



## Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, Seventh Sunday of Pascha, Sunday After Ascension

27 May / 9 June

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 6:** The angelic powers were at Thy tomb; / the guards became as dead men. / Mary stood by Thy grave, / seeking Thy most pure Body. / Thou didst capture hell, not being tempted by it. / Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. / O Lord who didst rise from the Dead, / Glory to Thee!

**Tropar of The Ascension Of The Lord, Tone 4:** Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, having gladdened Thy disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit; and they were assured by the blessing that Thou art the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

**Tropar of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council - Tone 8:** Most glorified art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast established our holy fathers as stars upon the earth, and through them didst guide us all to the true Faith. O Most-merciful One, glory be to Thee.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 6:** When Christ God the Giver of Life, / raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His Mighty Hand, / He bestowed resurrection on the human race. / He is the Saviour of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of All.

**Kondak of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council - Tone 8:** The preaching of the apostles and the doctrines of the fathers confirmed the one Faith of the Church. And wearing the garment of truth, woven from the theology on high, She rightly divideth and glorifieth the great mystery of piety.

**Kondak of The Ascension Of The Lord, Tone 6:** When Thou didst fulfill Thy dispensation for our sake, uniting things on earth with the heavens, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, departing not hence, but remaining inseparable from us, and crying unto them that love Thee: I am with you, and no one shall be against you.

### Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council

The Commemoration and eulogy of the holy fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, which was held in Nicaea in 325 in the reign of Constantine the Great—held during the week before Pentecost, or the seventh week after Easter. It was summoned to remove the confusion which Arius, an Alexandrian priest, had created by his false teaching. He had been spreading the teaching that Christ was created from God in time, and that He is not the pre-eternal Son of God, equal in being with God the Father. Three hundred and eighteen holy fathers took part in this Council. It condemned the Arian teaching, and anathematized Arius when he would not repent. This Council also definitively confirmed the Symbol of Faith (the Creed) which was later amplified at the Second Ecumenical Council. Many bishops were present at the First Ecumenical Council, among whom the following stood out: St Nicolas of Myra in Lycia, St Spiridon, St Athanasius, St Acillius, St Paphnutius, St James of Nisibis, Macarius of Jerusalem, Alexander of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, Eusebius of Caesarea, Mitrophanes of Constantinople, John of Persia, Aristarchus of Armenia and many others from the East. And from the West: Hosius of Cordova, Theophilus the Goth, Cecilianus of Carthage, and others. The most important work of this Council was the confirmation of the Symbol of Faith. The Council also confirmed the time of the celebration of Easter, and prescribed twenty Canons. St. Nicolas in his zeal, struck Arius with his hand. For this act, he was removed from the Council and from his episcopal duties. That very night, several of the fathers had the selfsame vision: how the Lord stood on one side of Nicolas with the Gospels and the Mother of God on the other with a pallium, offering to the saint those marks of rank that had been stripped from him. Seeing this, the fathers were amazed, and quickly returned to Nicolas that which they had taken from him. They began from that time to respect him as a great man, and to interpret his action against Arius not as some senseless rage but as the expression of great zeal for God's truth.

**Vespers: Gen. 14:14-20; Deut. 1:8-10, 1:15-17; Deut. 10:14-21**

**Matins Gospel X**

## **EPISTLE: The Acts of St. Apostles 20: 16-18; 28-36**

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by labouring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

### **YOU MUST SUPPORT THE WEAK: IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE**

It is to raise up their minds that he says all this, and to persuade them not only not to flee, but also to bear nobly. This is the reason he calls it a 'course' and a 'ministry' on the one hand, showing it to be glorious from its being a race, on the other, showing what was due from it, as being a ministry. I am a minister: nothing more. He had comforted them, so they would not grieve that he was treated in such a bad way ... For my anxiety is not that you should be saved through me as the means, but only that you should be saved: the person as the instrument is immaterial. You do not know the pangs of spiritual childbirth, how overpowering they are, how he who is in travail with this birth would rather be cut into ten thousand pieces, than see one of those to whom he has given birth perishing and undone.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XLIV on Acts XX. B#55, pp. 270-272.*

### **TO SHEPHERD THE CHURCH OF GOD**

There is no ministry in the Church other than Christ's ministry ... This identification of the Church's ministry with that of Christ has gone beyond the theology of the Fathers and entered the liturgical life of the ancient Church in a decisive way: in the Eucharist, Christ is not only the one who is offered and who receives but also the one who offers ...

