious dream, she had been told, "Tomorrow you, your husband and your sons shall come to Me and know that I am the true God." The spouses then proceeded to do as they had been bidden.

They hastened to the Christian bishop, who baptized all their family, and communed them with the Holy Mysteries. Placidus was renamed Eustathius, his wife was called Theopiste, and their children, Agapius and Theopistus.

On the following day, Saint Eustathius set out to the place of his miraculous conversion and in fervent prayer he offered up thanks to the Lord for having called him onto the path of salvation.

Again Saint Eustathius received a miraculous revelation. The Lord Himself foretold his impending tribulations: "Eustathius, you shall suffer many misfortunes, as did Job, but in the end you will conquer the devil."

Soon Saint Eustathius was plunged into misfortune: all his servants died of the plague and his cattle perished. Brought to ruin, but not despairing in spirit, Saint Eustathius and his family secretly abandoned their home, to live unknown, humble and in poverty.

They went to Egypt to board a ship sailing for Jerusalem. During the voyage a new woe beset the saint. The ship owner, enchanted by Theopiste's beauty, cruelly set Eustathius and his children ashore, keeping the wife for himself.

In great sorrow the saint continued on his way, and new woe beset him. Coming to a tempestuous river, he went to carry his two sons across in turn. When he had brought one across, the other was seized by a lion and carried off into the wilderness. As he turned back towards the other, a wolf dragged that child into the forest.

Having lost everything, Saint Eustathius wept bitterly, but he realized that Divine Providence had sent him these misfortunes to test his endurance and devotion to God. In his inconsolable grief, Saint Eustathius went on farther, prepared for new tribulations.

In the village of Badessos he found work and spent five years in unremitting toil. Saint Eustathius did not know then that through the mercy of God, shepherds and farmers had saved his sons, and they lived right near him. He also did not know that the impudent shipowner had been struck down with a terrible disease and died, leaving Saint Theopiste untouched. She lived in peace and freedom at the place where the ship landed.

During this time it had become difficult for the emperor Trajan to raise an army for Rome to deal with a rebellion, for the soldiers would not go into battle without their commander Placidas. They advised Trajan to send men out to all the cities to look for him.

Antiochus and Acacius, friends of Placidas, sought him in various places. Finally, they arrived in the village where Saint Eustathius lived. The soldiers found Eustathius, but they did not recognize him and they began to tell him of the one whom they sought, asking his help and promising a large reward. Saint Eustathius, immediately recognized his friends, but did not reveal his identity to them.

He borrowed money from one of his friends and fed the visitors. As they looked at him, the travellers noted that he resembled their former commander. When they saw a scar on his shoulder from a deep sword-wound, they realized that it was their friend there before them. They embraced him with tears and told him why they were seeking him.

Saint Eustathius returned to Rome with them and again became a general. Many new recruits were drafted into the army from all over the empire. He did not know that two young soldiers who served him, and whom he loved for their skill and daring, were actually his own sons. They did not know that they were serving under the command of their own father, nor that they were brothers by birth.

While on campaign, the army led by Eustathius halted at a certain settlement. The soldier-brothers were talking in their tent. The elder one spoke about his life, how he had lost his mother and brother, and how in a terrifying way he had been parted from his father. The younger brother then realized that before him was his very own brother, and told him how he had been rescued from the wolf.

A woman overheard the soldiers' conversation, since their tent was pitched right next to her house, and this woman realized that these were her sons. Still not identifying herself to them, but not wanting to be separated from them, she went to their commander, Saint Eustathius, to ask him to take her to Rome with him. She said she had been a prisoner, and wanted to go home. Then she came to recognize the commander as her husband, and with tears she told him about herself and about the two soldiers who were actually their sons. Thus, through the great mercy of the Lord, the whole family was happily reunited.

Soon thereafter the rebellion was crushed, and Saint Eustathius returned to Rome with honor and glory. The emperor Trajan had since died, and his successor Hadrian (117-138) wanted to celebrate the event of victory with a solemn offering of sacrifice to the gods. To the astonishment of everyone, Saint Eustathius did not show up at the pagan temple. By order of the emperor they searched frantically for him.

