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READER'S TYPICA ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2026
(35th Sunday after Pentecost)

***After-feast of Presentation of the Lord in the Temple &
The Sunday of the Prodigal Son***

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 fulfillleth 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 TWO

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

For the Resurrection in Tone Two

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

We offer Thee the voice of the thief and cry aloud to Thee: Remember us, O Saviour in Thy Kingdom.

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

We bring Thee the Cross for the forgiveness of offences. For us hast Thou accepted it, O Lover of mankind.

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

We venerate, O Master, Thy tomb and Thy rising, through which Thou hast delivered the world from corruption, O Lover of mankind.

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

By Thy death, O Lord, death has been swallowed up, and by Thy Resurrection, O Saviour, has the world been saved.

For the Prodigal Son¹ in Tone Two

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

The depth of sin ever holds me fast, and the tempest of transgressions overwhelms me. Pilot me, O Christ my God, to the haven of life and save me, King of glory.

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

The depth of sin ever holds me fast, and the tempest of transgressions overwhelms me. Pilot me, O Christ my God, to the haven of life and save me, King of glory.

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

I have wasted in evil living the riches which the Father gave me, and now am brought to poverty. I am filled with shame and enslaved to fruitless thoughts. Therefore I cry to Thee who lovest mankind: Take pity on me and save me.

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

I am wasted with hunger, deprived of every blessing, and an exile from Thy presence, O Christ supreme in loving-kindness. Take pity on me as I now return, and save me as I sing the praises of Thy love for mankind.

For the Feast² in Tone Three

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 people of Israel, seeing Emmanuel, thy glory, as a child come from a Virgin, dance before the divine Ark and sing: O all ye works, bless ye the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto all the ages.

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

O people of Israel, seeing Emmanuel, thy glory, as a child come from a Virgin, dance before the divine Ark and sing: O all ye works, bless ye the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto all the ages.

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

T Behold, cried Symeon, He shall be a sign that is spoken against, being both God and a child. With faith let us sing to Him: O all ye works, bless ye the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto all the ages.

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

This Child, Who is Life, God the Word become a babe, shall be the fall of the disobedient and the rising again of all who sing with faith: O all ye works, bless ye the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto all the ages.

THE SUNDAY EISODIKON

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

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

Apolytikia:

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE TWO

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the

¹ These troparia are from 6th Ode of the Matins canon (cf. St. Sabbas Typikon).

² These troparia are from 8th Ode of the Matins canon of the Feast.

earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace, for from thee arose the Sun of justice, Christ our God, lighting those who are in darkness. Rejoice and be glad, O righteous old man, carrying in thine arms the Deliverer of our souls, Who granteth us Resurrection.

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 faithfully 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 2

The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation. *(Ps.117:14) {twice}*

Verse: With chastisement hath the Lord chastened me, but He hath not given me over unto death. *(Ps.117:18)*

The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation.

SUNDAY APOSTOLOS FROM THE TRIDION:

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS §135 (6:12-20)

Brethren, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything. Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food; but God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

ALLELUIA, TONE 2

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Verse 1: The Lord hear thee in the day of affliction; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. *(Ps.19:1)*

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Verse 2: O Lord, save the king, and hearken unto us in the day when we call upon Thee. *(Ps.19:9)*

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

SUNDAY GOSPEL (FROM THE TRIODION):

Reader: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke §79 (15:11-32)

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

Reader: The Lord spoke this parable: “There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.’ And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.’ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

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 FOR THE PRODIGAL SON IN TONE THREE

*(**On this day the Virgin**)*

Foolishly I sprang away * from Thy great fatherly glory, * and dispersed in wicked deeds * the riches that Thou didst give me. * With the Prodigal I therefore * cry unto Thee now: * I have sinned against Thee, O compassionate Father. * But receive me in repentance; * make me as one of * Thy hired servants, O Lord.

KONTAKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

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

Instead of the usual: “It is truly meet...” we sing the *Refrain & Irmos of the 9th Ode of the Matins Canon, in tone 3*

Refrain: O Theotokos, thou hope of all Christians; keep and shelter and preserve them that set their hope in thee.

