

God is Wonderful in His Saints

Orthodox Saints commemorated in July

JULY 1

† Holy and Wonderworking Unmercenary Cosmas and Damian, martyrs at Rome (284)

There are three pairs of Unmercenary Physicians named Cosmas and Damian. The two commemorated today were brothers from Rome. Though they inherited great wealth, they gave most of it to the poor and needy, only setting aside enough for themselves to devote their lives to the service of Christ. As Christian physicians, they freely performed their healing services for men and for beasts, asking the healed only to believe in Christ in thanks for their healing. They ended their lives in martyrdom. According to the *Prologue*, They were summoned before the Emperor Galerius, who interrogated them and commanded them to worship the gods. The brothers refused to do so, but to show the truth of the Christian faith, they healed the Emperor of a grave infirmity. At this he proclaimed the truth of Christianity and released them. But a doctor and a former teacher who envied their reputation lured them into the countryside on the pretext of collecting herbs, then killed them.

JULY 2

† The Placing of the Honorable Robe of the Most Holy Theotokos at Blachernae

During the reign of Leo the Great (457-474), two noblemen on pilgrimage to the Holy Land stayed at the home of an old widow. Seeing the miracles wrought in a small shrine in her house, they learned from her that she had the robe of the most holy Mother of God stored in a small chest in her house. The old woman was a descendant of one of two virgins who had attended the Theotokos before her dormition; in her last days on earth she had given each of them one of her garments as a blessing. The two pilgrims stole the garment and brought it to Blachernae near Constantinople, where they built a church dedicated to Sts Peter and Paul, and secretly deposited the robe there. Again, the multitude of miracles wrought through the robe revealed its presence, and it became known to the Emperor Leo and to the Orthodox people in general.

† St John (Maximovich), Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco (1966) (June 19 OC)

This brightly-shining Saint of our own day was born in Russia in 1896. In 1921 his family fled the Russian Revolution to Serbia, where he became a monk and was ordained a priest. From the time of his entry into monastic life he adopted a severely ascetical way of life: for the rest of his life he never slept in a bed, sleeping only briefly in a chair or prostrated before the icons. He ate one meal a day, in the evening. Teaching seminarians in Serbia, he instructed them each day to devote six hours to divine services, six hours to prayer (not including the divine services!), six hours to good works, and six hours to rest (these six hours obviously included eating and bathing as well as sleeping). Whether his seminarians followed his counsels we do not know, but he himself not only followed but exceeded them.

In 1934 he was made Bishop of Shanghai (in the Russian Church Abroad), where he served not only the Russian emigre community but a number of native Chinese Orthodox; from time to time he served the Divine Liturgy in Chinese. When the Communists took power in China, he labored tirelessly to evacuate his flock to safety, first to the Philippines, then to various western countries including the United States. He served as Bishop in Paris and Brussels, then, in 1962 was made Archbishop of San Francisco. Throughout his life as monk and hierarch he was revered (and sometimes condemned) for his ascetical labors and unceasing intercessions. During his life and ever since, numerous miraculous healings of all manner of afflictions have been accomplished through his prayers. Once, in Shanghai, a caretaker, investigating strange noises in the cathedral after midnight, discovered Bishop John standing in the belltower, looking down on the city and praying for the people. Years later, when he visited Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York, the priest responsible for hosting him found the saint walking through the halls of the monastery, standing outside the door of each room and praying for the monk or seminarian sleeping within. When the Archbishop had prayed outside each room, he returned to the beginning of his circuit and began praying again; and so he spent the entire night.

Even as Archbishop, he lived in near-absolute poverty. His appearance was striking: His cassock was made of blue Chinese "peasant cloth," crudely decorated with crosses stitched by orphans who had been in his care in Shanghai. His Bishop's "miter" was often a cloth cap to which he had glued paper icons. Even in the United States, even while serving the Divine Liturgy (which he did every day), he went barefoot in all seasons. (Eventually, after he was hospitalized with an infected foot, his Metropolitan ordered him to wear shoes; thereafter, he wore sandals). Needless to say, he was an embarrassment to those who like their bishops to make a more worldly appearance, but among his various flocks throughout the world, there were always those who recognized him as a Saint in his own lifetime.

Following his repose in 1966, a steady stream of healings and other miracles was accomplished through his intercessions, and in 1996 he was glorified as a Saint of the Church. His incorrupt and wonder-working relics can be venerated at his cathedral in San Francisco. At St John's funeral, the eulogist told his mourners (and all of us): because Archbishop John was able to live the spirituality of the Orthodox Church so fully, even in modern, western, urban society, we are without excuse.

Footnote: An acquaintance of Monk John once met him on a train in Serbia. When asked his destination, Monk John replied, "I'm going to straighten out a mistake. I've gotten a letter meant for some other John whom they intend to make a bishop." The same person met him again on his return journey and asked if he had been able to resolve his problem. John answered, "The mistake is much worse than I thought: they did make me a bishop."

St Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem (458)

A zealous hierarch, he took part in two Ecumenical Councils: the Third in Ephesus, which rebuked the doctrines of Nestorius; and the Fourth at Chalcedon, which rebuked the teachings of Eutyches and Dioscoros that Christ has only one nature, divine but not human. Following these councils, he returned to his see in Jerusalem. But through the plotting of Dioscoros' allies, he was driven from his throne and Theodosius, a monophysite, was installed in his place. The Empress Eudocia, widow of the Emperor Theodosius the younger, initially supported the heretics. But, unsure of the true Orthodox doctrine, she went to inquire of St Symeon the Stylite, who denounced the monophysite doctrine and told the Empress to do all that she could to uphold the teaching of the Councils. Obeying him, she condemned the false Patriarch Theodosius and prevailed on the Emperor Marcian to have him deposed. Thus St Juvenal was at last restored to his patriarchal throne. He served the Church in peace, for a total of thirty-eight years, and reposed at a great old age.

St Juvenaly, First Martyr of America and Alaska (1796)

"St Juvenal was (together with St Herman, see Dec. 12) a member of the first mission sent from Russia to proclaim the Gospel in the New World. He was a priest-monk, and a zealous follower of the Apostles, and baptized hundreds of the natives of Alaska. He was martyred by enraged pagans in 1796." (*Great Horologion*)

JULY 3

Martyr Hyacinth of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and those with him (108)

He was a young courtier to the Emperor Trajan, and a secret Christian. When the Emperor and his court were offering sacrifice to the idols, Hyacinth stood apart; he was noticed and brought before the Emperor where, when interrogated, he proclaimed himself a Christian and refused to make sacrifice to the pagan gods. For this he was brutally whipped, then thrown into prison, where the Emperor ordered that he be given only food that had been sacrificed to idols. This Hyacinth refused to eat and, after eight days, died in prison.

Our Holy Father Isaiah the Solitary (491)

One of the Desert Fathers, he lived in asceticism first at Scetis in Egypt, then in Palestine; he died in Gaza. His instructive writings are often quoted by the Fathers.

Abba Isaiah said: *The crown of all good works consists in this: that a man place all his hope in God, that he flee to Him once and for all with all his heart and strength, that he be filled with compassion for all and weep before God, imploring His help and mercy.*

Our Holy Father Alexander, founder of the Monastery of the Unsleeping Ones (430)

"Born in Asia and educated in Constantinople, he went into the army after completing his studies and became an officer. Reading the Holy Scriptures, he came upon the Saviour's words: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me' (Matt. 19:21). These words made such an impression on him that he sold and gave away all that he had, and went off to the desert. After long asceticism and striving for purification, he founded the community of the 'Wakeful Ones' (*Acemetae*) with a special rule. According to this rule, the services in the church continued day and night in unbroken sequence. The brethren were divided into six groups, each having its appointed hours of day or night to go to church and take over the reading and singing from the previous group. He travelled a great deal over the East, bringing people to faith in Christ, disputing with heretics, working miracles by God's grace and growing old in the service of the Lord Jesus. He finished his earthly course in Constantinople in the year 430, where his relics revealed the miraculous power and glory with which God had glorified His holy servant." (*Prologue*)

Our Father among the Saints Anatolios, Archbishop of Constantinople (458)

He was a priest from Alexandria. At the 'Robber Council' at Ephesus in 449, Dioscoros, the monophysite who occupied the Patriarchal throne in Alexandria, had Anatolios installed as Patriarch of Constantinople, thinking that he would prove an ally. But Anatolios quickly emerged as a fervent champion of Orthodoxy: he convened a council of bishops just before the Council of Chalcedon in 451, at which Pope Leo's Orthodox "Tome" (see February 18) was approved, though Dioscoros had not allowed it to be read at the Robber Council. At the Council of Chalcedon, Anatolios condemned Nestorius, Eutyches, and his frustrated patron Dioscoros. He reposed in peace in 458.

