

# 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

## Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council

11 / 24 October



**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 1:** When the stone had been sealed by the Jews; / while the soldiers were guarding Thy Most Pure Body; / Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour, / granting life to the world. / The Powers of Heaven therefore cried to Thee O Giver of Life: / glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ! / Glory to Thy Kingdom; / Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

**Tropar of the Fathers, Tone 8:** Glorious art Thou, O Christ our God Who hast established our holy fathers as stars on earth./ Through them Thou dost guide us to the True Faith./ O Most Merciful One, glory to Thee.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 1:** As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, / Raising the world with Thyself. / Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. / Adam exults O Master, Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage, and cries to Thee; / Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ.

**Kondak of the Fathers, Tone 8:** The preaching of the Apostles and the doctrine of the Fathers confirmed the one faith in the Church./ In the garment of truth woven from theology on high she rightly divides and glorifies true piety.

**Another Kondak of the Fathers, Tone 2:** The Son Who shone from the Father/ was ineffably born in two natures of a woman./ We do not deny the image of His form/ but depict it piously and revere it./ For this cause the Church, holding the true Faith,/ kisses the icon of Christ's Incarnation

**Vespers:** Gen. 14:14-20; Deut. 1:8-11, 15-17; Deut. 10:14-21

**Matins Gospel VII**

**EPISTLE: Corinthians 9:6-11**

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, While you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

**HE WHO SOWS SPARINGLY WILL ALSO REAP SPARINGLY,  
AND HE WHO SOWS BOUNTIFULLY WILL ALSO REAP BOUNTIFULLY**

He called the thing sowing, so you might at once look into the recompense, and having in mind the harvest, you might feel that you receive more than you give. For this reason he did not say, 'he who gives,' but 'he who sows' ...A man when left to himself, does a thing more readily than when compelled. Therefore he dwells on this ...For if it is a work of virtue and yet all that is done is of necessity, it is shorn of its reward. So he labours at this point with reason. And he does not merely advise, he also adds a prayer ...By this prayer he waylays a thought which lay in wait against this liberality and which is now also a hindrance to many. For many persons are afraid to give alms, saying, 'Lest perchance I become poor' ...To do away with this fear then, he adds this prayer, saying, May 'He make all grace abound towards you.' Not merely fulfil, but 'make it abound.' 'Fill you,' he means, 'with such great things, that you may be able to abound in this liberality' ...He does not pray for riches, nor for abundance, but for all sufficiency...For in carnal things he asks for a sufficiency for them, but in spiritual things for abundance, not only in almsgiving, but in all others things as well, 'unto every good work.'

Then he brings the prophet forward as a counsellor for them, having sought out a testimony inviting them to bountifulness ...Let us not therefore nicely calculate, but sow with a profuse hand. Do you see how much others give to players and harlots? Give at any rate the half to Christ, of what they give to dancers ...For they clothe the persons of wantons with untold gold, but you do not cover even with a threadbare garment the flesh of Christ, and that though beholding it naked.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XIX on II Corinthians IX, 2, 3. B#56, pp. 369-370.*

for the Fathers: Heb. 13:7-16

## Gospel : Luke 7:11-16

At that time Jesus went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people."

### RESURRECTION OF THE SON OF THE WIDOW OF NAIN

Christ, surrounded by His Apostles and a multitude of people, moved toward the gates of the town of Nain. And at that time, from the town of Nain appeared a funeral procession. A young man was being carried out, the only son of a widow from Nain. Imagine the suffering of the mother: the only one, the favourite, the hope of her old age.

What was the mother going through? But at this time, Christ, with a multitude of people and His Apostles, approached this procession on the road. He came closer and closer. He was walking on the same road on which the deceased was being carried. He saw the suffering of the mother, came up to her and said, 'weep not' (Lk. 7:13). Who could, who had the right to say these words to a mother at the coffin of her son? He alone, because He conquered death. The bearers stopped. Christ took the young man by the hand and said: "Arise!" (Lk.7:14). And He returned him to his mother.

Can you imagine what the mother was experiencing? The peace which a mother could have before the death of her son, that peace was not only renewed, but it revived her whole life. Besides her son, she saw the power of resurrection. And all this happened because the way of Christ coincided with the way of the funeral procession. The way of Christ—the deceased had to move along this way of Christ, and on the way of Christ there can be no grief. This is how it happened. In saying "Weep not," Christ renewed the inner strength which had already been put to rest. Years might pass, and this young man would depart in the same way. But this is not the point. The point is that peace appeared in the heart, strengthening the person in external existence.