(Irmos) Let us magnify, O believers, the first-born Son, the eternal Word of the Father, First-born of a Mother who knew no man; for we have beheld in the shadow of the law and the Scriptures a sign, that every first-born male that openeth the womb is called holy to God.

READING(S)

THE AFTER-FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION (MEETING) OF CHRIST

On February 2 the Church commemorates an important event in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:22-40). Forty days after His birth the God-Infant was taken to the Jerusalem Temple, the center of the nation’s religious life. According to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8), a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the Temple of God for forty days. At the end of this time the mother came to the Temple with the child, to offer a young lamb or pigeon to the Lord as a purification sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, had no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity without defilement. However, she humbly fulfilled the requirements of the Law.

At this time the righteous Elder Simeon (February 3) was living in Jerusalem. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he should behold the promised Messiah. By inspiration

from above, Saint Simeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Joseph had brought the Infant Jesus to fulfill the Law.

The God-Receiver Simeon took the divine Child in his arms, and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words repeated by the Church each evening at Vespers: “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32). Saint Simeon said to the Most Holy Virgin: “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:34-35).

At the Temple was the 84-year-old widow Anna the Prophetess, daughter of Phanuel (February 3), “who did not leave the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day. She arrived just when Saint Simeon met the divine Child. She also gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:37-38). In the icon of the Feast she holds a scroll which reads: “This Child has established Heaven and earth.”

Before Christ was born, righteous men and women lived by faith in the promised Messiah, and awaited His coming. The Righteous Simeon and the Prophetess Anna, the last righteous people of the Old Testament, were deemed worthy to meet the Savior in the Temple.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord is among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons on the Feast by the holy bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilocius of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407). Despite its early origin, this Feast was not celebrated so splendidly until the sixth century.

In 528, during the reign of Justinian, an earthquake killed many people in Antioch. Other misfortunes followed this one. In 541 a terrible plague broke out in Constantinople, carrying off several thousand people each day. During this time of widespread suffering, a solemn prayer service (Litia) for deliverance from evils was celebrated on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and the plague ceased. In thanksgiving to God, the Church established a more solemn celebration of this Feast.

Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns: Saint Andrew of Crete in the seventh century; Saint Cosmas Bishop of Maium, Saint John of Damascus, and Saint Germanus Patriarch of Constantinople in the eighth century; and Saint Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonica in the ninth century.

On this day we also commemorate the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos known as “the Softening of Evil Hearts” or “Simeon’s Prophecy.” The Mother of God is depicted without Her Child, with seven swords piercing her breast: three from the left side, three from the right, and one from below.

A similar icon, “Of the Seven Swords” (August 13) shows three swords on the left side and four from the right.

The icon “Simeon’s Prophecy” symbolizes the fulfillment of the prophecy of the righteous Elder Simeon: “a sword shall pierce through your own soul” (Luke 2:35). [From oca.org]

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THE SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Through the parable of today's Gospel, our Saviour has set forth three things for us: the condition of the sinner, the rule of repentance, and the greatness of God's compassion. The divine

Fathers have put this reading the week after the parable of the Publican and Pharisee so that, seeing in the person of the Prodigal Son our own wretched condition -- inasmuch as we are sunken in sin, far from God and His Mysteries -- we might at last come to our senses and make haste to return to Him by repentance during these holy days of the Fast.

Furthermore, those who have wrought many great iniquities, and have persisted in them for a long time, oftentimes fall into despair, thinking that there can no longer be any forgiveness for them; and so being without hope, they fall every day into the same and even worse iniquities. Therefore, the divine Fathers, that they might root out the passion of despair from the hearts of such people, and rouse them to the deeds of virtue, have set the present parable at the forecourts of the Fast, to show them the surpassing goodness of God's compassion, and to teach them that there is no sin -- no matter how great it may be -- that can overcome at any time His love for man. [From tyoos.org]

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THE HOLY AND GLORIOUS GREAT MARTYR THEODORE THE COMMANDER

The holy Martyr Theodore was from Euchaïta of Galatia and dwelt in Heraclea of Pontus. He was a renowned commander in the military, and the report came to the Emperor Licinius that he was a Christian and abominated the idols. Licinius therefore sent certain men to him from Nicomedia, to honor him and ask him to appear before him. Through them, however, Saint Theodore sent back a message that it was necessary, for various reasons, that Licinius come to Heraclea. Licinius, seeing in this a hope of turning Saint Theodore away from Christ, did as was asked of him.