Anatolios is believed to be the author of the 'Anatolian Stichera' found in the weekly Vespers and Matins services; but these may have been composed by another Anatolios, a monk and a disciple of St Theodore the Studite.

July 4

† Holy Royal Martyrs of Russia: Tsar Nicholas II, Tsaritsa Alexandra, Crown Prince Alexei, and Grand duchesses Olga, Tatiana Maria, and Anastasia, and those martyred with them (1918).

"Tsar Nicholas II was the son of Alexander III, who had reposed in the arms of St John of Kronstadt. Having been raised in piety, Tsar Nicholas ever sought to rule in a spirit consonant with the precepts of Orthodoxy and the best traditions of his nation. Tsaritsa Alexandra, a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria of England, and a convert from Lutheranism, was noted for her piety and compassion for the poor and suffering. Their five children were beloved of all for their kindness, modesty, and guilelessness.

"Amidst the political turmoil of 1917, Tsar Nicholas selflessly abdicated the throne for what he believed was the good of his country. Although he had abdicated willingly, the revolutionaries put him and his family under house arrest, then sent them under guard to Tobolsk and finally Ekaterinburg. A letter written from Tobolsk by Grand Duchess Olga, the eldest of the children, shows their nobility of soul. She writes, 'My father asks that I convey to all those who have remained devoted to him... that they should not take vengeance on his account, because he has forgiven everyone and prays for them all. Nor should they avenge themselves. Rather, they should bear in mind that this evil which is now present in the world will become yet stronger, but that evil will not conquer evil, but only love shall do so.'

"After enduring sixteen months of imprisonment, deprivation, and humiliation with a Christian patience which moved even their captors, they and those who were with them gained their crowns of martyrdom when they were shot and stabbed to death in the cellar of the Ipatiev house in Ekaterinburg in 1918.

"Together with them are also commemorated those who faithfully served them, and were either slain with them, or on their account..." (*Great Horologion*)

† St Andrew, archbishop of Crete (720?)

He was born in Damascus to Christian parents. He was mute until the age of seven, when he was given the power of speech upon receiving Holy Communion. Tonsured a monk at the monastery of St Sabbas in the Holy Land, he served the Patriarch of Jerusalem, then became deacon in the Great Church in Constantinople, and finally was made Archbishop of Crete. He was present at the Sixth Ecumenical Council. Accounts of the date of his repose vary from 712 to 740.

He is best known as the composer of the *Great Canon*, sung during the first and fifth weeks of the Great Fast.

St Martha, mother of St Symeon of the Wonderful Mountain (551)

She was a model of the Christian married life: she rose at midnight for prayer, she gave to the needy without reserve, and she bore and raised the holy Symeon of the Wonderful Mountain (May 24). Having foreseen the hour of her death, she reposed peacefully in 551, and was buried near the pillar of her son Simeon. After her death, she appeared many times to teach and to heal the sick. The *Prologue* tells the following story. After her funeral, the abbot of St Simeon's monastic community kept a lamp burning at her grave, intending that it be kept burning perpetually. But after awhile, the monks grew forgetful and allowed the lamp to go out. The abbot became ill, and St Martha appeared to him and said 'Why are you not lighting the lamp on my grave? Know that the light of your candles is not needful to me, because God has made me worthy of His eternal, heavenly light, but it is needful for you. When you burn a light on my grave, you urge me to pray to the Lord for you.'

St Andrew (Rublev), iconographer (1430)

His "Holy Trinity" icon of the Hospitality of Abraham is sometimes called the most perfectly executed of all icons. See January 29.

July 5

† St Athanasius of Mt Athos (1003) and his six disciples

Born in Trebizond, he was educated in Constantinople, then entered into ascetic life. Seeking greater reclusion, he went to the Holy Mountain to live in silence. But many others gathered around him, and in time he was forced to build the monastery known as the Great Lavra. As construction was being planned, he beheld the Mother of God, who miraculously brought forth water from a rock near the site, and promised him that she would be the abbess of his monastery. He died when the newly-constructed dome of the monastery collapsed while he and six of his brethren were working on it.

† Uncovering of the Relics (1422) of St Sergius of Radonezh (1392)

For his life, see September 25.

Martyrdom of St Elizabeth Romanov and Nun Barbara (1918)

Grand Duchess Elizabeth was a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria of England and the older sister of the Empress Alexandra (July 4). After marrying Grand Duke Sergei she converted to the Orthodox faith, though this was not required by her position. After her husband was assassinated in 1905, she took monastic vows and withdrew from the world, founding the Convent of Saints Mary and Martha. There she served as superior, devoting her time to prayer, fasting, and caring for the sick and the poor.

During the Russian Revolution, she was seized by the God-hating Bolsheviks and taken to the Urals, where she and several with her were martyred by being thrown alive down an abandoned mine-shaft. When the fall did not kill them, soldiers threw grenades down the shaft to complete their work. Saint Elizabeth was singing the Cherubic Hymn when she died.

The Nun Barbara, her cell-attendant, voluntarily followed St Elizabeth into exile and received martyrdom with her. Their relics were recovered and taken at great risk to China, then to Jerusalem, where they were deposited in the Convent of St Mary Magdalene. When their reliquaries were opened in 1981, their bodies were found to be partly incorrupt, and gave off a sweet fragrance.

Footnote: After the assassination of her husband in Moscow, Grand Duchess Elizabeth had a cross erected at the site of his death, bearing the inscription "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." After the revolution, the cross remained standing through the devotion of the people of Moscow to St Elizabeth, until it was personally torn down by Lenin.

Our Holy Father the New Martyr Cyprian (1679)

"Born in the village of Klitzos in Epirus, Cyprian went off to the Holy Mountain after the death of his devout parents. He became a monk there and gave himself to asceticism in a cell near the monastery of Koutloumousion. He heaped labour upon labour on himself, asceticism upon asceticism, until he came to be known and respected all over the Holy Mountain. But he was not satisfied. He was tormented by the thought that he could not be saved but by martyrdom for Christ. He therefore left the Holy Mountain and went to Salonica, appeared before the Pasha of Salonica and urged him to discard the false, Mohammedan faith and receive the true Faith of Christ. The Pasha ordered that he be whipped and driven out of the city. Dissatisfied with such little suffering for Christ, Cyprian went to Constantinople and wrote a letter to the Grand Vizier in which he set down the falseness of Mahomet and the truth of Christ the Lord. The enraged Vizier sent him to Sheik ul-Islam, and the latter heard all that Cyprian had to say, then ordered that he be beheaded. Cyprian was filled with joy beyond measure, and went to the scaffold as to his wedding. Thus this godly man suffered for Christ on July 5, 1679, and fulfilled his strong desire." (*Prologue*)

JULY 6

Our Holy Father Sisoës the Great of Egypt (429)

One of the greatest of the Desert Fathers, he lived in asceticism at Scetis in Egypt. After the death of St Anthony the great, Abba Sisoës became a hermit in Anthony's cave, saying "Thus in the cave of a lion, a fox makes his dwelling." In his own lifetime he was granted the grace to heal the sick, drive out unclean spirits, and even raise the dead.

As his death approached after a long life in the desert, his brethren gathered around him. His face began to shine, and he said, "See, Abba Anthony is here!" then, "See, the choir of the prophets is here!" Seeing that he seemed to be speaking with someone, his brethren asked him who it was. He replied, "The Angels are here, and I am asking them for time to repent." Amazed, they asked him what he could have to repent of, to which he replied, "Brethren, I do not know if I have ever repented." Finally, his face became as bright as the sun, and he said, "See, the Lord is here, and He says, 'Bring Me the best of the desert.'" With this, he gave his soul up to God, and his entire dwelling was filled with light and sweet fragrance.

Some of his teaching, as told in the *Prologue*: "St Sisoës taught his monks: 'When temptation comes to a man, that man must give himself over to the will of God, and acknowledge that the temptation comes upon him because of his sins. If something good comes to pass, he must acknowledge that it comes about by the providence of God.' A monk asked him: 'How can I please God and be saved?' The saint replied: 'If you desire to please God, withdraw from the world, separate yourself from the earth, leave aside creation and draw near to the Creator, unite yourself to God with prayers and tears, and you will find rest in this world and in the next.' A monk asked Sisoës: 'How can I acquire humility?' The saint replied: 'When a man learns to regard every man as better than himself, he thus acquires humility.' Ammon complained to Sisoës that he could not memorise the wise sayings that he had read, to be able to quote them in conversation with others. The saint replied: 'It is not necessary. That which is necessary is to acquire purity of mind and to speak from this purity, placing one's hope in God.'"