"Why don't you want to worship the gods?" the emperor inquired. "You, above all others, ought to offer thanks to them. They not only preserved you in war and granted you victory, but also they helped you find your wife and children." Saint Eustathius replied: "I am a Christian and I glorify and give thanks to Him, and I offer sacrifice to Him. I owe my life to Him. I do not know or believe in any other god than Him."

In a rage, the emperor ordered him to take off his military belt and brought him and his family before him. They did not succeed in persuading the steadfast confessors of Christ to offer sacrifice to idols. The whole family of Saint Eustathius was sentenced to be torn apart by wild beasts, but the beasts would not touch the holy martyrs.

Then the cruel emperor gave orders to throw them all alive into a red-hot brass bull, and Saint Eustathius, his wife Theopiste, and their sons Agapius and Theopistus endured a martyr's death.

Before being placed in the bull, Saint Eustathius prayed, “Grant, O Lord, Thy grace to our relics, and grant to those who call upon us a place in Thy Kingdom. Though they call upon us when they are in danger on a river or on the sea, we entreat Thee to come to their aid.”

Three days later, they opened the brass bull, and the bodies of the holy martyrs were found unscathed. Not one hair on their heads was singed, and their faces shone with an unearthly beauty. Many seeing this miracle came to believe in Christ. Christians then buried the bodies of the saints. [From oca.org]

* * *

THE HOLY NEW RIGHTEOUS MARTYR HILARION OF ST. ANNE SKETE ON ATHOS

Saint Hilarion was from Heraklion in Crete and his secular name was John. He had four other siblings, John, Polyzoos, George, and two sisters, whose names are unknown. His parents, Francis and Katherine, had raised him with diligence, and he had learned to read and write. When he was a young man, his uncle took him to Constantinople, promising to train him for some occupation.

Although John stayed with him for ten years, his uncle neglected to train him and did little else for him. That is why John was forced to leave his uncle’s house and get a job as the clerk of a merchant from the island of Chios, who came to trust John. One day, the merchant was obliged to leave his shop and travel back to Chios, placing John and another Orthodox Christian employee in charge of the business.

When he returned, the two employees gave their boss an accounting for the time that he was away. The merchant said that he had been cheated, because the money they collected did not correspond to the value of the goods that were sold. Although the merchant did not make an inventory before going to Chios, he estimated that the two clerks were short by thirty grosia. The other employee had been with the merchant for many years, and so all suspicion fell on John. He was told that there would be severe consequences if he did not return the money at once.

Knowing that he was innocent, John asked his uncle to help him, but his uncle refused to see him. In his despair he went to the palace, hoping to see the valide sultana, the Sultan’s mother. First, however, he met the Ethiopian eunuch, Mertzan Aga, It appears that John knew him and told him what had happened. The evil Aga seized this opportunity and told him that if he converted to Islam, he would not be liable to any punishment; moreover, he would receive many riches and honors.

In his fear and anxiety, John accepted. Then he was presented to the Sultan’s mother, who introduced him to the Sultan. Right away, John was circumcised, and was given Muslim clothing and other gifts. In addition, a certain hodja was appointed to instruct him in Islamic teachings.

Three days later, the young man came to himself and repented from his heart when he realized the gravity of his sin. He waited for an opportunity to escape, and after twelve days he managed to board a ship for the Crimea, where he remained for ten months. He knew no peace there because his conscience tormented him for his betrayal of Christ. Therefore, he decided that the only way he could atone for his sin was by the path of martyrdom. Returning to Constantinople, he consulted the renowned Spiritual Fathers, Elder Symeon and Elder Jeremiah. He told them of his intention to confess Christ in the place where he had denied Him. Instead, the Elders advised him to go to Mount Athos for a time.

John did exactly as he was told, and entered Iveron Monastery. The Fathers there sent him to the Skete of St. Anna to place himself under the guidance of Hieromonk Bessarion, who had prepared the New Martyr Luke (March 23) for his martyrdom the previous year. The Elder

accepted him and gave him a Rule of strict asceticism and fasting. Soon he received the monastic tonsure with the name Hilarion.

