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READER'S TYPIKA ON SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2026

(2nd Sunday after Pascha)

***Sunday of the Holy Myrrh-Bearing Women, Pious Joseph of Arimathea
& Righteous Nicodemus***

THE OPENING

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

Reader: Amen.

Leader & Choir: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down Death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! (*thrice*)

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 being. 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 TWO

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.
- Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

For the Resurrection in Tone Two¹

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

Remember us also, O Compassionate One, even as Thou didst remember the thief, in the Kingdom of the Heavens.

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

¹ Although these verses are marked as Resurrectional, those given in the Pentecostarion (shown here) appear to differ from the ones given in the Sunday Octoechos. This anomaly shows up both in the Romanian and the English (HTM) Pentecostarion.

The tree drove out Adam, and the Cross led the thief up into the Kingdom of the Heavens.

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

The grave received Thee, O Saviour, Who didst empty the graves, and Who, as God, didst grant life unto the dead.

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

O glorious Apostles of Christ, entreat Him fervently that He save us from perils.

For the Myrrh-bearers In Tone Two²

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.

Having wrapped Thee in linen, O Christ, the noble Joseph laid Thee in a tomb; and having anointed with myrrh the fallen temple of Thy Body, he rolled a great stone before the sepulchre.

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

O ye myrrh-bearing women, why hasten ye now? Why bring ye myrrh unto the Living One? Christ is risen, as He foretold. Let your tears cease and be changed into joy.

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

O ye faithful, let us praise the Trinity in Unity, glorifying the Father with the Son, and the Spirit Who is consubstantial with the Son, and Who with the Father is co-beginningless and everlasting God.

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

Like a vineyard didst thou conceive untilled in thy womb the Cluster of grapes from which, like wine, there pour forth for us torrents of immortality, even eternal life.

THE FESTAL EISODIKON

Verse: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the well-springs of Israel.

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

APOLYTIKION OF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA IN TONE TWO

The noble Joseph, taking Thine immaculate Body down from the Tree, and having wrapped It in pure linen and spices, laid It for burial in a new tomb. But on the third day Thou didst arise, O Lord, granting to the world Great Mercy.

APOLYTIKION OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN IN TONE TWO

Unto the myrrh-bearing women did the Angel cry out as he stood by the grave: Myrrh-oils are meet for the dead, but Christ hath proved to be a stranger to corruption. But cry out: The Lord is risen, granting to the world Great Mercy.

² These troparia are taken from the 6th Ode of Matins Canon, cf. Pentecostarion.

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 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:

Reader: The reading is from the Acts of the Apostles §16 (6:1-7)

In those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the Twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaos, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

ALLELUIA, IN 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:

Reader: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark §69 (15:43-16:8)

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

Reader: At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the Kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if He were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked

him whether Jesus was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that He was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. And he bought a linen shroud, and taking Him down, wrapped Him in the linen shroud, and laid Him in a tomb, which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where He was laid.

And when the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices so that they might go and anoint Him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, “Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified. He has risen, He is not here; see the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His Disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see Him, as He told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Choir: Glory to 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 MYRRH-BEARERS IN TONE TWO

When Thou didst cry, Rejoice, unto the Myrrh-bearers, Thou didst make the lamentation of Eve the first mother to cease by Thy Resurrection, O Christ God. And Thou didst bid Thine Apostles to preach: The Saviour is risen from the grave.

KONTAKION OF PASCHA IN TONE EIGHT

O Immortal One, when Thou didst descend into the tomb, Thou didst destroy the power of Hades; and Thou didst rise victorious, O Christ God. Thou hast said to the ointment bearing women: Rejoice! And Thou gavest peace to Thy Disciples, O Bestower of Resurrection to those Who had fallen.

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 "It is truly meet..." we sing

the Refrain & Irmos of the 9th ode of the Paschal Canon, in tone 1

The Angel cried to the Lady full of grace: Rejoice, Rejoice, O pure Vir-gin! Again I say: Rejoice; thy Son is risen from his three days in the tomb. With Himself He has raised all the dead. Rejoice, rejoice, O ye people. Shine! Shine! Shine! O new Jerusalem. The glory of the Lord has shone on thee. Exult now, exult and be glad, O Sion. Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection, the Resurrection of thy Son.