Holy Martyrs Marinus and Martha, and those with them (269)

Marinus and Martha were wealthy Persians; but they sold all their goods and traveled to Rome with their sons Audifax, Habakkuk, Valentine, and Cyrinus, in order to venerate the holy relics of the apostles and martyrs. When the Emperor

Claudius asked them why they had come so far, at such cost, to seek the dead in Rome, they answered 'We are servants of Christ, and are come to venerate the holy apostles whose immortal souls are alive with God, that they may be our intercessors with Christ our God.' All of them were sentenced to interrogation and to death if they would not deny Christ. Valentine, who was a priest, was handed over to a General named Asterius. When Valentine healed Asterius' daughter, who had been blind for two years, Asterius and his entire household accepted Christ and were baptised by Valentine. All of them, along with Marinus and Martha and their family, underwent torture and death for the sake of Christ.

JULY 7

St Thomas of Mt Malson (10th c.)

He was a renowned general, known for his great size and courage, his many victories against barbarian enemies, and his considerable wealth. But, forsaking wealth and reputation to follow Christ, he retired to the desert to live in asceticism. The Prophet Elias appeared to him and, accompanied by a pillar of fire, led him to Mount Maleon, near the Holy Mountain. There he lived in solitude, giving his days and nights to prayer. Like so many who seek to hide their holiness from the world, he was discovered, and people began to come to him for healing of their ailments and those of their loved ones. The saint healed countless ailments, drove out demons, cured the blind, and made water to pour forth from barren earth. In prayer he appeared as a pillar of fire. He reposed in peace, and his relics continued to be a powerful source of healing.

Holy Martyr Kyriake of Nicomedia (289)

Dorotheos and Eusebia, A devout, aging Christian couple who lived in Anatolia, had no children. After many years, their fervent prayers for a child were answered, and they were blessed with a daughter, whom they named Kyriake ('Sunday' in Greek) because she was born on the Lord's day. The child grew up beautiful in body and soul and, though she had many suitors, chose to consecrate herself entirely to God and remain single. One of her suitors, angered at her refusal, denounced her and her parents to the Emperor Diocletian. Dorotheos and Eusebia were subjected to cruel tortures, then sent into exile, where they died under further torture. Kyriake was sent to Maximian, Diocletian's son-in-law, for trial. By his orders, she was subjected to a horrifying series of torments; but Christ Himself appeared to her in prison, healing and comforting her. Many pagans came to believe in Christ when they saw her miraculously saved from death by fire or from wild beasts; all of these were beheaded. Kyriake told Apollonius, the general who supervised her tortures: 'There is no way that you can turn me from my faith. Throw me into the fire — I have the example of the Three Children. Throw me to the wild beasts — I have the example of Daniel. Throw me into the sea — I have the example of Jonah the Prophet. Put me to the sword — I will remember the honored Forerunner. For me, to die is life in Christ.' Apollonius then ordered that she be beheaded. At the place of execution, she raised her hands in prayer and gave up her soul to God before the executioner could take her life.

Note: St Kyriake is also known as Dominica or Nedelja, Latin and Slavonic words for 'Sunday'.

JULY 8

† Appearance of the "Kazan" icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (1579)

"In Kazan, in 1579, the nine-year old Matrona, whose parents' home had burned down in a fire, had a dream in which she beheld an icon of the Theotokos and heard a voice commanding her to recover this icon from the ashes of the ruined house. The icon was found wrapped in an old piece of cloth under the stove, where it may have been hidden during the Tartar invasions. The icon was finally brought to the Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, where it became renowned for the healings that the Mother of God wrought through it for the blind... The icon of Kazan is one of the most beloved icons of the Mother of God in Russia." (*Great Horologion*)

† Holy Great Martyr Prokopios (303)

"He was born in Jerusalem of a Christian father and a pagan mother, at first bearing the name Neanias. After his father's death, his mother brought him up entirely in the spirit of Roman idolatry. When he had grown up, the Emperor Diocletian saw him at some time and was so pleased with him that he took him to court to serve in the army. When this wicked Emperor launched a persecution of Christians, he ordered Neanias to go with a detachment of soldiers to Alexandria and exterminate the Christians there. But, on the road, there happened to Neanias something similar to that which happened to Saul. At three o'clock in the morning there was a violent earthquake, the Lord Jesus appearing to him and saying: 'Neanias, where are you going, and against whom are you rebelling?' In great fear, Neanias replied: 'Who are you, Lord? I cannot recognise You.' Then a brilliant Cross, as of crystal, appeared in the sky and a voice came from the Cross: 'I am Jesus, the crucified Son of God.' The Lord went on: 'By this sign that you have seen, overcome your enemies, and My peace will be with you.' This event utterly changed Neanias's life. He caused a cross such as he had seen to be made, and, instead of moving against the Christians, set off with his soldiers against the Agarians, who were attacking Jerusalem. He entered Jerusalem victorious and told his mother that he was a Christian. Brought to trial, he took off his army belt and sword and

cast them before the judge, demonstrating by this that he was a soldier only of Christ the King. After harsh torture, he was thrown into prison. There Christ the Lord appeared to him again, baptising him and giving him the name Procopius. One day twelve women came to the window of his cell and said to him: 'We also are the servants of Christ.' Arrested for this, they were thrown into the same prison, where St Procopius instructed them in the Christian faith and carefully prepared them to receive the crown of martyrdom. These twelve women were then harshly tortured. Beholding their sufferings and courage, Procopius's mother also came to faith in Christ, and then all thirteen were put to death. When St Procopius was led to the scaffold, he raised his hands towards the East and prayed to God for all the poor and needy, the destitute and the widowed, and especially for the holy Church, that it might grow and spread and that Orthodoxy might shine to the end of time. He was assured from heaven that his prayer was heard, after which he joyfully laid his head under the sword and went to his Lord, to eternal joy. St Procopius suffered with honour in Palestinian Caesarea, and was crowned with an eternal wreath of glory, on July 8th, 303." (*Prologue*)

St Procopius, Fool for Christ (1303)

He was a prominent merchant of German origin. Visiting Novgorod on business, he was so moved by the beauty of Orthodoxy that he embraced the Orthodox faith. Seeking to follow Christ more fully, he gave away all his goods to the poor and lived as an indigent, giving his life to prayer and asceticism but feigning madness to avoid the praise of men. He was granted the gifts of prescience and of insight into the hearts of others: he would often speak to those who came to him of their secret sins, and several times he predicted natural disasters. Once he stopped a deadly hailstorm in town of Ustiug through his fervent prayers before the icon of the Mother of God. He was found dead on the road, covered with snow; a church was built over his relics, which worked many wonders.

JULY 9

Hieromartyr Pancratius, bishop of Taormina in Sicily (1st c.)

He was born in Antioch during the years that Christ walked in the flesh in Palestine. His parents, hearing of Christ's miracles and teaching, journeyed to Jerusalem, bringing their young son Pancratius. There all three of them saw and listened to Jesus Himself, and met the disciple Peter as well. After the Ascension, Pancratius and his parents were baptised in Antioch (some accounts say by the Apostle Peter himself). The Apostle Peter installed Pancratius as bishop of Taormina in Sicily, where he worked great wonders and brought many to Christ.

A pagan general named Aquilinus, hearing that Taormina had become Christian, set out with his army to destroy the town. Pancratius instructed the faithful not to fear and went out to confront the army, armed only with the sign of the Cross. When the army came near the town, the soldiers were seized with confusion and fear, fell on their own weapons and attacked one another, and finally withdrew in terror. Thus the city was saved by the prayers of the holy bishop. Later, pagans stoned him to death, granting him a martyr's end. His relics may still be venerated in Rome.

JULY 10

Holy 45 Martyrs of Nikopolis in Armenia (319)

During a persecution of Christians in the reign of the Emperor Licinius, Leontius and several of his companions came before the Imperial governor in Nikopolis of Armenia, and declared themselves as Christians. They were whipped and thrown into prison, where they were given no food or drink; but a Christian noblewoman secretly brought them water, and an angel of the Lord appeared to them in their cell to comfort them. Such was the power of their faith that, at their trial, two of the jailers proclaimed their conversion to Christianity. Many others came forward in the same way, until the company of Christians numbered forty-five in all. The judge ordered that they all have their arms and legs hacked off and that they then be burned to death.