One morning, Father Hilarion told his Elder that he was ready to confess Christ, Whom he had denied. The Elder blessed his good intention, and the Saint received the Holy Mysteries. They left for Constantinople together, and then Father Hilarion presented himself to the Aga at the palace.

“Three days after becoming a Muslim,” he said, “I repented of what I had done, and I abandoned the darkness of error and returned to the light of truth, so I curse your religion. I was a Christian, and now I am once more.”

Throwing his turban on the ground, he put on the black monastic skoufia he had concealed under his coat. Seeing the Saint’s resolve, the Aga ordered that he be tortured without mercy. His torments were so severe that all his bones were broken.

Saint Hilarion was beheaded on September 20, 1804, and received two incorruptible crowns from Christ: that of asceticism, and that of martyrdom.

Elder Bessarion was once invited to a Christian home and the children were brought to receive his blessing. One child, a little girl about eight years old, had been possessed by a demon. She turned black, made some erratic movements, and eventually she fell down as if she were dead. The Elder had some of the Saint’s blood with him, but before he could even anoint the girl with it, the demon came out of her, and the child stood up. [From oca.org]

* * *

THE VENERABLE JOHN “THE STRANGER,” ENLIGHTENER OF CRETE (+ 1031)

The Cretan Saint John the Stranger (or the Xenos), as we learn from his will, was born in the village of Makra Siva of the Pyriotissa Province in Messara, in 970, ten years after the liberation of Crete from the Saracens.

Crete has been under the occupation of many conquerors throughout history. For 133 years, from 828 until 961, the Arab Saracens had transformed the island into a center of pirate raids in the Aegean. Many towns and villages were virtually destroyed and the Christians who had escaped the massacres and Islamization had a problem of survival. So when Crete was liberated in 961 by Nikephoros Phokas, there was an urgent need to re-evangelize the inhabitants.

Although his parents were wealthy and pious, Saint John loved Christ from a young age and dedicated his life to monasticism and asceticism. For a while he lived in a cave on Mount Raxos, where he built a church after a divine revelation dedicated to Saints Eutychios and Eutychianos, and was tonsured a monk there by a certain elder.

Saint John the Stranger is the successor of the missionary action of Saint Athanasios the Athonite and Saint Nikon "Metanoeite", after preaching for fifty years and building temples and monasteries, going from place to place throughout the island. The two former Missionaries had taken on the mission of regenerating the Orthodox faith and life on the island. But neither of these men remained in Crete. Saint Athanasios stayed for a while in Crete and fled to Mount Athos where he founded the Monastery of Great Lavra, while Saint Nikon "Metanoeite" remained in Crete for seven years, where he was active mainly on the central-eastern part of the island and then went to Laconia, where, today, he is honored as patron saint of Sparta (he is called "Metanoeite", because in his sermons he repeatedly told people to repent). Only Saint John the Stranger remained on the island until his death.

Our Venerable Father, apart from his great missionary activity, also had great and deep knowledge of Christian philosophy. Not only was he methodical and practical, but also a scholar, as he wrote discourses on Matthew's Gospel. He was also probably a hymnographer and translator of works of Aristotle. This is why he is praised by hymnographers as "wise, all-wise, great luminary, God-bearer, judicious, experienced, desert-loving, boast of the ascetics, boast of the venerables, the boast of Crete."

The center of the missionary action of Saint John was the Holy Monastery of the Panagia in Myriokephala which the Saint founded in a miraculous way (like most of his shrines) after being commanded to do so by Panagia herself. Nine buildings of the Saint can be found in his will and his biography:

- 1) The Church of Saints Eutychios and Eutychianos
- 2) The Holy Monastery of Panagia Myriophefala
- 3) The Church of Saint George Douvrikas in Melikas
- 4) The Church of Saint George the Fisherman (Psaropiasti)
- 5) The Holy Monastery of Saint Patapios
- 6) The Church of the Life Giving Spring of Koufos (known as Saint John Koufos)
- 7) The Church of Saint Paul in Sfakia
- 8) The Church of Saint George in Azogyres
- 9) The Church of Saint Eustathios on the Coast of Kissamos

This is the chronological order in which the buildings as well as the building action of the Saint is placed. According to his will, all his foundations in Crete were dedicated to the Holy Monastery of the Panagia of Myriokephala and may, therefore, be classified as parts or chapels of the Monastery of Myriokephala.