Maybe I am mistaken. Maybe my way of thinking is wrong. All right, then open to the Apostle's reading for today, and you will see that I am telling the truth. What does today's reading from the Apostle say? It tells us about the Apostle Paul, while he was still Saul. Here is what it says: A new gospel I am giving to you; "the gospel which was preached of me is not after man...but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1 11- 12). How was this revealed? It was revealed in this way: Paul (Saul) was a true pharisee and he awaited the Messiah. But what kind of Messiah were the Jews expecting at that time? The Jews were under the domination of Rome, and a certain balance had been established between Rome and the Jewish lawmakers and princes. And the Jewish nation was waiting for the coming of the Messiah; and they thought of the Messiah as a king who should free them from the power of Rome and make them head of the world—king. The Pharisee Saul thought in the same way. He believed it would be thus: that the Jewish Messiah would come and would give them, the Jews, worldwide dominion. And everything he did, he did sincerely. He sincerely awaited the Messiah, and because he awaited the Messiah with such sincerity, and did not know or understand that Christ was the Messiah; at the moment he was going to persecute what seemed to him a sect of Nazarenes, at that moment Christ appeared to him, because he was seeking the Christ. And here, in a moment, Saul changed into Paul a Christian. The Gospel was revealed to him. And here it is again: the way of the Messiah. On this way of the Messiah stood Paul. And because of this sincere motion toward salvation, the Truth was revealed to him.

So it is for us, brothers. We too should know what way we are standing on. The way of a Christian is the element in which the Way of Christ is revealed. And the Way of Christ is the Church. In her is the Grace which exists in all the sacraments, in all activities of the Church, in all the prayers, in everything which is given to us for sanctification. And this Grace which is in the Church is with us. It is expressed in every activity, in the rites, and in a special way, in the Divine Eucharist, in this Tree of Life which is given to us for the renewal of our nature, for our deification.

Here is the way on which we must go. If we are on this way, then, believe me, there will not be such tragedy in our life as there is now. If the Lord said to the widow of Nain: "Weep not!" so that same voice whispers to us today, "Weep not!" Only do not abandon this way of true Christianity. Abide in prayer, behave yourself in life as the Holy Church requires, remembering the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the mystery of death and the mystery of life. See how life goes on: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday— Sunday [the day of Resurrection - In Russian it is voskresenia]. The end of everything is the Resurrection. Live in the Grace of God, and the Lord will not forsake you.

*Archbishop Andrei, The One Thing Needful*

for the Fathers: John 17:1-13

## Saints of the week

**11 / 24 October - The Holy Apostle Philip** - Born in Palestinian Caesarea, he was married and had four daughters, all four endowed by God with the gift of discernment and all four vowed virgins for the sake of Christ (Acts 21:8-9). When the holy apostles chose deacons, Philip was chosen along with Stephen and the others (6:5). Philip served the poor and the widows with great fervour. When persecution fell on the Christians in Jerusalem, he fled to Samaria and there preached the Gospel and witnessed to it by many miracles, driving out demons, healing the sick and so forth. Seeing the miracles of the holy apostle, Simon the Magician was baptised. St Philip also baptised the eunuch of Queen Candace. After that, an angel of God suddenly and invisibly bore him away to Azotus, where he taught and preached, bringing many to Christ (Acts 8). He was later made bishop in Tralles. He died peacefully in great old age, and entered into the joy of his Lord.

**Commemoration of the Seventh Ecumenical Council** - This Council was held in 787 in Nicaea, in the reign of the devout Empress Irene and her son Constantine, and in the time of Patriarch Tarasius. This Council finally upheld the veneration of icons, expounding it from Holy Scripture, the witness of the holy fathers and the examples of miracles in connection with the holy icons. Among other examples cited, the Cypriot bishop, Constantine, brought forward this one: A herdsman from the city of Constantia, driving his flock out to pasture one day, saw an icon of the Mother of God adorned with flowers by the devout. 'Why give so much honour to a rock?', said the herdsman, obviously brought up in iconoclasm, and threw his iron stave at the icon, damaging the right eye of the Mother of God. As soon as he had left that spot, he stumbled over the same stave and put out his own right eye. Returning blinded to the city, he cried out tearfully that it was a punishment from the Mother of God. This Council also decided that the relics of the martyrs be placed in the antimins (the cloth spread on the Holy Table for the celebration of the Liturgy). Three hundred and sixty-seven fathers took part in the Council. May the Lord have mercy on us and save us by their prayers; Our Holy Father Theophanes the Hymnographer; St Nectarius, Patriarch of Constantinople; The Holy Martyrs Zinai and Philonilla; St. Cainnech (Kenneth), abbot of Aghaboe, Ireland (7th c.);