When the Emperor came to Heraclea, Saint Theodore met him with honor, and the Emperor in turn gave Theodore his hand, believing that through him he would be able to draw the Christians to the worship of his idols. Seated upon his throne in the midst of the people, he publicly bade Theodore offer sacrifice to the gods. But Theodore asked that the Emperor entrust him with the most venerable of his gods, those of gold and silver, that he might take them home and himself attend upon them that evening, promising that the following day he would honor them in public. The Emperor, filled with joy at these tidings, gave command that Theodore's request be fulfilled.

When the Saint had taken the idols home, he broke them in pieces and distributed the gold and silver to the poor by night. The next day a centurion named Maxentius told Licinius that he had seen a pauper pass by carrying the head of Artemis. Saint Theodore, far from repenting of this, confessed Christ boldly. Licinius, in an uncontrollable fury, had the Saint put to many torments, then crucified. While upon the cross, the holy Martyr was further tormented: his privy parts were cut off, he was shot with arrows, his eyes were put out, and he was left on the cross to die. The next day Licinius sent men to take his corpse and cast it into the sea; but they found the Saint alive and perfectly whole. Through this, many believed in Christ. Seeing his own men turning to Christ, and the city in an uproar, Licinius had Theodore beheaded, about the year 320. The Saint's holy relics were returned to his ancestral home on June 8, which is also a feast of the Great Martyr Theodore. [From tyoos.org]

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THE HOLY PROPHET ZACHARIAS

The Prophet Zacharias was the son of Barachias, and a contemporary of the Prophet Aggeus (Dec. 16). In the days of the Babylonian captivity, he prophesied, as it says in the book of Ezra, "to the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem" (Ezra 5:1); he aided Zorobabel in the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. In the book of Ezra he is called "Zacharias the son of Addo (or Iddo)"

but in his own prophetic book he is called more fully “Zacharias, the son of Barachias, the son of Addo the Prophet” (Zach. 1:1). When the captivity returned from Babylon, he came to dwell in Jerusalem in his old age.

His book of prophecy is divided into fourteen chapters and has the eleventh place among the books of the minor Prophets; his name means “Yah is renowned.” Sozomen reports that under the Emperor Honorius, Zacharias’ holy relics were found in Eleutheropolis of Palestine. The Prophet appeared in a dream to a certain Calemerus, telling him where he would find his tomb. His body was found to be incorrupt (*Eccl. Hist.*, Book IX, 17). [From tyoos.org]

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OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS SABBAS THE SECOND, ARCHBISHOP OF SERBIA

Born Predislav Nemanjic, the son of Saint-King Stephen Prvovencani the First-Crowned (September 24) and the nephew of Saint Savva I, the first Archbishop of Serbia (January 14), Saint Savva II distinguished himself in monastic life by his ascetic practices, in imitation of his sainted uncle.

He succeeded Saint Arsenius (October 28) as Archbishop of Serbia in 1266. He guided the Church with great love and dedication until his repose, variously dated as 1268, 1269 and 1271. His holy relics are at Pec, the site of the ancient Serbian Patriarchate. [From oca.org]

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SAINTS EMMELIA, NONNA AND ANTHOUSA - MOTHERS OF THE THREE HIERarchs

On the Sunday after the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Feb. 2), the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece has determined, that the memory of the three holy mothers of the Three Hierarchs be honored. They are Saint Emmelia, the mother of Basil the Great, who is also commemorated on May 30th; Saint Nonna, the mother of Gregory the Theologian, who is also commemorated on August 5th; and Saint Anthousa, the mother of John Chrysostom, for whom this is her primary feast.

Saint Anthousa, Mother of John Chrysostom (circa. 347-407)

Anthousa was an intelligent woman living in the city of Antioch in the fourth century. She was a woman of means, being married to Secundus, an illustrious officer in the Imperial Army of Syria. The city of Antioch was the starting point of the Apostle Paul’s three missionary journeys and was one of the four chief cities of the Roman Empire. Of its population of about two hundred thousand, half were thought to have been Christian.