It is worth mentioning some information about the establishment of the Monastery in Myriokephala. Tradition and also the life of the Saint tell us that the Monastery was founded by order of the Panagia herself. The ascetic John, going from place to place, arrived in Tourma in Kalamona, on Mount Myriokephalon. The winter was harsh and John lived in a cave in Koumaro praying and eating weeds. Once he entered the cave he became blind for seven days, yet he ceased not to pray. On the seventh day he heard a voice saying to him: "John, go out and look east." Obeying that voice, he went out and having turned to the east, his eyesight returned and then he saw a great light. The voice continued: "John, in this place, build a church in the name of Panagia the Antiphonetria." He arrived a little distance from the place where he had seen the light and there, tired and thirsty, he surrendered to a deep sleep.

In his dream he saw an angel who told him: "John, do not come back. Make the sign of the cross to the east and place your hand in the earth and water will spring right there for you to drink and continue your work." Immediately he made the sign of the cross and put his hand in the earth using all five fingers. Immediately, water started to spring out of five sources (preserved until today). He washed and rested. Then, he began looking through the brambles for the icon, but it was to no avail. Then the workers set fire and, while the forest was burning, a voice was heard: "Here I am." John immediately ran and found the icon of the Panagia in flames, burned a little on the edge (this survives today). He bought the place and with the help of the Christians, he built the Monastery in the name of Panagia the Antiphonetria (named so because the voice commanded him).

John then left the monk Luke to continue building and he went to various places to preach the word of God. When he returned, the church was not finished and he began fundraising in

monasteries for its completion. In 1025 he went to Constantinople to Emperor Romanos and the Patriarch Alexios to ensure stavropegic value (ie. that the Monastery would be subject to the jurisdiction of the Patriarch), bringing icons of sacred vessels, etc. Another version of how the icon came to the Monastery is that it is the work of the Evangelist Luke, and was brought by Saint John from Constantinople when it been given to him by Patriarch Alexios, along with the document, "sigillium", which secured the independence of the monastery.

The reputation of the shrine of the Panagia is maintained until today and particularly on 8 September, which is the feast day of the Nativity of the Theotokos. The Monastery continued to operate until the second Byzantine period, while there is no information about the period of the Venetian rule. It was renovated in 1755 and later suffered damage from the Turks, only to be restored again in 1840 by Abbot Matthew. In 1852 it was recognized as being subject to Patriarchal jurisdiction and thus custody of the Monastery by the Monastery of Roustikon was terminated. In 1900 the Monastery was dissolved and since 1961 it has been a parish church - a holy shrine of the Holy Metropolis of Rethymno and Avlopotamos.

There are many legends, traditions and detailed descriptions of the temples, monasteries, foundations and every shrine founded by Saint John the Stranger. From his life it is obvious that he is a great figure of our Church. Mission was the basic and main purpose of his life. He dedicated his life to spreading the gospel, to the consolidation of national and religious consciousness, the organization of ecclesiastical life as well as monastic life and the construction of dozens of temples and monasteries. He reposed in peace in 1031.

The holy skull of the Saint was moved and is now kept in the Church of Saint John, which is located in a village of the same name, in the province of Kisamos. Since then, his skull has been gushing forth remedies as gifts to believers who ask for his help. The official recognition of John the Stranger as a Saint, was made by Patriarch Cyril Loukaris on 29 April 1632. He is celebrated on September 20. [From Mystagogy]

* * *

THE HOLY MARTYRS MICHAEL, PRINCE OF CHERNIGOV, AND HIS COUNCILOR, THEODORE, WONDERWORKERS OF CHERNIGOV

The Holy Prince Michael of Chernigov, son of Vsevolod Ol'govich the Dark-Red (+ 1212), was noted from childhood for his piety and mildness. His health was very poor, but in 1186, trusting in the mercy of God, the young prince asked for the holy prayers of Saint Nikita the Stylite of Pereyaslavl (May 24), who during these years received renown by his prayerful intercession before the Lord.