† St Anthony of the Kiev Caves (1073)

He is honored as the founder of Orthodox monastic life in Russia. He was born in Chernigov province and tonsured at the Monastery of Esphignenou on the Holy Mountain. His abbot sent him from Mt Athos to Kiev to establish the monastic life there in 1013, during the last years of Prince Vladimir's holy reign. He lived there as a hermit, slowly drawing to himself others who wished to share the ascetical life. In time, the brotherhood grew into the Kiev Caves Lavra. St Anthony refused to serve as abbot of the monastery; this task was taken up by St Theodosius (commemorated May 3). St Anthony continued to live as a cave-dwelling hermit and reposed in peace at the age of ninety.

The Placing of the Precious Robe of the Lord in Moscow (1625)

Elias, a soldier in the Roman army in Jerusalem, was a Georgian by birth, from the town of Mitakhet. When the Lord was crucified, his garments were divided by lot among the soldiers, and his robe fell to Elias, who took it home to Georgia and gave it as a gift to his sister Sidorina. The robe was buried with her, then miraculously found many years later by St Nina (January

14). King Mirian, who had accepted Christ in response to St Nina's teaching, built a church to the Holy Apostles on the spot where the robe was found. Many years later, Georgia was conquered by the Persians, and the robe fell into their hands. In 1625 the Persian Shah Abbas, wishing to establish good relations with Russia, sent the robe to Moscow as a gift to Prince Michael Feodorovich and Patriarch Philaret. It was placed with honor in the Cathedral of the Dormition.

JULY 11

† Commemoration of the Miracle (451) of Great-martyr Euphemia the All-praised, of Chalcedon (304)

St Euphemia is commemorated on September 16; today we commemorate the miracle wrought by her relics during the Fourth Ecumenical Council. After much debate and no progress among the defenders of Orthodoxy and the proponents of the Monophysite heresy, the two parties agreed each to write their different definitions of the Faith in two separate books, and to ask God to show them the truth. They placed the two books in the case containing St Euphemia's relics, sealed the case, and departed. After three days of constant vigil and supplication, they opened the reliquary in the presence of the Emperor, and found the Monophysite book under the feet of the Saint, and the Orthodox book in her right hand.

Blessed Equal-to-the-Apostles Olga, princess of Russia, in holy baptism called Helen (969).

"Saint Olga, renowned for her wisdom and sobriety, in her youth became the wife of Igor, Great Prince of Kiev, who ruled during the tenth century. After her husband's death, she herself ruled capably, and was finally moved to accept the Faith of Christ. She travelled to Constantinople to receive Holy Baptism. The Emperor, seeing her outward beauty and inward greatness, asked her to marry him. She said she could not do this before she was baptized; she furthermore asked him to be her Godfather at the font, which he agreed to do. After she was baptized (receiving the name of Helen), the Emperor repeated his proposal of marriage. She answered that now he was her father, through Holy Baptism, and that not even among the heathen was it heard of a man marrying his daughter. Gracefully accepting to be outwitted by her, he sent her back to her land with priests and sacred texts and holy icons. Although her son Svyatoslav remained a pagan, she planted the seed of faith in her grandson Vladimir (see July 15). She reposed in peace in 969." (*Great Horologion*)

New Martyrs Nikodemos (1722) and Nektarios (1820)

These two martyrs were unrelated, but their stories are similar. Both were Christians who embraced Islam at an early age under the Turks. Both later repented and, after doing penance, resolved to return to the place of their apostasy and accept martyrdom. Both presented themselves to the Turks, proclaimed their Christian faith, and were beheaded according to Islamic law.

Saint Nikodemos not only embraced Islam, but forced his family to do the same. One of his sons fled to the Holy Mountain and became a monk. The father pursued him there, but was moved to repentance by the holiness of the place and became a monk himself. After three years of penance, he resolved to return home to Albania and embrace his martyrdom.

Saint Nektarios converted to Islam (the *Prologue* says under duress) at the age of seventeen. When his mother saw him dressed as a Turk, she cried "Get away from me! I do not know you. I bore you as a Christian, not a Turk!" Repenting of his deed he went to the Holy Mountain and became a monk. Like St Nikodemos, he determined after a few years to return home and accept martyrdom for Christ.

Repose of Archimandrite Sophrony of Essex (1993) (June 28 OC)

This holy modern-day elder has not been formally glorified by the Church, though many are confident that in time he will be. He was born in Russia in 1896. As a young man, he lived an artist's life, trying to succeed as a painter while engaging in a wide-ranging spiritual search which included study of the Eastern religions. He fled to Paris during the Russian Revolution. There he rediscovered the Orthodoxy of his childhood and gave his life wholly to repentance and prayer, often spending hours at a time prostrated and weeping on the floor of his Paris apartment. In 1925 he moved to Mt Athos, where he lived as a monk for more than twenty years. On the Holy Mountain he became the spiritual child of the holy elder Silouan. After St Silouan's repose, his own health badly damaged by living in a damp cave, he was granted permission by his monastery to leave the Holy Mountain and write a life of St Silouan. This is *St Silouan of Mt Athos*, a great spiritual treasure which includes the writings of the Saint as well as Fr Sophrony's profound reflections on his life. (It was largely through Fr Sophrony's work that St Silouan, who lived an almost completely hidden life, was glorified by the Church).

In 1959 Fr Sophrony founded the Monastery of St John the Baptist in Essex, England, where he lived until his repose. He was a spiritual father to Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, one of present-day Orthodoxy's most profound spiritual writers, who has said this about him: "I ascertained from almost the first meeting... that Father Sophrony was a Theologian of our Church, a God-seer. I realized, that is, that the Elder had seen the Uncreated Light... I had discerned that he was truly a God-seer, because otherwise his whole life, his whole demeanor, the words he said, the counsels, and in any case his whole personality, could not be justified. He was literally altered by the uncreated Grace of God." At Essex, he was known as spiritual father to many and (little publicized) as a wonderworker and intercessor. He reposed in peace in 1993.

Any who wish to drink from the deep well of his teaching can read (in addition to *St Silouan*) his books *On Prayer* and *We Shall See Him As He Is*.

"Any and every dogmatic error will inevitably reflect on one's spiritual life." — Elder Sophrony

JULY 12

Holy Martyrs Proclus and Hilarius (2nd c.)

Proclus was the uncle of Hilarius; both were from Kallippi in Asia during the reign of Trajan. When Proclus was brought to be tried as Christians, the judge asked him 'Of what race are you?' Proclus answered 'I am of the race of Christ, and my hope is in my God.' When the judge threatened to torture him, he said 'When you are afraid to transgress the Emperor's commands and risk falling into temporal punishment, how much more do we Christians fear to transgress against God's commands and fall into eternal torment!' When Proclus was given over to torture, his nephew Hilarius came forward and proclaimed 'I too am a Christian.' After torture, both were condemned to death; Proclus was crucified and Hilarius beheaded.

Imagine how the Orthodox Church would benefit if, when we were asked 'Of what race are you?' the first answer that came to mind was not 'I am Greek, Russian, Serbian...' but 'I am of the race of Christ!'

St Verónica, the woman with the issue of blood who was healed by the Savior

See Matthew ch. 9, Mark ch. 5, and Luke ch. 8. After the events told in the Gospel, she spent the remainder of her life as a follower of Christ and reposed in peace.

Repose of Elder Paisios the New of the Holy Mountain (1994) (June 29 OC)

The future Elder Paisius was born in 1924 and baptized by St. Arsenius of Cappadocia. He spent his youth as a carpenter until WW II, during which he repeatedly distinguished himself in the army by his bravery and self-sacrifice. In 1950 he went to Mt. Athos for eight years, where he was tonsured. Then he was asked to spend some time in his home village of Epimachio, in order to defend the faithful against Protestant proselytism. He returned to Mt. Athos in 1964 and stayed in several monasteries, eventually settling in the Panagouda hermitage of Koutloumousiou Monastery, where he remained for fifteen years. Here his reputation as a holy elder and guide grew, and he tirelessly received those thirsting for spiritual direction, allowing himself only two or three hours of sleep each day. He reposed in 1994, one of the most well-known and beloved contemporary elders. Many of his counsels and other writings have been published. (*St Herman Calendar, 1994*)

Elder Paisios has not yet been glorified by the Church. More details of his life, and a selection of his sayings, may be found on the [Theologic.com](http://www.Theologic.com) web site.

JULY 13-19

Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the Seven Ecumenical Councils

Commemorated on the Sunday falling within July 13-19. In the Russian usage, only the first six Ecumenical Councils are commemorated today.