The ministry of the Church ... exists as an expression of the totality of the Economy. We cannot, therefore, understand the nature of the ministry by seeing it simply in terms of the past (Christ's ministry in Palestine) or a present (ministry as service to the needs of today) but of the future as well, namely as sustaining for creation the hope of the eschata, of sharing God's very life ...

Just as the Church becomes through the ministry a relational entity both in itself and in its relation to the world, so also the ordained man becomes, through his ordination, a relational entity. In this context, looking at the ordained person as an individual defeats the very end of ordination. For ordination ... aims precisely at making man not an individual but a person, i.e. an ek-static being, that can be looked upon not from the angle of his "limits" but of his overcoming his "selfhood" and becoming a related being ... In the light of the koinonia of the Holy Spirit, ordination relates the ordained man so profoundly and so existentially to the community that in his new state after ordination he cannot be any longer, as a minister, conceived in himself ... Only in terms of love can one understand the mystery of charismatic life and therefore of ministry.

*Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamos. Being as Communion, B#82, pp. 210, 211, 226, 227 (note).*

## **GOSPEL: JOHN 17:1-13**

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

## THE GREAT INTERCESSORY PRAYER OF CHRIST

'Seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us' (Heb.7:25). O how beautiful and mystical and kind! For to intercede ...is to plead for us by reason of his mediatorship, just as the Spirit also is said to make intercession for us. For 'there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus' (Rom.8:26, I Tim.2:5). He still pleads even now as man for my salvation; for He continues to wear the body which He assumed, until He shall make me god by the power of His incarnation ...Thus, too, we have an advocate, Jesus Christ, not indeed prostrating Himself for us before the Father ...but by what He suffered as man, He as the Word and the counsellor persuades Him to be patient. I think this is the meaning of His advocacy.

*St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Fourth Theological Oration, 14. B#7, p. 187.*

## THE STATUS OF CHRIST

Many statements in the Scriptures imply, or even openly assert that the Father is greater than the Son; and men have erred because they have not been careful enough to examine the whole tenor of the Scriptures and thus have sought to transfer what is said of Christ Jesus as man to His mode of being before His incarnation, which was and is eternal. And they allege that the Son is inferior to the Father because the Lord Himself is quoted as saying, 'The Father is greater than I'. But it is demonstrable that in this respect the Son is also inferior to Himself. For if 'He emptied Himself, receiving the form of a servant,' He must surely have become inferior to Himself. For this taking of the form of a servant did not entail His losing the form of God ...In both forms He was the same Only-begotten Son of God the Father, in the form of God equal to the Father, in the form of a servant, 'the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus' (I Tim. 2:5) ...He is equal to the Father in nature, inferior to Him in condition ... Godhead is not changed into a creature, so as to cease to be godhead.

*St. Augustine of Hippo. On the Trinity 1.14. B#15, p. 214.*

Today, between the Ascension and Pentecost, we remember the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. These "fathers" who made up the council were all bishops who gathered together at the request of the Byzantine Emperor to provide a definition of the Orthodox belief concerning the nature of Jesus Christ. These bishops, in response to the heretical ideas of Arius, confirmed that Jesus Christ is indeed the uncreated God incarnate and, as God, shares the same essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Who gave these bishops the right to make this decision? How could they know the truth of the nature of Jesus Christ? What made them wise? The answer, of course, is in the role of the bishop for the bishop is given the grace and indeed the duty by God, through ordination, to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" – that is, he is guided by the Holy Spirit to recognize the Truth and to explain it to his spiritual flock.