It was in this setting that Anthousa bore a son that she named John. While John was an infant, Secundus died, leaving her widowed when she was about twenty years old. Although she had the means to give her son a good education, she dreaded bringing him up amid the corruptions of Antioch and decided to teach him at home for a time. But the burden of rearing him, she later declared, was lightened for her by God’s support and the joy of seeing in him the image of his father.

Anthousa decided not to marry again, feeling that her child must come before her own happiness. She devoted her life to her son, who showed high intelligence and a love for virtue, and the service of the local Church.

It was her goal to nurture in him the highest quality of Christian character. In his early years she taught him to love the Holy Scripture and encouraged him to study and learn it. She instilled in him an intimate knowledge of the Scriptures which served to help him later in life.

Anthousa herself was a highly educated woman and transmitted much of her classical knowledge to her son. When the time was right, she sent him to the celebrated orator Libanius to

study further. As he grew into a man, she also encouraged him to pursue his desire to study classical knowledge and theology, inspiring him to study theology under the noted Diodore of Tarsus. While John did study under great men of his time period, the spiritual interpretations and the practical applications found in his great homilies on Genesis, Matthew, John, Romans, Galatians, Corinthians, Ephesians, Timothy, and Titus owe much to his mother's early teachings.

John went on to become one of the great Christian leaders of his time, earning the name Chrysostom, meaning "Golden-Mouthed". Though he reveled in his classical education, it was the things of the Spirit he learned at his mother's home that he credited for giving him the foundation he needed to succeed as a minister of the Gospel and becoming the man that he was.

Saint Emmelia, Mother of Saint Basil the Great

Saint Emmelia (also Emily, Emilia, Emelia), was part of a holy family and most famous for being the mother of Saint Basil the Great. There are very few descriptions of Saint Emmelia's life. She was the daughter of a martyr and the daughter-in-law of Saint Macrina the Elder (260-340). Along with her husband, Saint Basil the Elder (+ 349), she gave birth to nine or ten children. She instilled the Orthodox faith in her children, teaching them to pray and devote their lives to the service of the Church. Among these were Saint Basil the Great (+ 379), his sister Saint Macrina the Younger (c.330–379) and his brothers Saints Gregory of Nyssa (334-394), Naukratios of Mount Nitria (332-358), and Peter of Sebaste (345/7-392). It is also a widely held tradition that Saint Theosevia (c. 335-c.385) was his youngest sister (though some claim she was the spouse of Saint Gregory of Nyssa), who is also a saint in the Church. There are also about four or five other girls, unknown sisters of Saint Basil. Therefore, Saint Emmelia is often called "the mother of saints."

When her son, Naukratios, suddenly died at the age of twenty-seven, she was consoled by her eldest daughter, Macrina. Macrina reminded her that it was not befitting to a Christian to "mourn as those who have no hope" and inspired her to hope courageously in the resurrection bequeathed to us by the saving passion of the Lord.

After her children left home, Emmelia was persuaded by Macrina to forsake the world. Together they founded a monastery for women. Emmelia divided the family property among her children. Retaining only some meager possessions, she and Macrina withdrew to a secluded family property in Pontus, picturesquely located on the banks of the Iris River and not far from Saint Basil's wilderness home. A number of liberated female slaves desired to join the pair, and a convent was formed. They lived under one roof and held everything in common: they ate, worked, and prayed together. They were so eager to advance in virtue that they regarded fasting as food and poverty as riches. The harmony of this model community of women was unspoiled by anger, jealousy, hatred, or pride. Indeed, as the Church sings of monastics, they lived like angels in the flesh. Living in this manner for many years, Emmelia reached old age. When an illness signaled her departure from this world, her son Peter came to her side. Together with Macrina, he tended to his mother in her last days. As the oldest and the youngest, Macrina and Peter held a special place in Emmelia's heart.