The Seven Ecumenical Councils are:

- At Nicea, 325. Condemned the doctrine of Arius, who denied that the Son is of one essence with the Father. Composed the Creed.
- At Constantinople, 381. Condemned the doctrine of Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Edited the Creed to its present form.
- At Ephesus, 431. Condemned the doctrine of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who denied that Jesus Christ is fully God.
- At Chalcedon, 451. Condemned the teaching of Eutyches, that after the Incarnation there was only one nature, the divine, in Jesus Christ.
- At Constantinople, 535. Condemned the teaching of Origen and of Theodore of Mopsuestia.
- At Constantinople, 680. Condemned the Monothelite heresy, that in Jesus Christ there is only one will, the divine.
- At Nicea, 787. Condemned Iconoclasm and upheld the holy icons.

Each of these Councils also put forth various canons and made other decisions.

JULY 13

† Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel

On this day all the many visitations and miracles of the holy Archangel, recorded in Holy Scripture and ever since, are commemorated. This feast duplicates the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel that is celebrated on March 26, the day after

Annunciation; it is thought that it was added to the calendar here some time in the ninth century, so that it could be celebrated more festively outside of Great Lent.

Holy Martyr Gollindus of Persia (6th c.)

She was a Persian noblewoman during the reign of Chosroës II (590-628). Through a vision of an angel, she came to belief in Christ and received holy baptism; her name in baptism was Maria. Her furious husband reported her to King Chosroës, who had her thrown into a foul dungeon known as Oblivion for eighteen years. During these years she was repeatedly told to renounce Christ and was tormented in many ways. She was thrown to venomous snakes, which refused to harm her. Some lawless young men were sent to her cell to defile her, but God made her invisible to them. Many Persians, amazed and inspired by her patient sufferings, accepted Christ. She was finally set free through the visitation of an angel, traveled to Jerusalem and Constantinople, and reposed in peace.

She is commemorated July 12 on the Slavic calendar. Oddly, she is called a Martyr in all accounts, though she died free and in peace; presumably her eighteen years of cruel imprisonment earned her the title.

Saint Julian, Bishop of Cenomanis (Le Mans) (1st c.)

He was made bishop by the Apostle Peter and sent to Gaul as a missionary. Some believe that he was Simon the Leper, whom the Lord healed, later named Julian in Baptism. In Gaul, despite great difficulty and privation, he converted many to faith in Christ and worked many miracles — healing the sick, driving out demons, and even raising the dead. In time the local prince, Defenson, was baptised along with many of his subjects. He reposed in peace.

Repose of Photios Kontoglou (1965) (June 30 OC)

He is called "Blessed Photios" by many, but has not yet been officially glorified. In the twentieth century, he almost singlehandedly restored the practice of true Byzantine iconography to the Church. He was born in 1895 in one of the many Greek towns of Asia Minor. He and his family fled to Greece during the "exchange of populations" of 1923, when more than a million Greeks were driven from Turkey and resettled in Greece. He studied to be a secular artist, but was increasingly drawn to Byzantine iconography, the practice of which had almost disappeared: he learned the iconographic ethos and technique by copying ancient models and studying with the few monks on the Holy Mountain who still practiced true iconography. Initially his work was scorned, since secular western standards had come to dominate even the art of the Church. Slowly, through his tireless labors, an understanding of Orthodoxy iconography was restored to the Church, not only in Greece, but throughout the world. Though married, he lived his life in poverty, often donating his work to churches or performing it for nominal fees. His deeply spiritual writings are greatly honored in Greece, though most remain untranslated into English.

JULY 14

Apostle Aquila of the Seventy, and St Priscilla (1st c.).

He, along with his wife Priscilla, is mentioned in the book of Acts and in St Paul's Epistle to the Romans. He and his wife were Jews who moved to Corinth when the Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Italy. They were working as tentmakers in Corinth when they met and worked with St Paul, also a tentmaker by trade, who brought them to faith in Christ. From that time onward they worked diligently to spread the Gospel of Christ. The *Prologue* says that they died at the hands of pagans, the *Great Horologion* that the circumstances of their repose are unknown.

Or her among the Saints Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonika (833)

He was the brother of St Theodore the Studite (November 11), and is also sometimes called Studite. He is one of the inspired composers of the canons in the *Lenten Triodion*, many of which bear the title "by Joseph". (He should not be confused with St Joseph the Hymnographer, who is commemorated April 3.) As Archbishop of Thessalonika, he suffered greatly for his zealous defense of the holy icons: he was imprisoned, and was exiled three times.

St Nikodemus of the Holy Mountain, spiritual writer (1809)

He is best known for his collections of Orthodox writings, most importantly the *Philokalia*, a five-volume compendium of writings on asceticism and prayer, especially the Jesus Prayer, by the holy Fathers of the Church. (The first four volumes have been translated into English). He produced an Orthodox edition of *Unseen Warfare*, originally by Lorenzo Scupoli, a Roman Catholic. (This was further revised by St Theophan the Recluse). He also edited the *Pedalion (Rudder)*, a collection of the canons of the Orthodox Church with his commentary.

Note: The English edition of the *Rudder* needs to be read with care, since it includes additional comments by the translator, not clearly distinguished from those of the Saint.

JULY 15

† Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir (St. holy baptism Basil), enlightener of the Russian Land (1051)

Though his grandmother, Queen Olga, had been a Christian, his father Svyatoslav reverted to paganism, and Prince Vladimir spent the early part of his life believing and living the beliefs of the pagan Russian people. But he sought for something more, and sent emissaries to study the faiths of the Jews, the Muslims, the Western Christians and the Orthodox. After attending services in Agia Sophia in Constantinople, they told him 'We knew not if we were on earth or in heaven,' and Prince Vladimir determined to embrace the Christian faith. He was baptised in Cherson in 988, receiving the name Basil. "He came forth from the font not only healed of a blindness lately afflicting him, but also from being passionate and warlike, he became meek, peaceable, and exceedingly godly." (*Great Horologion*). He married Princess Anna, sister of the Emperor, and returned home with a retinue of priests from Constantinople. He immediately set about building a Christian nation: casting down the idols, baptizing the people, and establishing a Christian government. His legislation for his recently barbarian nation was modeled on the Gospel, and in its conformity to Christ's commandments exceeded even the other Christian nations of the time. He reposed in peace in 1015, leaving behind a kingdom that grew to be the largest Orthodox nation in the world.

Holy Martyrs Cerycus and His Mother Julitta (304)

"Holy Julitta was of noble birth. She was widowed young, and left with a newborn child, Cerycus. She lived in Iconium, a city of Lycaonia, and was a very devout Christian. She had her son baptised immediately after his birth and, when he was three years old, instructed him in the Faith and taught him to pray insofar as a child of that age is capable of learning. When Diocletian launched a persecution of Christians, much innocent blood was shed in the city of Iconium. Julitta took her son and hid from the wrath of the pagans in the town of Seleucid, but things were no better there. Julitta was arrested as a Christian and brought to trial. Seeing Julitta so courageously proclaim her faith in the Lord Jesus, the judge, to distress her and make her waver, took the child in his arms and began to kiss it. But Cerycus shouted: 'I am a Christian; let me go to my mother!', and he began to scratch the judge, turning his face away from him. The judge was furious, threw the child on the ground and kicked it, and the child rolled down the stone steps and gave his holy and innocent soul to God. Seeing how Cerycus suffered before her, Julitta was filled with joy and gave thanks to God that her son had been counted worthy of the wreath of martyrdom. After harsh torture, Julitta was beheaded, in the year 304. The relics of Ss Cerycus and Julitta have wonderworking power to this day. A part of the relics of these saints is to be found in Ochrid, in the Church of the Holy Mother of God, the Healer." (*Prologue*)

JULY 16

Hieromartyr Athenogenes, bishop of Sebaste, and his ten disciples (311)

"In the time of Diocletian, a fierce persecutor of Christians called Philomarchus came to Sebaste. He arrested and killed many Christians in the town. When he saw Athenogenes and his disciples, he told the elder to sacrifice to the idols, that they should not perish as had the other Christians. Athenogenes replied: 'O Torturer, those whom you describe as having perished have not perished, but are in heaven and make merry with the angels!' There was a touching moment when a deer, which had been hand-fed by the compassionate Athenogenes, ran up to him and, seeing him in such straits, shed tears. Wild animals of the hills had more pity on the martyrs than did the pagans! After harsh torture, during which an angel of God comforted them, they were all beheaded, first the priests and fellow workers of Athenogenes and then Athenogenes himself, and went to their heavenly home in the year 311." (*Prologue*)

The *Great Horologion* adds "There is a second Martyr Athenogenes commemorated today, mentioned by St Basil... said that as this Athenogenes approached the fire, wherein he was to die a martyric death, he chanted the hymn *O Joyous Light* in praise of the Holy Trinity." This is one way that we know that the vespersal hymn *Gladsome Light* was in use before the time of St Basil the Great.