READINGS

SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN

About the beginning of His thirty-second year, when the Lord Jesus was going throughout Galilee, preaching and working miracles, many women who had received of His beneficence left their own homeland and from then on followed after Him. They ministered unto Him out of their own possessions, even until His crucifixion and entombment; and afterwards, neither losing faith in Him after His death, nor fearing the wrath of the Jewish rulers, they came to His sepulchre, bearing the myrrh they had prepared to anoint His body. It is because of the myrrh that these God-loving women brought to the tomb of Jesus that they are called Myrrh-bearers. Of those whose names are known are the following: first of all, the most holy Virgin Mary, who in Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40 is called "the mother of James and Joses" (these are the sons of Joseph by a previous marriage, and she was therefore their step-mother); Mary Magdalene (celebrated July 22); Mary, the wife of Clopas; Joanna, wife of Chouza, a steward of Herod Antipas; Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee; Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus; and Susanna. As for the names of the rest of them, the evangelists have kept silence (Matt. 27:55–56; 28:1–10. Mark 15:40–41. Luke 8:1–3; 23:55–24:11, 22–24. John 19:25; 20:11–18. Acts 1:14).

Together with them we celebrate also the secret disciples of the Saviour, Joseph and Nicodemus. Of these, Nicodemus was probably a Jerusalemite, a prominent leader among the Jews and of the order of the Pharisees, learned in the Law and instructed in the Holy Scriptures. He had believed in Christ when, at the beginning of our Saviour's preaching of salvation, he came to Him by night. Furthermore, he brought some one hundred pounds of myrrh and an aromatic mixture of aloes and spices out of reverence and love for the divine Teacher (John 19:39). Joseph, who was from the city of Arimathea, was a wealthy and noble man, and one of the counsellors who were in Jerusalem. He went boldly unto Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and together with Nicodemus he gave Him burial. Since time did not permit the preparation of another tomb, he placed the Lord's body in his own tomb which was hewn out of rock, as the Evangelist says (Matt. 27:60). [From tyoos.org]

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THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR BASIL, BISHOP OF AMASIA & THE VIRGIN-MARTYR GLAPHYRA

The Hieromartyr Basil, Bishop of Amasea, lived at the beginning of the fourth century in the Pontine city of Amasea. He encouraged and comforted the Christians suffering persecution by the pagans. During this time the Eastern part of the Roman Empire was ruled by Licinius (311-324), the brother-in-law of the holy emperor Constantine the Great (May 21). Licinius deceitfully signed Saint Constantine's Edict of Milan (313), which granted religious toleration to Christians, but he hated them and continued to persecute them.

Licinius burned with passion for Glaphyra, a maidservant of his wife Constantia. The holy virgin reported this to the empress and sought her help. Dressing her in men's attire and providing her with money, the empress Constantia sent her to Pontus in the company of a devoted servant. They told the emperor that Glaphyra had gone mad and lay near death. On her way to Armenia, Saint Glaphyra stopped in Amasea, where the local bishop, Saint Basil, gave her shelter.

At this time the saint was building a church in the city. Saint Glaphyra donated all the money that she had received from Constantia for its construction, and in a letter to the empress she asked her to send additional funds to complete the church. The empress fulfilled her request. However, Saint Glaphyra's letter fell into the hands of the emperor. The enraged Licinius ordered the governor of Amasea to send him the hierarch and the maidservant. Saint Glaphyra died before the edict arrived in Amasea, and Saint Basil was sent to the emperor. Two deacons, Parthenius and Theotimos, followed after him and lodged near the prison where the saint was held.

The pious Christian Elpidophoros bribed the jailer and each night he visited the saint with Parthenius and Theotimos. On the eve of the saint's trial, he sang Psalms and chanted, "if I should sojourn at the extremity of the sea... even there Thy hand would guide me, and Thy right hand would hold me" (Ps 138/139:9-10). These were prophetic words.

Three times he broke down in tears. The deacons were afraid that the saint would not be able to endure the coming torments, but he calmed them.

At the trial Saint Basil resolutely refused the emperor's offer to become a pagan priest, and so he was sentenced to death. Elpidophoros gave the soldiers money, and they allowed the saint to pray and to speak with his friends before execution. Then the saint said to the executioner, "Friend, do as you have been ordered." Calmly, he bent his neck beneath the sword.

When the martyr had been beheaded, Elpidophoros tried to ransom his relics from the soldiers. But the soldiers were afraid of the emperor and they threw the saint's body and head into the sea. After this, an angel of God appeared to Elpidophoros three times in a dream, saying, "Bishop Basil is in Sinope and awaits you."