Before committing her soul to the Lord, she raised her voice to heaven, saying, "To you, O Lord, I give the first fruits and the tithe of the fruit of my womb. The first fruit is my first-born daughter, and the tithe is this, my youngest son. Let these be for you a rightly acceptable sacrifice, and let your holiness descend upon them!" Saint Emmelia reposed in 375 and was buried as she had requested, beside her husband in the chapel at their estate in Annesi, where Naukratios had also been laid.

Saint Nonna of Nazianzus, Mother of Gregory the Theologian.

Saint Nonna of Nazianzus, known for piety, purity and deep Christian faith, was the wife of Gregory of Nazianzus the Elder (Jan. 1). A member of the Hypsistarians, a distinct Jewish-pagan sect worshiping Hypsistos, the "Most High" God, Gregory was convinced to convert to Christianity by his wife Nonna in 325, who would pray for him daily. Both Gregory and Nonna came from wealthy families, and Gregory was able to personally finance the construction of a church in the region of Cappadocia. In 328, Gregory was selected as bishop of Nazianzus, a position he held until his death.

Three children were born to Gregory and Nonna, all of whom are saints of the Church. One daughter, Saint Gorgonia (Feb. 23), was outlived by her parents by only a year, and was lauded in the eulogy given by her brother Gregory as a model Christian wife. Their younger son, Cæsarius of Nazianzus (Mar. 9), studied in Caesarea Mazaca and at Alexandria and became a physician. He served in Constantinople as the court physician for both Constantius II and Julian the Apostate, and died in 368. Their elder son, also named Gregory (Jan. 25), served alongside his father first as a priest, and then as co-adjutor. Gregory of Nazianzus the Younger would later become the Patriarch of Constantinople and ranked among the great Three Hierarchs of the Church (Jan. 30) and an esteemed Theologian. Nonna outlived her husband and two of her children, dying in 374.

Speaking of her virtues and character, her son Gregory wrote of her:

"What time or place for prayer escaped her? This was the first thought of her day. Rather, who had more confidence in gaining a petition as soon as it was made? Who had such reverence for the hands and countenance of priests? Who showed such honor for every form of philosophy? Who subdued her flesh more by fastings and watchings, or stood like a pillar during the night-long or daily singing of the psalms? Who had greater admiration for virginity, although she herself was under the bond of matrimony? Who was a better champion of widows and orphans? Who relieved to a like degree the misfortunes of the distressed? These things, small perhaps, and, it may be, even despised by some because they do not lie within the reach of the majority for the unattainable, out of envy, is generally considered as not even credible I esteem highly, for they were the inventions of her faith and undertakings of her spiritual fervor. So, too, her voice was never heard in the sacred assemblies or places, except when necessary and required by the liturgy.

It was once counted a glory for the altar that no axe had been lifted upon it, no stone-cutter's tool seen or heard, with the higher meaning that whatever was consecrated to God should be natural and free from artifice. Why should it not redound to her great praise that she honored the sanctuary by her silence, that she never turned her back upon the holy table, nor spat upon the hallowed pavement, that she never grasped the hand or kissed the lips of any pagan woman, however honorable in other respects and however closely related? She would not even share salt, either willingly or perforce, with those coming from a profane and unhallowed table, nor suffer herself, contrary to the law of conscience, to pass by or look upon a polluted house. She would not let her ears or her tongue, which had received and uttered holy things, be defiled by pagan tales or theatrical songs, because nothing unholy is becoming to the holy. What is deserving of greater admiration is the fact that she restrained external manifestation of grief to such a degree, although she was deeply affected by the sufferings even of strangers, as never to let a cry of affliction burst forth before the Eucharist, or to let a tear drop from eyes mystically sealed, or let any sign of mourning remain when a festival day came, although many sorrows befell her. For she felt that the soul that loves God should subject all human things to the divine."