JULY 17

† Great-martyr Marina (Margaret) of Antioch in Pisidia (270)

She was born in Antioch of Pisidia to pagan parents; her father was a pagan priest. When she was about twelve years old her mother died, and she was given into the care of a woman who told her of the Gospel of Christ. She was immediately filled with love for Christ and consecrated her life to His service. Her father, hearing of this, was furious and disowned her. When she was fifteen years old, she was brought before the governor Olymbrius, who first desired to marry her and, when she refused, ordered her to make sacrifice to the idols. She refused and proclaimed herself a Christian. For this she was harshly tortured, imprisoned, and finally beheaded. While she was in prison she was tormented by demons, but drove them away by her prayers. For this reason she is especially invoked for deliverance from demonic possession. One of her hands is preserved at Vatopedi Monastery on the Holy Mountain, and some of her relics are preserved at an Albanian Monastery dedicated to her.

JULY 18

Holy Martyr Emilian (362)

He was from the town of Dorostolon in Thrace and during the reign of Julian the Apostate became a servant of the governor in that region. Before the time of his martyrdom he was a secret Christian. An imperial legate arrived in the town with orders to seize all Christians, but failed to find any; to show his pleasure he ordered a great feast for the whole town, complete with sacrifices to the pagan gods. On the night before the appointed feast, Emilian went around the town and smashed all the idols with a hammer. The following day there was an uproar, and an innocent villager was seized and charged with the crime. Emilian, seeing this, said to himself 'If I conceal my action, what sort of use has it been? Shall I not stand before God as the slayer of an innocent man?' So he presented himself to the legate and confessed what he had done. When the furious official asked Emilian on whose orders he had acted, Emilian replied 'God and my soul commanded me to destroy those dead pillars that you call gods.' As punishment, Emilian was subjected to many tortures and finally burned alive.

St Pambo, hermit of Egypt (374? 386?)

Abba Pambo was a contemporary of St Anthony the Great and one of the greatest of the Desert Fathers. He would only eat bread which he had earned by his own labors, plaiting baskets and mats out of reeds. In his later years, he became in appearance like an angel of God: his face shone so that the monks could not look on it. Through long ascetic labor, he was enabled to control his tongue so that no unnecessary word ever passed his lips. He never gave an immediate answer to even the simplest question, but always prayed and pondered on the question first. Once, when Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, was visiting the monks, they begged Abba Pambo to give the Patriarch a word. He answered: 'If my silence is no help to him, neither will my words be.' He reposed in peace, some say in 374, others in 386.

JULY 19

† Uncovering of the relics (1903) of St Seraphim of Sarov

"The uncovering of the holy relics of St Seraphim of Sarov on July 19, 1903 was attended by many thousands, among them the foremost of the clergy and royalty; the holy Tsar Nicholas II (July 4) was one of the bearers of the relics in procession, and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth (July 5) wrote an eyewitness account of the many miracles that took place. Not only had the Saint foretold the coming of the Tsar to his glorification, and that from joy they would chant 'Christ is Risen' in summer, but he also left a letter 'for the fourth sovereign, who will come to Sarov.' This was Nicholas II, who was given the letter when he came in 1903; the contents of the letter are not known, but when he had read it, the Tsar and future Martyr, though not a man to show his emotions, was visibly shaken." (*Great Horologion*)

Saint Seraphim is commemorated January 2.

St Macrina, sister of St Basil the Great and St Gregory of Nyssa (380)

She was sought as a bride by many because of her exceptional beauty and wisdom as well as her noble birth. She was betrothed at a young age, and when her betrothed died, she refused to consider any more suitors, saying that since her betrothed was alive in Christ, it was not right for her to turn to another. Instead she turned to a life of virginity, ascetic struggle and prayer. She greatly influenced her younger brothers, turning them from worldly things to monastic life. She established a monastery and, with her mother Emilia, became a nun. She reposed in peace in 379.

Her brother St Gregory of Nyssa held her in special honor. He was present at her death and gave a moving oration at her funeral. He describes how, in her last moments, she prayed thus to God: "Thou, O Lord, givest rest to our bodies in the sleep of death for a little time, then Thou wilt waken them again with the Last Trumpet. Forgive me, and grant that, when my soul is parted from my body, it may be presented before Thee stainless and without sin, and that it may be as incense before Thee." Then she made the sign of the Cross on her brow, eyes, face and heart, and died. St Gregory's work on the resurrection of the dead (available in English as *On the Soul and Resurrection*) is cast in the form of a dialogue between himself and his sister Macrina in which he is the earnest but ignorant student and she the wise and patient teacher. So do the Saints honor the Saints.

JULY 20

† Holy Glorious Prophet Elias (Eljah) (9th c. BC)

Read his marvellous story in the Holy Scriptures, 1 and 2 Kings. At his birth, his father Sabah saw angels of God surrounding the Prophet, clothing him in fire and feeding him flames. At the end of his years on earth, he was carried bodily to heaven by a flaming chariot; with Enoch (Gen. 5:24) he is one of the two ever to be taken bodily to heaven without first dying and being raised. His and Moses appeared standing with Christ at the Transfiguration on Mt Tabor. His name means 'The Lord is God'.

Martyrs Maria (Skobitsova), Dimitri (Klepinin) and those with them, who perished in the Nazi concentration camps (1944-1945). Mother Maria was born in Latvia in 1891. Like many of the pre-Revolutionary Russian intelligentsia, she was an atheist and a political radical in her youth, but gradually came to accept the truths of the Faith. After the Revolution, she became part of the large Russian emigre population of Paris. There she was tonsured as a nun by Metropolitan Evlogy, and devoted herself to a life of service to the poor. With a small community of fellow-believers, she established 'houses of hospitality' for the poor, the homeless, the alcoholic, and visited Russian emigres in mental hospitals. In 1939 Metropolitan Evlogy sent the young priest Fr Dimitry to serve Mother Maria's community; he proved to be a partner, committed even unto death, in the community's work among the poor. When the Nazis took Paris in 1940, Mother Maria, Fr Dimitry, and others of the community chose to remain in the city to care for those who had come to count on them. As Nazi persecution of Jews in France increased, the Orthodox community's work naturally expanded to include protection and care of these most helpless ones. Father Dimitri was asked to provide forged certificates of baptism to preserve the lives of Jews, and always complied. Eventually, this work led to the arrest of Mother Maria, Fr Dimitri, and their associates. A fragment survives of the Gestapo's interrogation of Fr Dimitri:

Hoffman: If we release you, will you give your word never again to aid Jews?

Klepinin: I can say no such thing. I am a Christian and must act as I must. (Hoffman struck Klepinin across the face.)

Hoffman: Jew lover! How dare you talk of helping those swine as being a Christian duty! (Klepinin, recovering his balance, held up the cross from his cassock.)

Klepinin: Do you know this Jew? (For this, Father Dimitri was knocked to the floor.)

"Your priest did himself in," Hoffman said afterward to Sophia Pilenko. "He insists that if he were to be freed, he would act exactly as before."

Mother Maria, Fr Dimitri, and several of their colleagues, were sent to the Nazi concentration camps (Mother Maria to Ravensbruck, Fr Dimitri to Buchenwald) where, after great sufferings, they perished. It is believed that Mother Maria's last act was to take the place of a Jew being sent to death, voluntarily dying in his place.

A full account of their life and death is given on the site of the Orthodox Peace Fellowship.

Mother Maria and her companions were glorified by the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 2004.

JULY 21

Our Righteous Fathers John and Symeon, the Fool for Christ's Sake (570)

These two brothers in Christ were from Edessa in Mesopotamia. After a pilgrimage to Jerusalem they fled the world together; they were tonsured as monks, but soon left their monastery to struggle in prayer near the Dead Sea. Thus they passed thirty years in silence and asceticism. Symeon was then commanded by God to leave the desert and serve God among the world's people. At their parting John said to him: 'Keep your heart from all that you see in the world. Whatever there may be that touches your hand, let it not take hold of your heart. When food passes your lips, let not your heart be sweetened by it. If your feet have to move, let there be peace within you. Whatever you do outwardly, let your mind remain tranquil. Pray for me, that God may not part us from each other in the world to come.' Symeon went to Emesa in Syria, where he spent the rest of his life, feigning madness in order to conceal his holiness from men. But he performed miracles of healing and appeared to people of the city in dreams, calling them to repentance. He was given the gift of discernment of others' inward condition, and while dancing and raving through the streets would approach people, whisper their sins into their ears, and call them to repentance. He reposed peacefully in 590; John, who had remained in the desert, reposed soon afterward.