After he received a wooden staff from the holy ascetic, the prince was healed at once. In 1223 Prince Michael took part in a council of Russian princes at Kiev, debating whether to aid the Polovetsians against the approaching Mongol-Tatar hordes. With the death of his uncle, Mstislav of Chernigov in the Battle at the Kalka River in 1223, Saint Michael became Prince of Chernigov.

In 1225 he was invited to be prince of the Novgorod people. Through his sense of justice, compassion and firmness he gained the love and respect of Old Novgorod. This was particularly important for the Novgorodians, since the accession of Michael as prince signified a reconciliation of Novgorod with the city of Vladimir's holy Great Prince George Vsevolodovich (March 4), whose wife was the holy princess Agatha, sister of Prince Michael.

But Saint Michael did not long remain prince at Novgorod. He soon returned to his native Chernigov. To the stipulations and requests of the Novgorodians to remain prince he answered that

Chernigov and Novgorod ought to become kindred lands, and their inhabitants like brothers, and he would forge the bonds of friendship of these cities.

The noble prince assiduously concerned himself with the building up of his appenage realm. But it was difficult for him in these troubled times. His activity provoked unease in the Kursk Prince Oleg, and in 1227 internecine strife nearly erupted, but Metropolitan Cyril of Kiev reconciled them. And in this same year Prince Michael peacefully resolved a dispute between the Kiev Great Prince Vladimir Rurikovich and the Galich prince. In 1235 Prince Michael occupied the throne of Kiev.

Troublesome times ensued. In 1238 the Tatars (Mongols) laid waste to Ryazan, Suzdal, and Vladimir. In 1239 they moved against South Russia, and ravaged the left bank of the Dniepr River, and the lands of Chernigov and Pereyasavl. By the autumn of 1240 the Mongols were coming close to Kiev. The khan's emissaries proposed that Kiev surrender voluntarily, but the prince would not negotiate with them.

Prince Michael rode urgently to Hungary, to persuade the Hungarian king Bela to organize allied forces to resist the common enemy. Saint Michael tried to recruit both Poland, and the German emperor into the struggle against the Mongols, but the moment for a combined resistance was lost. Rus was devastated, and later Hungary and Poland. With no foreign support, Prince Michael returned to the ruins of Kiev and for a certain time he lived near the city on an island, and then he resettled in Chernigov.

The prince did not abandon hope in the possibility of an united Christian Europe against the Asiatic nomads. In 1245, at the Council of Lyons in France, his co-worker Metropolitan Peter (Akerovich) was sent as emissary by Saint Michael, calling for a crusade to march against the pagan Horde. Catholic Europe in the persons of its chief spiritual leaders, the Roman Pope and the German emperor, betrayed the interests of Christianity. The Pope was involved in a war with the German emperor, and the Germans took advantage of the Mongol invasion to attack Rus themselves.

In these circumstances affecting Christianity in general, there is a universal significance to the confessor's deed of the martyred Orthodox Prince Saint Michael of Chernigov in the midst of the pagan Horde. In Rus emissaries of the khan soon appeared, in order to conduct a census of the Russian population and to impose taxes upon it.

The prince was ordered to make full submission to the Tatar khan, and for his princely realm, the khan would grant a special charter. The emissaries informed Prince Michael that it was necessary for him to journey to the Horde for an affirmation of rights to rule the principedom under the khan's charter. Seeing the woeful plight of Rus, Prince Michael recognized the need to obey the khan, but as a fervent Christian he knew that he would not deny his faith before the pagans. From his spiritual Father, Bishop John, he received a blessing to journey to the Horde and be a true confessor of the Name of Christ.

With the holy Prince Michael on the journey to the Horde went his faithful friend and companion, the noble Theodore. At the Horde they knew about Prince Michael's attempts to organize an uprising against the Tatars in concert with Hungary and the other European powers. His enemies had long sought the opportunity to destroy him.