Now we are all sealed with the grace of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Chrismation, however, the bishop is endowed with a special grace to lead the flock of Christ and to care for the spiritual and physical needs of the various members of that flock. The bishops were originally ordained by the apostles and became their successors, ordaining others as needed by the Church. Each bishop was selected on the basis of his spiritual life as well as his faithfulness to the teaching of the apostles. Even today, a man selected for ordination to the episcopacy must confess his faith first in a formal manner by reciting the Nicene Creed (as we, or our sponsors on our behalf, all do at our baptism) but then he is also expected to confess his faith more in depth, explaining and describing in his own words the meaning of the creed, how he understands it, how he applies it and how he interprets it. Only then, when his explanation meets the approval of the bishops who will ordain him, is he accepted as a candidate for the episcopacy. The bishop is ordained during the course of the Divine Liturgy, just before the reading of the Gospel in order to emphasize his role as the one who "rightly divides the Word of Truth" and who is given the responsibility for teaching the people. No one else has the right to teach in the Church, only the bishop and those to whom he gives a blessing to teach on his behalf.

The bishop is the one appointed as the shepherd of the flock of Christ, but he does not perform this task alone. He has assistants who help him in this task, the priests, deacons and other members of the clergy. St Ignatius the God bearer speaks of the place of the members of the clergy thusly: "the bishop presides in the place of God, and ... presbyters (priests) in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with ... deacons, who are ... entrusted with the ministry..." It is necessary that all the clergy are in the closest harmony with one another, and the bishop is the key and origin of that harmony: "(the) presbytery, being worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp." He says again that we should "reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father and the presbyters as the Sanhedrin of God, and assembly of the apostles." If the bishop separates himself from the Body of Christ, that is, from the Church, then he is no longer a bishop and if a priest or deacon separates himself from his bishop, he is likewise no longer a priest or a deacon. The spiritual rank and gift of grace that is the essence of the sacrament of ordination is inextricably tied to Christ, to His Church, and cannot exist in any way in separation from it.

The bishop is the one who holds, by the grace of his ordination, all of the sacraments of the Church. Those who are ordained by him receive from him the grace to administer those sacraments as appropriate to his rank and situation. A priest, as the extension of the bishop to the local community, is generally given the blessing to administer all the sacraments, except that of ordination which is held solely by the bishop. The deacon does not generally administer any of the sacraments but functions as the right hand of the priest and the bishop. These three ranks: bishop, priest, and deacon all work together to provide for the needs of the members of the Body of Christ, that is, the Church.

The primary spiritual work of the bishop is to teach – to continue the work of the apostles to bear witness to the Truth revealed to them by Jesus Christ who as God revealed Himself to us. It is the bishop who instructs us and guides us in

the path of salvation as the shepherd of the flock who stands in the place of Christ. He bestows upon us the dogma, doctrine and teaching of the Church which is the expression of the Truth revealed by Christ. He bestows upon us as well the sacraments by which we receive the grace of the Holy Spirit which enlightens us.

The primary task of the priest is to take all the the bishop provides and apply it to each member of his own flock in the manner that will be most effective and helpful. The priest then is the one who is given the responsibility to care for the spiritual lives of the flock and so not only administers the sacraments, but also teaches with the voice and authority of the bishop. The priest is the one who lifts up each of his spiritual children before the throne of God and it is his duty (a duty joyfully undertaken) to pray for each and every one in the parish. We see this clearly in the services of the Church when the priest stands either before the Holy Table in the Altar or directly before the Royal doors when outside the Altar and lifts up his prayer for us.

The role of the deacon is that of a servant. The apostles appointed deacons to care for the needs of the widows and orphans in the Church and to distribute the charity of the Church to all who were in need. It is the deacon, even now, who is the one who is nearest the people. His ministry is to know who in the flock is in need and to bring that need to the attention of the priest. Again, we see this in the service, for while the priest stands within the Altar, symbolically before the throne of God, to offer his prayers, the deacon stands outside the Altar in the midst of the people where he symbolically, through the litanies, gathers the prayers of the people and offers them to the priest who then lifts them up before the throne of God.

