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READER'S TYPIKA ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2022
(13th Sunday after Pentecost & Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross)

*After-feast of the Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady,
the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary*

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 immortal, 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 FOUR

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

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

For the Resurrection in Tone Four

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

Through a tree, Adam was deprived of his home in Paradise; while through the wood of the Cross, the thief went there to dwell. For the one by tasting set aside the commandment of the Maker, while the other, crucified with Him, confessed the hidden God crying aloud: Remember me, in Thy Kingdom.

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

Lifted upon the Cross, Thou O Lord as God, hast both destroyed the power of death and blotted out the handwriting against us. Do Thou Who alone lovest mankind, grant us the repentance of

the thief as we serve Thee with faith, O Christ our God, and cry to Thee: Remember us also in Thy Kingdom.

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

Crucified and rising from the tomb in power on the third day, with Thyself hast Thou, only Immortal, raised Adam, the first-formed man. Make me also worthy, O Lord, to turn to repentance from my whole heart and with warm faith ever to cry to Thee: Remember me, O Saviour, in Thy Kingdom.

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

Thou hast torn to pieces on the Cross, the handwriting against us and counted among the dead, Thou hast bound yonder tyrant, delivering all from the bonds of hell by Thy Resurrection. Through it we have been enlightened and cry aloud to Thee, Lord Who lovest mankind: Remember us also in Thy Kingdom.

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

For our sake He Who is without passion, became a suffering man and nailed upon the Cross of His own will, He raised us with Himself. Therefore with the Cross we glorify the Passion and the Resurrection through which we have both been made anew and through which we have been saved, crying: Remember us also in Thy Kingdom.

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

Let us entreat with faith Him rising from the dead despoiling the power of hell, Who was seen by the women bearing myrrh and said to them: Hail!, for our souls always to be delivered from corruption, crying at all times to Him with the gracious voice of the thief: Remember us also in Thy Kingdom.

For the Feast¹ in Tone Two

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.

In time past, when the Lawgiver was unable to understand thy great mystery in its immaterial manifestations, O all-holy Lady, he was instructed through symbols not to think in an earthly way; wherefore, astonished at the marvel, *Verse 3: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in the heavens.*

The divine choir divinely foretold of thee as a mountain, a heavenly gate, and a spiritual ladder. For out of thee was hewn a Stone, not cut by hand of man; and they called thee a gate, through which passed the Lord of wonders, even the God of our Fathers.

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

The foreordained tabernacle of our reconciliation with God now beginneth to be, she who will bear the Word for our sakes made manifest in the grossness of the flesh. We whom He brought out of nothing into being, praise Him and supremely exalt Him unto all the ages.

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

The transformation of barrenness hath undone the world's barrenness of good things; and the marvel openly intimated Christ's coming among mortals. We whom He brought out of nothing into being, praise Him and supremely exalt Him unto all the ages.

THE SUNDAY EISODIKON

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

¹ Troparia from 7th and 8th Odes of the 1st Matins canon.

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

Apolytikia

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FOUR

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS IN TONE FOUR

Thy nativity, O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole universe; for from thee did shine forth the Sun of justice, Christ our God, annulling the curse, and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting.

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, 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 SUNDAY BEFORE THE CROSS:

Reader: The reading is from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians §215 (6:11-18).

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the Law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all, who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

ALLELUIA, IN TONE 1

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Verse 1: I have raised up one chosen out of My people. *(Ps. 88:18b)*

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Verse 2: For My hand shall be unto him an ally, and Mine arm shall strengthen him. *(Ps. 88:20)*

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

GOSPEL FOR SUNDAY BEFORE THE CROSS:

Reader: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. John §9 (3:13-17).

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

Reader: The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

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 FOUR

*(**On this day Thou hast appeared**)*

Now hath my Deliverer * and mighty Savior * raised the earthborn from the grave * and from their bonds, since He is God; * and He hath crushed Hades' brazen gates * and is arisen the third day as Sovereign Lord.

KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS IN TONE FOUR

By thy holy nativity, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: The barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life.

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 THEOTOKOS

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 NATIVITY OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY, THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary: The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of mankind.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of mankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since Saint Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Saints Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Saints Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feastdays at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

Saint Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. Saint Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all mankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: “the East Gate... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls” (2nd Stikhera on “Lord, I Have Cried”, Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion. [From oca.org]

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OUR RIGHTEOUS MOTHER THEODORA OF ALEXANDRIA

Saint Theodora of Alexandria and her husband lived in Alexandria. Love and harmony ruled in their family, and this was hateful to the Enemy of salvation. Goaded on by the devil, a certain rich man was captivated by the youthful beauty of Theodora and began with all his abilities to lead her into adultery, but for a long time he was unsuccessful. Then he bribed a woman of loose morals, who led the unassuming Theodora astray by saying that a secret sin, which the sun does not see, is also unknown to God.