Heeding this call, Elpidophoros and the deacons sailed to Sinope, and there they hired fishermen to lower their nets. When they lowered the net on the suggestion of the deacons Theotimos and Parthenius, they came up with nothing. Then Elpidophoros declared that he would ask them to lower the net in the name of the God Whom he worshiped. This time, the net brought up the body of Saint Basil. The saint's head was attached to his body once more, and only the gash on his neck indicated the blow of the sword. The relics of Saint Basil were taken to Amasea and buried in the church he built. [From oca.org]

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OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS STEPHEN, FIRST BISHOP AND ENLIGHTENER OF PERM

Saint Stephen the Enlightener of Perm, and Apostle to the Zyrians, was born around the year 1340 into the family of Simeon, a cleric of the Ustiug cathedral. He was greatly influenced by his pious mother Maria. Endowed with great abilities, he already displayed an unusual zeal for the

service of the Church: in a single year he learned to read the Holy Books and he assisted his father in church during services, fulfilling the duty of canonarch, and also that of reader.

The young saint received monastic tonsure at the Monastery of Saint Gregory the Theologian at Rostov. The monastery was famed for its fine library. Since Saint Stephen wanted to read the holy Fathers in their original language, he studied Greek.

In his youth, when he had assisted his father in church, he frequently spoke with the Zyrian people. Now, having been immersed in the rich culture of the Church, Saint Stephen burned with a desire to convert the Zyrians to Christ.

To facilitate the enlightenment of the Zyrians, he compiled an alphabet of their language and translated some of the Church books. For this pious work Bishop Arsenius of Rostov (1374-1380), ordained him to the rank of hierodeacon.

Having prepared himself for missionary activity, Saint Stephen journeyed to Moscow (1379) to see Bishop Gerasimus of Kolomna, who then oversaw the affairs of the metropolitanate. The saint implored him, "Bless me, Master, to go into a pagan land, Perm. I want to teach the holy Faith to the unbelieving people. I am resolved either to lead them to Christ, or to lay down my life for them and for Christ." The bishop joyfully blessed him and ordained him as a hieromonk. He provided him with an antimimension for the altar table, holy chrism and service books, and Great Prince Demetrius gave him a document of safe passage.

From Ustiug Saint Stephen made his way along the North Dvina River up to the confluence of the Vycheгда into it, where settlements of the Zyrians began. The proponent of faith in Christ suffered many toils and struggles, deprivation and sorrow, living among the pagans who worshipped idols "with fire, water, trees, a stone and golden woman-figure, and shaman, and wizard, and wood."

Father Stephen was sad to see that the Zyrians continued to worship a "sacred birch tree." Immense in its thickness and height, the birch tree grew on an elevated spot. The Zyrians gathered there and brought wild animals there for sacrifice.

Saint Stephen's cell was not far from the birch tree. He prayed and set fire to the tree in order to end the superstition. The Zyrians, seeing that the tree had been destroyed, meant to kill him. The saint said to them, "Judge for yourselves whether or not your gods have any power, since they are not able to defend themselves from the fire. Can they be gods, when they are so powerless? They have no mind, neither can they see or hear. Your idol could not defend itself against me, a weak man. Are all your other gods so powerless? The Christian God is not like this. He sees everything, knows everything and is Almighty, since He created the whole world and foresees everything. How good He is, particularly to those who know Him! I desire only what is good for you, to bring you to the true God. He will love you and bless you, when you sincerely begin to honor Him." On the site of the "sacred birch tree," Saint Stephen built a church in honor of the Archangel Michael, the vanquisher of the spirits of darkness.

The newly-baptized Zyrians themselves began to remove that which they once worshiped. They cut down sacred trees, they destroyed idols, and they brought to Saint Stephen the rich gifts set aside for the pagan sacrifices. He told his Zyrian helper Matthew to throw everything into the fire, except the linen cloth which was used for foot wrappings.

But things came to a head among the Zyrians after Saint Stephen got the better of their chief priest Pama, who rose up against the spread of Christianity. The pagan priest entered into a debate with Saint Stephen. "Christian, you have only one God," said Pama, "but we have many helpers on the land, and in the water, granting us good hunting in the forests, and with its abundance

providing food and pelts to Moscow, the Horde and faraway lands. Our gods reveal to us the magic mysteries, inaccessible to you.”

Saint Stephen answered that the true God is one; the Almighty is one, but experience has proven that the idols are powerless. After a lengthy dispute the pagan priest Pama challenged Saint Stephen to pass through fire and water in a test of faith. Saint Stephen humbly replied, “Great is the Christian God. I accept your challenge.”

Pama, however, lost his nerve and entreated the saint to save him from certain death. “You are witnesses,” said Saint Stephen to the people “how he wished to resolve the dispute about faith by fire and water, but he does not wish to be baptized. Who has regard for Pama now? What is to be done with him?”