There are many other lesser orders of clergy that have roles in the work of the Church. The “sub-deacon” is a kind of “manager” tasked with making the services all run smoothly and so allowing the bishop, priest and the deacon to focus on their prayers. The most common rank of the lesser clergy that is seen in the parish is that of “reader”. The reader is tasked with chanting and singing the service. He is the one who has the responsibility to learn the structure of the services and to make sure that the proper hymns are sung in a beautiful and worshipful manner and to chant the proper sections of the scripture appointed for each service. The rank of “reader” was at one time called a “taper bearer” for he would also carry the candles in the service, however, this duty has largely been given to the laymen who serve in the altar. It is obvious that these “lesser” clergy have a large responsibility and are key to the external beauty and spirituality of the services.

Other lesser clergy which are not seen as much (or at all) in modern times are the ranks of deaconess and bell ringer. Their duties are fulfilled mostly now by laymen and women. The deaconess would see to the personal needs of the women in the parish and assist in the baptism of women. The bell ringer, quite obviously, was responsible for ringing the Church bells at the proper time and in the proper fashion. These duties have not disappeared but are apportioned out among the laity of the Church according to the interest and skill of each person.

All of the clergy, from the bishop on down to the reader, are in the end the servants of the people (recall the words of our Lord Who said that whoever would be greatest in the Kingdom of God must be the servant of all) The loving care of the people in the Church is the primary focus of the ministry of every member of the clergy. While the bishop or priest is necessary to serve the liturgy or to celebrate any of the sacraments, he cannot do any of these things without also the people present. It is necessary for the clergy to function within the whole parish and Church community and outside that community it is impossible for any clergyman to function properly. In the hierarchal service, the bishop stands in the middle of the temple – in the midst of the whole congregation. He is accompanied by his other clergy who also stand with the people. All together we stand in unity before the throne of God and the bishop speaks with the voice of all the people, offering up all our prayer to God our Creator, our Lord and Master, and our Beloved Father.

*Archpriest David Moser*  
<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/propoved/info>

### **Saints of the Week**

**May 27 / June 9 — The Hieromartyr Therapon, Bishop of Sardis** - he brought many Greeks to the Christian faith and was cruelly persecuted by the pagans, being starved, imprisoned and flogged. They stripped him and threw him to the ground, bound him to four posts and beat him mercilessly, until they had stripped the flesh from his bones. However, the martyr still remained alive and the four dry posts became green and grew into tall trees from which many of the sick received healing. Finally St Therapon was slain like a lamb and entered into the Kingdom, to behold the glory of God in eternity. He suffered with honour in the time of Valerian, m about 259; The Holy Martyrs Theodora and Didymus; St David of Garesjei;  
**St. Bede the Venerable** - 673-735. Born in Wearmouth in the north of England, as a child he entered the monastery of Sts Peter and Paul at Wearmouth-Jarrow, and spent his whole life there, 'always praying, always writing, always reading, always teaching'. He wrote many commentaries on the Scriptures. His work *The History of the English Church and People* earned him the title of the Father of English History. He reposed on Ascension Eve and his dying words were Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**May 28 / June 10 — St Nicetas the Confessor, Bishop of Chalcedon** - he renounced the world in his youth and withdrew to follow the path of monastic asceticism. He shone like the sun with virtue and came to the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities, being raised to the episcopal throne of Chalcedon. He was, as a hierarch, particularly compassionate to the poor and cared for many orphans, widows and beggars. When the wicked Emperor Leo the Armenian made his stand against the icons, St Nicetas came courageously to their defence, denouncing the Emperor and expounding their meaning. He was finally driven into exile for his confession of the Faith, and, after much hardship and suffering, went to the Lord to receive a wreath of glory in the Kingdom of God;