In 1246 when Prince Michael and the boyar Theodore arrived at the Horde, they were instructed on how to go to the khan, to proceed through a fire to cleanse them of their evil intents, and to worship the primal elements considered gods by the Mongols: the sun and fire. In answer to the

pagan priests commanding them to perform the pagan rituals, the holy Prince replied, “A Christian worships only God, the Creator of the world, and not creatures.”

They reported to the khan about the firmness of the Russian Prince. Batu’s attendant El’deg delivered the conditions: either fulfill the demands of the pagan priests, or die in torments. But this also was followed by the resolute answer of holy Prince Michael, “I am prepared to submit to the emperor, since that God has entrusted him with the destiny of the earthly kingdoms, but as a Christian, I cannot worship idols.” The fate of the brave Christians was sealed.

Taking courage in the words of the Lord: “Whoever would save his life, shall lose it, and whoever will lose his life for My sake shall save it” (Mt.16:25), the holy prince and his devoted boyar prepared for a martyr’s death and received the Holy Mysteries, which their spiritual Father gave them, foreseeing this possibility. The Tatar executioners seized the prince and for a long time they beat him fiercely, until the ground ran crimson with blood. Finally, Domanus, an apostate from the faith in Christ, cut off the head of the holy martyr.

The Tatars deceitfully promised Saint Theodore great honor and his lord’s princely rank if he would fulfill the pagan ritual. But Saint Theodore was not swayed by this, and he followed in the path of his prince. After quite vicious torments they beheaded him. The bodies of the holy passion-bearers were thrown to be eaten by dogs, but the Lord miraculously guarded them for several days, until faithful Christians could secretly bury them with reverence. Later on, the relics of the holy martyrs were transferred to Chernigov.

The confessor’s act of Saint Theodore amazed even his executioners. Persuaded of the Russian people’s steadfast fidelity to the Orthodox Faith, and their readiness to die for Christ with joy, the Tatar khans decided not to try the patience of God as before, and ceased demanding that Russians at the Horde perform any pagan rituals. But the struggle of the Russian nation and the Russian Church against the Mongol Yoke continued for yet a long time. The Orthodox Church was adorned in this struggle by new martyrs and confessors. Great Prince Theodore was poisoned by the Mongols. Also martyred were Saint Roman of Ryazan (+ 1270), Saint Michael of Tver (+ 1318), his sons Demetrius (+ 1325) and Alexander (+ 1339). All of these took courage from the example and holy prayers of the Russian Protomartyr of the Horde, Saint Michael of Chernigov.

On February 14, 1572, at the wish of Tsar Ivan Vasilievich the Terrible, and with the blessing of Metropolitan Anthony, the relics of the holy martyrs were transferred to Moscow, to the temple dedicated to them. From there in 1770 they were transferred to the Visitation cathedral, and on November 21, 1774 to the Archangel cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin.

The Lives and service to Saints Michael and Theodore were compiled in the mid-sixteenth century by the renowned church writer, Saint Zenobios of Otonsk.

“The generation of the upright shall be blessed,” says the holy Psalmist David (Ps. 111/112:2). This occurred in full measure for Saint Michael. He is at the head of many famous families in Russian history. His children and grandchildren continued the holy Christian service of Saint Michael. The Church also numbers his daughter Saint Euphrosyne of Suzdal (September 25), and his grandson Saint Oleg of Briansk (September 20) among the saints. [From oca.org]

THE LITTLE DISMISSAL

The Leader bows toward the icon of Christ on the iconostasis, saying:

Leader: Glory to thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to thee.

All: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. O Lord, bless.

*Leader: O Thou Who rose again from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross—the Exaltation of which we now celebrate; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers; of the Holy Myrrh-Bearer and Equal to the Apostles Mary Magdalene, protector of this community; of the Great-martyr Eustathios and his family; Venerable-martyr Hilarion of St. Anne Skete on Athos; Venerable John of Crete; Martyrs Michael, prince of Chernigov, and his councilor Theodore, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: *have mercy on us, and save us, for Thou art good and lovest mankind.**

Then, facing the icon of Christ, on the iconostasis, the Leader says:

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us, and save us.

All: Amen.