“Let the deceiver be put to death,” the people said, “for if Pama is set free, he will make mischief for you.” “No,” the saint replied, “Christ has not sent me to hand anyone over to death, but to teach. Since Pama does not wish to accept the saving Faith, let his stubbornness punish him, but I will not.” Pama was banished. In thanksgiving for his victory over the chief pagans, Saint Stephen built a church in honor of Saint Nicholas at Vishero. After this, the saint’s preaching of Christ was more successful.

In 1383, Saint Stephen was consecrated Bishop of Malaya Perm [Lesser Perm]. Like a loving father he devoted himself to his flock. To encourage the newly-converted, Saint Stephen opened schools adjacent to the churches, where they studied the Holy Scriptures in the Permian language. The saint supervised the instructions, and taught them what they needed to know in order to become priests and deacons. Saint Stephen taught several of his students how to write in the Permian language. The saint built churches, in which he placed Zyrian priests, and services were conducted in the Zyrian language.

Saint Stephen translated the HOROLOGION [Book of Hours], the PSALTER, and other liturgical books into the Zyrian language.

During a crop failure the saint provided the Zyrians with bread. Many times he protected them from the trickery of corrupt officials, gave them alms, and defended them from the incursions of other tribes, interceding for them at Moscow. The fruit of his efforts and good deeds came in the conversion of all of Perm to Christianity. This great deed was accomplished by his strength of faith and Christian love. The life of the saint was a victory of faith over unbelief, of love and meekness over malice and impiety.

There was a touching “meeting in absence” of Saint Stephen of Perm with Saint Sergius of Radonezh, occurring in the year 1390 as Saint Stephen journeyed to Moscow on church business. Saint Stephen fervently loved the Radonezh ascetic and very much wanted to pay him a visit, but had no time to do so. Ten versts from the monastery of Saint Sergius, Saint Stephen turned in the direction of the monastery and with a bow he said, “Peace to you, my spiritual brother!”

Saint Sergius, who was eating a meal with the brethren, stood up, made a prayer and, bowing towards the direction where the saint rode, answered, “Hail also to you, pastor of the flock of Christ, may the peace of God be with you!”

The deep spiritual connection of Saint Stephen of Perm and Saint Sergius of Radonezh is recalled even today in a certain prayer recited each day in the trapeza.

Besides building churches, Saint Stephen also founded several monasteries for the Zyrians: the Savior Ulianov wilderness monastery 165 versts from Ust-Sysolsk, the Stephanov 60 versts from Ust-Sysolsk, the Ust-Vym Archangel, and the Yareng Archangel.

In the year 1395 Saint Stephen again went to Moscow on affairs of his flock, and died there. His body was placed in the Church of the Transfiguration in the Moscow Kremlin. The Zyrians bitterly lamented the death of their archpastor. They earnestly entreated the Moscow prince and the Metropolitan to send the body of their patron back to Perm, but Moscow did not wish to part with the relics of the saint.

The glorification of Saint Stephen began already at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The Life of the saint was written soon after his death. The hieromonk Pachomius the Serb composed the service to him, with the hieromonk Epiphanius the Wise, who was a disciple of Saint Sergius of Radonezh. He also knew Saint Stephen and loved to converse with him. [From oca.org]

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OUR RIGHTEOUS FATHER JOANNICIUS (JANIK) OF DEVICH IN SERBIA (+1430)

He was a Serb from Zeta. As a young man, overcome with love for Christ, he left his home and went off to the region of the Ibar, to the mouth of the Black River, to a narrow cave in which, according to tradition, St Peter of Korisa had lived in asceticism before him. But when his fame began to spread among the people, he fled to Drnica and hid himself in the thick forest of Devic. St Janik spent years there in solitude, silence and prayer. According to tradition, the Serbian Prince George Brankovic brought his mad daughter to him, and the saint healed her. In gratitude, George built a monastery in that place known today by the name of Devic. Here are kept Janik's holy and wonderworking relics. In this monastery there lived almost to the present day a famous and godly nun, Euphemia, better-known in the Kossovo region as Blessed Stojna. She entered into rest in the Lord in 1895. [From the Prologue]

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 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 Pious Joseph of Arimathea, Righteous Nicodemus and the holy Myrrh-bearing Women; of the Hieromartyr Basil, bishop of Amasea with Venerable Glaphyra; Stephen, bishop of Perm; and Venerable Ioanikios of Devitch in Serbia, 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: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down Death by death, and upon those in the tombs...

People: ...bestowing life!