**The Holy Martyr Heliconis** - born in Thessalonica and was educated in Christian piety. During the reign of Gordian and Philip, she moved to Corinth where she openly denounced all those who offered sacrifices to the idols. When Perinus the mayor counselled her to offer a sacrifice to the idol Aesculapius, this martyr of Christ said to him: "Hear me, I am a handmaiden of Christ and who Aesculapius is, I do not know. Do with me what you will." For this, she was brought to trial and endured terrible tortures. She was cast into fire and much blood poured from her body which extinguished the fire and she remained alive. She was cast before lions but the lions did not touch her but fawned around her. Admitted into the temple, allegedly to offer sacrifices to the idols, she destroyed the idols, and by this, embittered the torturer even more. Lying wounded in prison, the Lord Himself appeared to her with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. He healed her wounds, comforted and strengthened her. After that she was led to the scaffold to be beheaded. Before her beheading, Heliconis raised her arms high and prayed that God receive her and unite her with His lambs in the heavenly enclosure. When she completed her prayer, a voice was heard from heaven: "Come daughter, a wreath and a throne is prepared for you!" Finally, she was beheaded and received the wreath of glory from God to Whom, out of love, she sacrificed herself as an innocent and pure lamb;

**St Ignatius, Bishop of Rostov** - As a hierarch, he governed the flock of Christ for twenty-six years with great love and compassion. When he died and as his body was being placed in church, some of those who were present witnessed as his body rose from the coffin into the air above the church and from the heights, he blessed the people and the to the Lord on May 28, 1288 A.D.; St. Germanus, bishop of Paris, St. William of Toulouse.

**May 29 / June 11 — Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council** - the Commemoration and eulogy of the holy fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, which was held in Nicaea in 325 in the reign of Constantine the Great—held during the week before Pentecost, or the seventh week after Easter. It was summoned to remove the confusion which Arius, an Alexandrian priest, had created by his false teaching. He had been spreading the teaching that Christ was created from God in time, and that He is not the pre-eternal Son of God, equal in being with God the Father. Three hundred and eighteen holy fathers took part in this Council. It condemned the Arian teaching, and anathematised Arius when he would not repent. This Council also definitively confirmed the Symbol of Faith (the Creed) which was later amplified at the Second Ecumenical Council. Many bishops were present at the First Ecumenical Council, among whom the following stood out: St Nicolas of Myra in Lycia, St Spiridon, St Athanasius, St Acillius, St Paphnutius, St James of Nisibis, Macarius of Jerusalem, Alexander of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, Eusebius of Caesarea, Mitrophanes of Constantinople, John of Persia, Aristarchus of Armenia and many others from the East. And from the West: Hosius of Cordova, Theophilus the Goth, Cecilianus of Carthage, and others. The most important work of this Council was the confirmation of the Symbol of Faith. The Council also confirmed the time of the celebration of Easter, and prescribed twenty Canons.

**The Holy Martyr Theodosia of Tyre** - One day during the reign of the Emperor Maximian, many Christians were standing bound before the Praetor in Palestinian Caesarea. The pious virgin Theodosia came to comfort them and encourage them in their death by martyrdom. The soldiers heard her words and brought her also before the judge. The enraged judge ordered that a stone be tied round her neck and that she be cast into the deep. But angels carried her up onto the shore alive. When she appeared before the judge again, he gave orders to have her beheaded. The following night, Theodosia appeared to her parents in the brightest heavenly light, surrounded by many other virgins, and said: 'Do you see how great is the glory and grace of my Christ, of which you wished to deprive me?' She spoke thus to her parents because they had turned back from confessing Christ and from martyrdom. She suffered with honour and was glorified in the year 308;

**Our Holy Mother, the Martyr Theodosia** - born as the result of the prayers of her mother to the holy martyr Anastasia who appeared to her and said that she will give birth. Her parents dedicated her to God and at an early age presented her to a convent. After the death of her parents, Theodosia inherited a vast estate, and from that estate, she ordered three icons from a goldsmith: The Savior, The Mother of God [The Theotokos] and St. Anastasia. The rest she distributed to the poor. She suffered in the year 730 A.D. during the reign of the evil Emperor Leo the Isaurian, the iconoclast, and received a two-fold wreath: virginity and martyrdom; St Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria; St John the Fool for Christ of Ustiug; The Holy Martyr Nannus (John) of Salonica; The Holy Martyr Andrew of Chios; The Fall-of Constantinople.