Theodora betrayed her husband, but soon came to her senses and realizing the seriousness of her fall, she became furious with herself, slapping herself on the face and tearing at her hair. Her conscience gave her no peace, and Theodora went to a renowned abbess and told her about her transgression. The abbess, seeing the repentance of the young woman, spoke to her of God’s forgiveness and reminded her of the the sinful woman in the Gospel, who washed the feet of Christ with her tears and received from Him forgiveness of her sins. In hope of the mercy of God, Theodora said: “I believe my God, and from now on, I shall not commit such a sin, and I will strive to atone for my deed.”

At that moment Saint Theodora resolved to go off to a monastery to purify herself by labor and by prayer. She left her home secretly, and dressing herself in men’s clothes, she went to a men’s monastery, since she feared that her husband would find her in a women’s monastery.

The igumen of the monastery, in order to test the resolve of the newcomer, would not even bless her to enter the courtyard. Saint Theodora spent the night at the gates. In the morning, she fell down at the knees of the igumen, and said her name was Theodore from Alexandria, and entreated him to let her remain at the monastery for repentance and monastic labors. Seeing the sincere intent of the newcomer, the igumen consented.

Even the experienced monks were amazed at Theodora’s all-night prayers on bended knee, her humility, endurance and self-denial. The saint labored at the monastery for eight years. Her body, once defiled by adultery, now became a vessel of the grace of God and a receptacle of the Holy Spirit.

Once, the saint was sent to Alexandria to buy provisions. After blessing her for the journey, the igumen indicated that in case of a delay, she should stay over at the Enata monastery, which was on the way. Also staying at the guest house of the Enata monastery was the daughter of its igumen. She had come to visit with her father. Attracted by the comeliness of the young monk, she tried to seduce the monk Theodore into the sin of fornication, not knowing that it was a woman standing before her. Meeting with refusal, she committed sin with another guest and became pregnant. Meanwhile, the saint bought the food and returned to her own monastery.

After a certain while the father of the shameless girl, realizing that a transgression had occurred, began to question his daughter about the father of the child. The girl indicated that it was the monk Theodore. The father at once reported it to the Superior of the monastery where Saint Theodora labored in asceticism. The igumen summoned the saint and repeated the accusation. The saint firmly replied: "As God is my witness, I did not do this." The igumen, knowing of Theodore's purity and holiness of life, did not believe the accusation.

When the girl gave birth, the Enata monks brought the infant to the monastery where the ascetic lived, and began to reproach its monks for an unchaste life. But this time even the igumen believed the slanderous accusation and became angry at the innocent Theodore. They entrusted the infant into the care of the saint and threw her out of the monastery in disgrace.

The saint humbly submitted to this new trial, seeing in it the expiation of her former sin. She settled with the child not far from the monastery in a hut. Shepherds, out of pity, gave her milk for the infant, and the saint herself ate only wild vegetables.

Bearing her misfortune, the holy ascetic spent seven years in banishment. Finally, at the request of the monks, the igumen allowed her to return to the monastery with the child, and in seclusion she spent two years instructing the child.

The igumen of the monastery received a revelation from God that the sin of the monk Theodore was forgiven. The grace of God dwelt upon the monk Theodore, and soon all the monks began to witness to the signs worked through the prayers of the saint.

Once, during a drought, all the wells dried up. The igumen said to the brethren that only Theodore would be able to reverse the misfortune. Having summoned the saint, the igumen bade her to bring forth water, and the water in the well did not dry up afterwards. The humble Theodore said that the miracle was worked through the prayer and faith of the igumen.

Before her death, Saint Theodora shut herself in her cell with the child and instructed him to love God above all things. She told him to obey the igumen and the brethren, to preserve tranquility, to be meek and without malice, to avoid obscenity and silliness, to love non-covetousness, and not to neglect their communal prayer. After this, she prayed and, for the last time, she asked the Lord to forgive her sins. The child also prayed together with her. Soon the words of prayer faded from the lips of the ascetic, and she peacefully departed to a better world.

The Lord revealed to the igumen the spiritual accomplishments of the saint, and also her secret. The igumen, in order to remove any dishonor from the deceased, in the presence of the igumen and brethren of the Enata monastery, told of his vision and uncovered the bosom of the saint as proof.