Gregory also tells of an occasion in 351 when Nonna fell sick with a severe illness and appeared to be at the point of death. He writes:

"Hardy and vigorous and free from disease all her life, she herself was seized with sickness. Of the many ills she suffered, not to prolong my story, nothing affected her so grievously as the inability to eat. Her life was in danger for many days, and no remedy for the disease could be found. How did God sustain her? Not by raining down manna, as of old for Israel, nor by striking the rock that gushed forth water for the thirsting people, nor by feeding her with the help of ravens, as the great Elias, nor by satisfying her need by a prophet carried through the air, as was done for Daniel of old when he suffered hunger in the lions den. In what manner, then? She thought that she saw me, her darling for not even in dreams did she prefer any other of us come up to her suddenly in the night with a basket of purest white bread, and after blessing and signing it with the cross according to my custom, feed and comfort her, and that she then recovered her strength. And this vision of the night was a thing of reality. For from that time she returned to herself and was of better hope. This is evidenced by a clear and manifest token. For on the day after, when I visited her early in the morning, I noticed at once that she was more cheerful. Then I asked her as usual how she had passed the night and whether she required anything. 'You fed me very readily and kindly, my son,' she said, and now you ask how I am ! I feel splendid, and quite comfortable.' And at the same time her attendants made signs to me not to gainsay her and to accept her answer at once, lest she might be struck by despondency if the truth were revealed."

Gregory then speaks of a miracle his mother performed for him while he was traveling by sea and got caught in a fearsome storm:

"I was voyaging from Alexandria to Greece over the Parthenian Sea. I sailed at a very unseasonable time, on an Aeginetan ship, impelled as I was by eager desire. What especially influenced me was that I had fallen in with a crew whom I knew well. We had proceeded but a little way when a violent storm arose, and one such as my shipmates said they had seldom experienced before. While all were afraid of a common death, I was in greater fear of spiritual death. Unfortunately, I was in danger of departing from life unbaptized, and I yearned for the spiritual water amid the waters of death. Therefore, I cried aloud and begged and implored a brief space of time. And my shipmates, in spite of their common danger, joined in my cries as not even many relatives would have done, being kindly strangers who had learned sympathy from their perils. Thus did I suffer, and my parents suffered with me, sharing my danger which became known to them in a dream. And they brought help from the land, calming the waves by prayer, as afterwards we learned upon reckoning the time when I returned home. This was also revealed to me in a salutary sleep which I at length experienced when the storm abated a little. I seemed to be holding fast to a Fury of fearful aspect, threatening danger, for the night represented her clearly to me. Another of my fellow voyagers, a boy very well disposed and dear to me and deeply concerned for me, under the circumstances, thought he saw my mother walk upon the sea and seize the ship and with no great effort draw it to land. And this vision was believed, for the sea began to grow calm, and we quickly arrived at Rhodes, without experiencing any great distress in the meantime. As a result of that peril, we ourselves became an offering. We promised ourselves to God if we were saved, and, on being saved, we gave ourselves to Him."

Gregory championed Nonna as a model of Christian motherhood. He wrote of her, "My mother was a worthy companion for such a man [as my father] and her qualities were as great as his. She came from a pious family, but was even more pious than they. Though in her body she was but a woman, in her spirit she was above all men... Her mouth knew nothing but

the truth, but in her modesty she was silent about those deeds which brought her glory. She was guided by the fear of God."

And speaking further of his parents as models of Christian parentage, he wrote: "Our mother, from the beginning and by virtue of descent, consecrated to God and receiving piety as a necessary heritage not for herself alone, but also for her children, was truly a holy lump from the holy first fruits of the dough. She so far increased and augmented it that some have expressed their belief the assertion is bold, but I will make it that not even her husband's perfection was any other's work than hers. And how wonderful it is that a greater and more perfect piety was bestowed as the reward of piety! Both were lovers of their children and of Christ. Yet it is a striking paradox that they were more devoted lovers of Christ than of their children. Their sole enjoyment in their children was that they be known as Christ's and called His. Their single definition of good children comprised virtue and kinship with the Chief Good. Compassionate and sympathetic, they rescued much treasure from moths and brigands and from the prince of this world, transferring it from their place of exile to their homeland, and storing up the glory of heaven for their children as their greatest inheritance." [From *Mystaogy*]

THE 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 deigned to be carried in the arms of Simeon the Righteous for our salvation, and rose again from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of his all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; 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 Theodore the General ('Stratelates'); the Prophet Zachariah; Sabbas the Second, archbishop of Serbia; and of the Holy and Righteous Mothers of the Three Hierarchs Emmelia, Nona and Anthousa, 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.