**May 30 / June 12 — Fast Day - Our Holy Father Isaac the Confessor** - in the time of the Emperor Valens, the Arians persecuted Orthodoxy fiercely with the Emperor's encouragement. Isaac, a hermit somewhere in the East, heard of the persecution, left his desert and went to Constantinople to encourage the faithful and denounce the heretics. Valens arrived in the north at that very time with his army, to meet the Goths who had come down from the Danube into Thrace. Isaac went out and stood before him, saying: 'Open the churches to those of the true Faith, O Emperor, and God will bless thy path', but the Emperor turned a deaf ear to the elder and went on his way. Isaac spoke out before the Emperor on the next day also, repeating his warning, and the Emperor almost hearkened to him, but one of his advisors, a follower of the Arian heresy, thwarted him. Isaac spoke before the Emperor again on the third day, seizing the Emperor's horse by the reins and pleading with him to grant freedom to the Church of God and to escape divine punishment by acceding to his request. The enraged Emperor ordered that the elder be thrown into a waste place full of thorns and mud, but three angels appeared and pulled him out of the swamp. St Isaac appeared before the Emperor on the fourth day, and foretold a terrible death if he did not give the Orthodox freedom: 'I tell thee, my Emperor, that thou shalt lead thy troops out upon the barbarians, but thou shalt not be able

to withstand them. Thou shalt flee before them, but shalt thyself be taken captive and burned alive.' And so it all came to pass. The barbarians mowed the Greek force down like grass, and the Emperor fled with his Arian counsellor, and hid in a hamper. The barbarians arrived at the spot and realised where the Emperor was hiding. They surrounded the hamper and set fire to it, burning both the Emperor and his counsellor. The Emperor Theodosius the Great then came to the throne. He heard of Isaac and of the prophecy that had been fulfilled, and, sending for him, prostrated himself before him. And so peace came to reign in the Church and the Arians were banished. Isaac desired to return to his desert, but he was persuaded to remain in Constantinople. A certain influential citizen, Saturninus, built him a monastery where the elder laboured in asceticism until his death, performing many wonders. The community overflowed with monks and became a great monastery. Before his death, Isaac appointed a pupil of his, Dalmatus (after whom the monastery was later named), as abbot. The elder Isaac, who had found such favour with God, entered into eternity in the year 383, to rejoice forever in the vision of the face of God.;

**St Macrina** - the grandmother of St. Basil the Great. She was wonderful in mind and in her piety. She was a disciple of St. Gregory Neo-Caesarea the miracle worker. During the reign of Diocletian, Macrina abandoned her home and, with her husband Basil, hid themselves in the forests and wilderness. Their property was confiscated but they did not grieve over it. Deprived of everything except their love for God, they settled in a primeval forest where they spent seven years. By God's providence, goats descended from the mountains and offered themselves to them and so they were nourished. They both died peacefully in the fourth century following great suffering for the Faith of Christ.