Prophet Ezekiel (6th c. BC)

He is commemorated today on the Slavic calendar. See July 23, his commemoration on the Greek calendar.

JULY 22

† Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalene

She was from the town of Magdala on the Sea of Galilee, for which reason she is called "Magdalene." The Lord Jesus cast out seven demons from her, after which she became His faithful disciple, following Him even to the Cross when most of His disciples had fled. With the other holy Myrrh-bearers, she prepared the spices to anoint His body and carried them to His tomb. There she was one of the first witnesses to the Resurrection, and the first to proclaim it.

Various traditions hold that, after Christ's ascension, she traveled to Rome, where she presented the Emperor with a red egg and proclaimed "Christ is Risen!" For this reason her icons often show her holding a red egg, and from this the tradition of distributing red eggs at Pascha is said to have arisen. She is then said to have travelled to Ephesus where she helped St John the Theologian in his gospel ministry before reposing there.

Mary Magdalene is sometimes identified with the "sinful woman" of the Gospels, but this is not the Church's tradition. Neither the Gospels nor the sacred hymnography of the Church make this connection.

The name 'Madeleine' is a form of 'Magdalene'.

JULY 23

Hieromartyr Apollinarius, bishop of Ravenna (75)

He was a disciple of St Peter, born in Antioch. St Peter took him to Rome (he was bishop of Antioch before being bishop of Rome, so Antioch is as much the 'see of Peter' as is Rome) and made him Bishop of Ravenna. In Ravenna, he healed the wife of the military governor of a grave illness, after which the governor and his household confessed Christ and were baptized. Apollinarius was able to form a house church in the governor's home, from which he labored for the Gospel for twelve years. Eventually, he was condemned to exile in Illyria for his faith, and began a life of missionary travel in the Balkans, travelling as far as the Danube. After twelve years of this work, he was driven back to Italy by the hostility of some of the pagans. He was received with joy by the people of Ravenna, which aroused the envy of the pagan elders, who denounced him to the Emperor Vespasian. When the elders asked permission to kill Apollinarius, the Emperor only gave them permission to drive him from the city, wisely saying 'It is not seemly to take revenge on behalf of the gods, for they can themselves be revenged on their enemies if they are angered.' But, in defiance of the Imperial decree, the pagan leaders attacked and killed Apollinarius with knives. His holy relics are preserved in Ravenna, in a church dedicated to him.

Holy Prophet Ezekiel (6th c. BC)

He is counted as the third-ranked of the Major Prophets. Read the Old Testament book that bears his name, in which the Church recognizes prophecies of the Lord's Incarnation by the Virgin and of the general resurrection of mankind.

Rj *ius Anna (Hannah), mother of the prophet Samuel Righteous Anna (Hannah), mother of the prophet Samuel*

JULY 24

† Martyr Christina of Tyre (200)

She was from Tyre in Syria, the daughter of a pagan named Urban. She is a miraculous example of one brought to faith in Christ without any human intervention. When she was about eleven years old, her father, seeing her great beauty and wanting to protect her from men until she was grown, made her live alone on the top floor of a fine house, with slaves, all worldly comforts, and gold and silver idols. Passing the time by looking out the window, Christina came by her meditations on the beauty and order of nature to believe in the one, living God. An Angel of the Lord then came to her, who marked her with the sign of the Cross and instructed her in the truth of the Gospel. The newly-enlightened Christina smashed all the idols in her room, so infuriating her father that he sent her to be tortured and beheaded for her faith. Her father, though in good health and in the prime of life, died that night. Christina was subjected to horrible tortures and mutilations, and finally died by the sword, her faith unshaken.

Troparion to St Christina: *O Lord Jesus, unto Thee Thy lamb doth cry with a great voice: "O my Bridegroom, Thee I love;" and seeking Thee, I now contest, and with Thy baptism am crucified and buried. "I suffer for Thy sake, that I may reign with Thee;" for Thy sake I die, that I may live in Thee: "accept me offered out of longing to Thee as a spotless sacrifice." Lord, save our souls through her intercessions, "since Thou art great in mercy.*

Hc *artyrs and Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb of Russia, in holy baptism Romanus and David (1015)*

Pious sons of Prince Vladimir, enlightener of Russia, they were named Romanus and David in Baptism. When Prince Vladimir died, his kingdom was divided among his sons (prior to baptism, he had children by several wives). But Prince Svyatopolk, not content with his share, resolved to have his brothers murdered in order to take their territories. Both brothers knew of the plan, but resolved not to take up arms against their brother, to avoid civil war and to fulfil the commandment "Resist not evil." Their bodies remained incorrupt and fragrant in death. They are buried in Vyshgorod.

Saints Boris and Gleb are also commemorated on July 24,

Note: Since every Orthodox Christian should be baptized with the name of a known Orthodox Saint, how do we get new Saints' names over the years? We see the process at work with St Vladimir and his sons Boris and Gleb. At baptism they received new Christian names, but when they were glorified, their (originally) pagan names were sanctified. Since then, countless Russians and others have been named Vladimir, Boris or Gleb at baptism.

JULY 25

† Dormition of the Righteous Anna, mother of the Most Holy Theotokos

According to tradition, both Anna and her husband Joachim had reposed by the time the Most Holy Theotokos was about eleven years old and living in the Temple; thus when she reached maturity she was an orphan, and was given into the care

of the noble Joseph. The prayers of St Anna are invoked for conceiving children and for help in difficult childbirth. Her main feast is on September 9th.

Commemoration of the holy 165 Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553)

This council was held in Constantinople during the reign of Justinian the Great. The council condemned the various forms of monophysitism, the heretical writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret, and the writings of Origen (particularly of universal salvation).

St Olympias the Deaconess (408)

She was born to a noble family in Constantinople: her father Anysius Secundus was a senator. She was betrothed to a nobleman who died before they could be wed; resisting all advice to take another husband, Olympias devoted herself entirely to God, giving her large inheritance to the Church and to the poor. She served as a deaconess, first under the Patriarch Nektarios, then under St John Chrysostom. When St John was sent into exile, he advised her to remain in Constantinople, and to continue to serve the Church whatever patriarch took his place. But as soon as the holy hierarch went into exile, a fire destroyed a large part of the City, and St John's enemies accused the holy Olympias of setting the fire. She in turn was exiled to Nikomedia, where she reposed in 408. She left instructions that her body be placed in a coffin and thrown into the sea, to be buried wherever it was cast up. The coffin came to shore at Vrochthoi and was buried there at a church dedicated to the Apostle Thomas. Her relics have continued to be a source of great miracles of healing.

During his exile, St John Chrysostom wrote a number of letters to St Olympias, seventeen of which have been preserved through the centuries. In one he writes: 'Now I am deeply joyful, not only because you have been delivered from sickness, but even more because you are bearing adversities with such fortitude, calling them trifles — a characteristic of a soul filled with power and abounding in the rich fruits of courage. You are not only enduring misfortune with fortitude, but are making light of it in a seemingly effortless way, rejoicing and triumphing over it — this is a proof of the greatest wis-

JULY 26

Holy Hieromartyrs Hermolaus (305), Hermippus, and Hermocrates at Nicomedia

They were priests in Nicomedia; it was Hermolaus who converted St Panteleimon (July 27) to Christ. When St Panteleimon, interrogated by Maximian, was asked who had turned him from the idols, he named Hermolaus. (The Great Horologion notes that it had been revealed to Panteleimon that the time of Hermolaus' martyrdom was near at hand). St Hermolaus was arrested along with Sts Hermippus and Hermocrates and, when they proclaimed Christ to be the only true God, all were beheaded. St Hermolaus, along with his disciple St Panteleimon, is counted as one of the Unmercenary Physicians.

Holy Righteous Martyr Paraskeve (140)

She was born near Rome to pious parents. Since she was born on a Friday, she was named Paraskeve (Friday in Greek; literally "preparation" or "preparedness" because Friday was the Biblical Day of Preparation for the Sabbath). From early childhood she studied the scriptures, consecrated herself to a monastic life, and brought many to faith in Christ by her example and teaching. During the reign of Antoninus she was arrested because she was a Christian. When ordered to worship the idols, she answered "Let the gods that have not made heaven and the earth perish from off the earth" (Jeremiah 10:11). For this, after severe tortures she was beheaded in 140.