The Enata igumen and brethren shrank back in terror at their great transgression. Falling down before the body of the saint, with tears they asked forgiveness of Saint Theodora. News of Saint Theodora reached her former husband. He received monastic tonsure at this same monastery where his wife had been. And the child, raised by the nun, also followed in the footsteps of his foster-mother. Afterwards, he became igumen of this very monastery. [From oca.org]

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OUR RIGHTEOUS FATHER EUPHROSYNUS THE COOK

Saint Euphrosynus the Cook was from one of the Palestinian monasteries, and his obedience was to work in the kitchen as a cook. Toiling away for the brethren, Saint Euphrosynus did not absent himself from thought about God, but rather dwelt in prayer and fasting. He remembered always that obedience is the first duty of a monk, and therefore he was obedient to the elder brethren.

The patience of the saint was amazing: they often reproached him, but he made no complaint and endured every unpleasantness. Saint Euphrosynus pleased the Lord by his inner virtue which he concealed from people, and the Lord Himself revealed to the monastic brethren the spiritual heights of their unassuming fellow-monk.

One of the priests of the monastery prayed and asked the Lord to show him the blessings prepared for the righteous in the age to come. The priest saw in a dream what Paradise is like, and he contemplated its inexplicable beauty with fear and with joy.

He also saw there a monk of his monastery, the cook Euphrosynus. Amazed at this encounter, the presbyter asked Euphrosynus, how he came to be there. The saint answered that he was in Paradise through the great mercy of God. The priest again asked whether Euphrosynus would be able to give him something from the surrounding beauty. Saint Euphrosynus suggested to the priest to take whatever he wished, and so the priest pointed to three luscious apples growing in the garden of Paradise. The monk picked the three apples, wrapped them in a cloth, and gave them to his companion.

When he awoke in the early morning, the priest thought the vision a dream, but suddenly he noticed next to him the cloth with the fruit of Paradise wrapped in it, and emitting a wondrous fragrance. The priest, found Saint Euphrosynus in church and asked him under oath where he was the night before. The saint answered that he was where the priest also was. Then the monk said that the Lord, in fulfilling the prayer of the priest, had shown him Paradise and had bestowed the fruit of Paradise through him, “the lowly and unworthy servant of God, Euphrosynus.”

The priest related everything to the monastery brethren, pointing out the spiritual loftiness of Euphrosynus in pleasing God, and he pointed to the fragrant paradisaical fruit. Deeply affected by what they heard, the monks went to the kitchen, in order to pay respect to Saint Euphrosynus, but they did not find him there. Fleeing human glory, the monk had left the monastery. The place where he concealed himself remained unknown, but the monks always remembered that their monastic brother Saint Euphrosynus had come upon Paradise, and that they in being saved, through the mercy of God would meet him there. They reverently kept and distributed pieces of the apples from Paradise for blessing and for healing. [From oca.org]

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THE HOLY MARTYRS DEMETRIUS, HIS WIFE EVANTHIA, AND DEMETRIANUS THEIR SON

Saint Demetrius was a prince and prefect of the city of Skepsis in the Hellespont. Saint Cornelius the Centurion (September 13), the first Gentile converted to Christ by the Apostle Peter, came into his city preaching the Gospel.

Saint Cornelius sowed the seeds of Christianity among many of the inhabitants of Skepsis, and so the pagans arrested him and brought him to trial before the prefect Demetrius. In vain he demanded that the saint renounce Christ, and finally handed him over for torture.

Saint Cornelius bravely endured the torture, while in turn urging the prefect to forsake his pagan errors and turn to the true faith in Christ. Led into a temple of idols, Saint Cornelius destroyed the pagan temple and the idols standing in it by his prayer.

Persuaded of the truth of Christianity by the saint’s preaching and by his miracles, the prefect Demetrius himself came to believe in Christ and was baptized with all his family. Because the saints now believed in Christ, the pagans threw the newly-converted family into prison where they were starved to death. [From oca.org]

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THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF VENERABLE SERGIUS AND HERMAN,
WONDERWORKERS OF VALAAM

Saints Sergius and Herman settled on the island of Valaam in 1329. The brethren gathered by them spread the light of Orthodoxy in this frontier land. The Karelian people began to regard Christianity with renewed suspicion, with its authority in the fourteenth century being undermined by the Swedes, who sought to spread Catholicism by means of the sword.

Saints Sergius and Herman died about the year 1353. They are also commemorated on June 28 (Their holy repose). [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—whose Nativity 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 our Venerable Mother Theodora of Alexandria; Righteous Euphrosynos the Cook; Martyrs Demetrios, Evanthia and Demetrianos; and Venerable Sergios and Herman of Valaam, 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.