**May 31 / June 13 — The Holy Apostle Hermes** - one of the Seventy, he is mentioned in the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans (16:14). A Greek by birth, he spent a long time in Rome. He was bishop in Philippoupolis, and finished his life a martyr. He compiled the very instructive book 'The Shepherd' through revelations from the angels of God. Hermes was a rich man, but fell into extreme poverty through his own sins and those of his sons. A man appeared to him, clad in white and with a staff in his hand, and told him that he was the angel of repentance, sent to him before the end of his life. The angel gave him twelve commandments: 1. To believe in God. 2. To live in simplicity and innocence. 3. To love truth and flee from falsehood. 4. To guard his thoughts in chastity. 5. To learn patience and magnanimity of soul. 6. To know that a good and an evil spirit attend every man. 7. To fear God, but not the devil. 8. To perform every good deed and to restrain himself from every evil one. 9. To pray to God in faith from the depths of his heart, so that his prayer might be heard. 10. To preserve himself from melancholy, the daughter of doubt, and from anger. 11. To try true and false prophecies. 12. To preserve himself from every evil desire;

**The Holy Martyr Hermeas** - Hermeas grew old as an imperial soldier and in his old age suffered for Christ the King. Since the evil judge tried in vain to dissuade him from the Faith of Christ and counseling him to offer sacrifices to the idols, the judge then gave orders that his teeth be knocked out with a stone and the skin peeled from his face with a knife. After that they threw him into a fiery furnace but, by the Grace of God, he was saved and stood up. Following that, by order of the judge he drank a bitter poison which was given to him by a magician, but the poison did him no harm. Witnessing this, the magician was so amazed that he openly confessed Christ for which he was immediately beheaded. Afterwards, they gouged out both of Hermeas' eyes but he did not grieve and cried out to the judge: "Take for yourself these bodily eyes that gaze upon the vanity of the world. I have eyes of the heart by which I clearly see the light of the truth." He was hung then by the feet upside down and those who did this to him were blinded and staggered around him. St. Hermeas beckoned them to come to him, laid his hands on them and, by prayer to the Lord, restored their sight. Witnessing all of this, the judge became as enraged as a lion, drew a knife and severed the head of this godly-man. Christians secretly removed the body of Hermeas and honorably buried it. His relics gave healing to all the sick and to the afflicted. St. Hermeas suffered in the year 166 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Antoninus;

**The Holy Martyr Philosophus** - This martyr of Christ was born in the vicinity of Alexandria. During the time of the persecution of Christians, St. Philosophus did not want to deny Christ the Lord before the pagan princes and judges. For that, the pagans subjected him to violent tortures. Since he was tortured in various ways, they finally placed him on a soft bed, tied his legs and hands and permitted an immoral woman to come to him and to lure him into sin. When St. Philosophus sensed that the sin of passion was being aroused in him from the touch of the woman's hand, he placed his tongue between his teeth, bit it off and spit it in the face of the depraved one. Because of that, the passion subsided in him and the immoral woman was so horrified that she immediately fled from him. He was beheaded after that about the year 252 A.D. in his youth and took up habitation in the kingdom of eternal youth.

**1 / 14 June — Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Justin the Philosopher** - He was born of Greek parents in the Samaritan town of Shechem (formerly called Nablus), about a hundred and five years after Christ. He sought wisdom and philosophy with his whole heart, first with the Stoics, then with the Peripatetics, the Pythagoreans and finally with the Platonists. Although Platonic philosophy did not content him, it held him the longest, until he found something higher to attract him. By God's providence, he encountered a remarkable old man who began to undermine his Platonic philosophy, reminding him that a man cannot fully know the truth about God till God reveals it to him, and telling him that God had revealed the truth about Himself in the books of Holy Scripture. Justin began to read the Scriptures, and became an utterly convinced Christian, but he would not be baptised or call himself a Christian until he had convinced himself of the falseness of the accusations that pagans found to bring against Christians. Going to Rome for a philosophical gathering, he quickly gained much respect there, and many followers. He witnessed the martyrdom of St Ptolemy and St Lucian, and, seeing the tortures of these innocent Christians, wrote an Apologia for Christians and Christian teaching and gave it to the Emperor Antoninus and the Senate. The Emperor read it carefully and ordered that the persecution of Christians cease. Justin took a copy of the Emperor's decree and went off to Asia, where he saved many persecuted Christians by its aid. After that, he returned again to Rome. When a persecution arose under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, he wrote a second Apologia and addressed it to the Emperor. Some disreputable philosopher, Crescens, a Cynic, denounced him as a Christian because Justin was getting the better of him in every dispute, and Justin was thrown into prison. Desiring his death, and fearing that judgement would not be given against him, Crescens took the opportunity to administer poison to him in the prison. Thus this great defender of the Christian faith

finished his earthly course and went to the blessedness of eternity, in the year 166. The Holy Martyrs Justin, Chariton, Charity, Euepistus, Hierax, Peon, Liverianus and Justus.