St Iakov (Netsvetov) of Atka Island and Ikogmute, mission priest to the Yup'ik of the Yukon River (1867)

JULY 27

† Holy Great-martyr and Healer Panteleimon (305)

He was born in Nicomedia; his father was a pagan, his mother a Christian. Through her he was taught the Christian Faith and baptized by St Hermolaus (July 26). He became a physician, and practiced his art with compassion and generosity, healing many more through his prayers as by his medicines. His parents had named him Pantoleon ("in all things a lion"), but because of his great compassion he was re-named Panteleimon ("all-merciful"). He once healed a man of blindness by calling on Christ, which led the once-blind man to embrace the Faith. When asked how he came to be healed he named Panteleimon as his healer and proclaimed his newfound faith in Christ. For this the pagans executed him, then arrested Panteleimon, who after many tortures was beheaded in 305. He is counted as the foremost of the Unmercenary Physicians.

St Clement, Archbishop of Ochrid (916)

He was a disciple of Saints Methodius and Cyril, working with them in their missionary labors in Moravia. After the death of St Methodius, Clement and many others of their mission were driven out of Moravia by the Germans, and traveled south. Clement, with his five companions Gorazd, Nahum, Sava and Angelarius, crossed the Danube, stayed for a time with King Boris Michael, and settled in near Ochrid (in what is now Kosova, Yugoslavia). He founded a monastery at Belica, then moved to Ochrid, where he built a church dedicated to St Panteleimon. There he continued the work of Sts Cyril and

Methodius, producing many books in the new Slavonic script for the help of the Slavic Orthodox people. Saint Clement performed miracles in his own lifetime and after his repose: his wonder-working relics are still venerated in a church dedicated to him. He reposed in peace.

Commemoration of the canonization (1970) of St Herman of Alaska (1837)

His feast day is December 12. Due to the severity of the Alaskan climate, the annual pilgrimage to his relics in Kodiak, Alaska, is in the Summer, around this date.

JULY 28

Holy Apostles of the Seventy and Deacons Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon and Parmenas

They are mentioned by name in Acts 6:5. St Prochorus became Bishop of Nicomedia and reposed in peace. St Nicanor was stoned to death in Jerusalem. St Timon became Bishop of Bostra in Arabia and ended his life in martyrdom by fire at the hands of the pagans. St Parmenas died in peace in Jerusalem.

St Irene, Abbess of the Convent of Chrysovalantou (912)

"Saint Irene, who was from Cappadocia, flourished in the ninth century. Because of her great beauty and virtue, she was brought to Constantinople as a prospective bride for the young Emperor Michael (842-867); however, as St Joannicius the Great foretold, it was God's will that she assume the monastic habit instead. She shone forth in great ascetical labors, and suffered many attacks from the demons; while yet a novice, she attained to the practice of St Arsenius the Great, of praying the whole night long with arms stretched out towards Heaven (see May 8). God showed forth great signs and wonders in her, and she became the Abbess of the Convent of Chrysovalantou. She was granted the gift of clairvoyance and knew the thoughts of all that came to her. She appeared in a vision to the king and rebuked him for unjustly imprisoning a nobleman who had been falsely accused. Through a sailor from Patmos to whom he had appeared, St John the Theologian sent her fragrant and wondrous apples from Paradise. She reposed at the age of 103, still retaining the youthful beauty of her countenance. After her repose, marvellous healings beyond number have been wrought by her to the present day." (*Great Horologion*)

JULY 29

Holy Martyr Callinicus of Gangra in Asia Minor (c. 250)

He was born in Cilicia to a pious family. He left all worldly things and devoted his life to preaching the Gospel of Christ, for which he was arrested in Ancyra by the governor Sacerdos. When he was commanded to worship the idols or suffer torture, Callinicus replied, 'Every torture for my God is as welcome to me as bread to a hungry man.' After harsh torture, the governor had him shod in shoes in which nails had been set pointing upright, and had him driven on foot to the town of Gangra. (The governor was afraid to keep him in Ancyra, since many of the people were turning to Christ through the Saint's example.) On the way, when the soldiers became thirsty, Callinicus prayed to God and brought forth water from a rock. At Gangra he was thrown alive into a furnace. When the fire was out, his dead body was found completely unharmed.

Holy Martyr Seraphima (2nd c.)

She was a maiden from Antioch who lived (perhaps as a slave) in the house of Sabina, wife of a Senator. When Seraphima brought the senator's wife to faith in Christ, the governor summoned Seraphima before him. When she held firm in her faith, he cast her into prison and send several young men to her cell by night to defile her. When they arrived, she was praying to God, and an angel of the Lord appeared before them, clothed in light and bearing a sword; and the young men fell down unconscious. Finally, Seraphima received her martyr's crown when she was beheaded by the governor's order. Sabina, the senator's wife, recovered and buried her body, from which a healing myrrh flowed. This was during the reign of Hadrian.

JULY 30

Apostles Silas, Silvanus, Crescens, Epenetus, and Andronicus of the Seventy

St Silas was a companion and fellow-worker of the Apostle Paul (see Acts 15). He became Bishop of Corinth and reposed in peace. St Silvanus became Bishop of Thessalonica and reposed in peace. St Crescens, mentioned by St Paul in 2 Timothy 4:10, became Bishop of Chalcedon. St Epenetus, praised by St Paul in Romans 16:5 as "my well-beloved Epenetus, the first-fruits of Achaia" (that is the first Christian from the Greek land) became Bishop of Carthage. St Andronicus and his fellow-worker Junia are also commemorated May 17.

Heteromartyr Polychronius, Bishop of Babylon, and those with him (251)

"when the Emperor decius conquered Babylon, he arrested Polychronius, together with three priests, two deacons and two baptised princess, Eudin and Seris. Polychronius would make no reply before the Emperor, but kept silent, while St Parmenius, one of the priests, spoke for them all. The Emperor took the bishop and priests to Persia, to the city of Kordoba,

and had them beheaded with an axe, but he took the princes with him to Rome, threw them first to the wild beasts and then had them slain with the sword. They all suffered with honour in 251." (*Prologue*)

Venerable Angelina, Princess of Albania.

She was the daughter of Scanderbeg, Albania's national hero. She married Stefan, Prince of Serbia, a kinsman of Scanderbeg who sought refuge in his court. Stefan, a gentle, God-fearing man, had been blinded by the Turkish Sultan. Princess Angelina, loving him despite his loss of his vision and his worldly kingdom, married him with her father's blessing. Together they had two sons, George and John. When their sons were grown, Albania was ravaged by an invasion of the Turks. Stefan, with Angelina and their sons, fled to Italy, where they lived until his repose in 1468. The widowed Angelina buried her husband in his Serbian homeland and devoted her remaining years to good works. Her elder son George gave up his princely title and entered monastic life. John married but died without children in 1503. When Angelina had outlived her two sons as well as her husband she too entered monastic life. She was buried with her sons at Krušedol monastery in northern Serbia. There her miracle-working relics are venerated to this day, and a service is held each year in her memory. She, her husband and her two sons are all glorified as saints of the Church.

JULY 31

Forefeast of the Procession of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord.

† Righteous Eudocimus of Cappadocia (9th c.)

"Saint Eudocimus was from Cappadocia, the son of pious and most illustrious parents, patricians in rank. He especially cultivated chastity and mercy, the one by never meeting the gaze of a woman, the other by cheerfully providing the needs of the poor. When he was made military commander of Cappadocia, he continued in his righteous ways, showing mercy and uprightness in all his dealings. Having so lived in piety, quietly and without ostentation, he was called from this life age of thirty-three, about the year 840, during the reign of the Iconoclast Theophilus. Not long after his burial, his grave became a fountain of unending miracles, as God revealed the virtue that Eudocimus had striven to hide; when his grave was later opened, his body was found incorrupt. His holy relics were translated to Constantinople." (*Great Horologion*)

Righteous Joseph of Arimathea (1st c.)

The "noble Joseph" was a secret follower of Christ and a wealthy member of the Jewish Sanhedrin (ruling council); it was he who provided Christ's tomb. When his faith became known he was driven from the Sanhedrin, from the synagogues, and from the Holy Land, and traveled through many lands, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. According to some accounts he eventually reached England, where he reposed in peace.

† Indicates a Saint or day whose commemoration is at least "Doxology rank" (Great Doxology sung at Matins); there is generally some dispensation from fasting when these days fall on fast days.

Assembled by John Brady. The opinions and errors contained herein are his own.
Lives are compiled mostly from: The *Synaxarion* published by Ormylia Monastery;
The *Prologue from Ochrid* by St Nikolai of Zilka (Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic);
and the *Great Horologion*, published by Holy Transfiguration Monastery.