**Our Holy Father Agapitus of the Kiev Caves** - a doctor who practiced medicine by using natural remedies. He was a disciple of St. Anthony of the Caves. He cured people through prayer and by giving them vegetables from which he prepared bread for himself. In this manner he cured Prince Vladimir Monomachus for which Agapitus became known throughout. Being envious of this the prince's physician, an Armenian, began to slander Agapitus. When Agapitus became ill, the Armenian came to him and looking at him said that he [Agapitus] would die within three days and that if he [Agapitus] did not die, he [the Armenian physician] would become a monk. Agapitus said that it had been revealed to him by the Lord that he would not die within three days but within three months. And so it happened. After the death of Agapitus, the Armenian came to the Abbot of the Caves and begged him to tonsure him a monk for, he said, Agapitus appeared to him from the other world and reminded him of his promise. Thus, the once envious one became a humble monk by the Providence of God Who wishes that all men be saved. St. Agapitus died about the year 1095 A.D.

**2 / 15 June — St Nicephorus the Confessor** - a nobleman of Constantinople. His father Theodore, a wealthy and devout man, was a high-ranking official at the Emperor's court. Nicephorus served several years at court in the same capacity as his father but then, seeing all the vanity of the world, he withdrew to the shore of the Bosphorus and built a monastery there. This monastery rapidly became filled with monks and he administered it; not, however, himself becoming a monk from a conviction of his unworthiness. He was, in this, an example to all. He had earlier, as a layman, taken part in the Seventh Ecumenical Council, at the request of the Emperor and the Patriarch, and was of great assistance there with his intimate knowledge of Holy Scripture. When Patriarch Tarasius died, Nicephorus, much against his will, was chosen to succeed him. He was immediately professed a monk and received the priestly orders in succession, being enthroned as Patriarch in St Sophia's in 806. This was in the time of the Emperor Nicephorus, who went off to war against the Bulgars very shortly after this and was killed in battle there. His son Stauracius reigned for only two months before he died. After this, the good Emperor Michael, called Rangabe, came to the throne, but he reigned only two years before Leo the Armenian attacked him and drove him into exile. When this Emperor began his reign, the Patriarch sent him a book on the Confession of the Orthodox faith for him to sign (this being according to the custom obtaining for all Byzantine Emperors, who were regarded as sworn to uphold and defend the true Faith). The Emperor did not sign it, but set it aside until his coronation. When the Patriarch crowned him, he still refused to sign the book, and revealed himself to be an iconoclast heretic. The Patriarch attempted to remonstrate with him and bring him back to the true Faith, but in vain. The Emperor exiled him by force to the island of Proconnesus, where he spent several years in want and privation before going to eternity in the year 829. He governed the Church as Patriarch for nine years. The Holy New Martyr Constantine;

**The Holy Martyr John the New of Sochava** - A nobleman of Trebizond, he was denounced by some envious Latin and suffered for Christ in the town of Akerman. After being tortured for not accepting the Persian religion (for the governor of the town was of that faith), St John was tied to a horse's legs and dragged round the town. Some wicked Jews, seeing him thus, ran up and butchered him. That night, a burning column was seen by many people above his body, and three men bathed in light standing around it. Later the Moldavian commander, Joalexander, took his honoured body and buried it in the metropolitanical church, where it remains to this day and miraculously saves men from various pains and sicknesses. He suffered with honour and was glorified on June 2nd, 1492; The Hieromartyr Erazmo of Ochrid.