**St. Ethelburga, abbess of Barking Monastery, England, sister of St. Erkonwald (c.676)** - taught by Saint Hilda she was known for her meekness and humility and received many gifts of Grace from God, and miracles were worked through her holy prayers. Our holy mother Ethel had a great love for all people and she tried to help anyone who had a need. When a great epidemic came to Britain and hundreds of people were dying she received the sick and cared for them with her own hands. This holy saint lived a life of poverty and of love for God and neighbour for a very long time. At last, the time came for her to depart this life. As she lay dying, a great light suddenly filled her cell and God's angels took her soul to paradise.

**12 / 25 October - The Holy Martyrs Tarachus, Probus and Andronicus** - Tarachus was born in Syrian Claudiopolis, Probus in Pamphylian Side and Andronicus was the son of an eminent citizen of Ephesus. They were all three martyred together by the proconsul, Hymerius Maximus, in the time of the Emperor Diocletian (284-305). Tarachus was sixty-five years old when he was martyred. When the proconsul asked him three times for his name, he answered all three times: 'I am a Christian.' They were first beaten with rods, then, all bloody and wounded, thrown into prison. After that, they were brought out again for further torture. When the proconsul urged Probus to deny Christ, promising him honours from the Emperor and his own friendship, holy Probus replied: 'I neither desire imperial honours nor seek your friendship.' When he put St Andronicus to even greater physical torture, Christ's young martyr replied: 'My body is before you; do with it what you will.' After long-drawn-out torture in various places, these three holy martyrs were thrown into the theatre before the wild beasts. Before them, others were torn to pieces by the animals in this same theatre, but the beasts would not touch the saints; both the bear and the ferocious lioness fawned around them. Seeing this, many people believed in Christ the Lord and cried out against the proconsul. Wild with anger, and more ferocious than the beasts, the proconsul ordered soldiers to go in and cut Christ's soldiers to pieces, and their bodies lay mingled with the bodies of the others who had been slain. Three Christians: Macarius, Felix and Verianus, who witnessed the slaughter of the holy martyrs, came that night to take their bodies. All the bodies being mixed up and the night being very dark, they, in uncertainty about how to distinguish the martyrs' bodies, prayed to God, and three lights suddenly appeared above the bodies of the saints. They then took them and gave them burial. St Martin, Bishop of Tours;

**Our Holy Father Cosmas of Maium** - Born in Jerusalem, he was a friend of St John Damascene, whose parents took him in as an orphan and educated him. As a monk, he helped St Damascene to compile the Octoechos (the book of the Eight Tones, which change weekly and comprise the basis of the Offices), and he himself composed many Canons to the saints. The especially lovely Canons for Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday and the Sunday of the Judgement are ascribed to him. He was bishop of the town of Maiuma, near Gaza. He outlived St Damascene and died in great old age;

**St. Edwin, king and martyr (584-633), king of Northumbria.** A prince of the dynasty of Deira, whose territory was in the Yorkshire area, he was obliged to spend many of his early years in exile in Wales and East Anglia from Ethelfrith, king of Northumbria, of the rival tribe of Bernicia in the Northumberland area. Early in life he married Cwenburg of Mercia by whom he had two sons. In 616, with the help of Redwald, king of East Anglia, his host in exile who had steadfastly refused to betray him, Edwin defeated and killed Ethelfrith at the battle of the river Idle and so became king of Northumbria. Cwenburg had presumably died and Edwin sought to marry St. Ethelburga, a Christian princess from Kent. His embassy met with an initial rebuff because he was not a Christian, but the marriage was eventually agreed on condition that Ethelburga would be free to practise her own religion and that Edwin would seriously consider joining it. St. Paulinus was consecrated bishop and sent to York c.625 as the queen's chaplain; but with a view to the spread of Christianity in the North. As in Kent, there was an interval of some years before the king decided to become a Christian. Edwin was a thoughtful and melancholy man and not inclined to hurry important decisions; he naturally wished to take his followers with him when, and, if he decided to change his religion. Three events led up to his conversion: an unsuccessful assassination attempt by West Saxons; the pagan high priest, Coifi, deciding to abandon his old religion; and a reminder by St. Paulinus of a mysterious experience Edwin had undergone when in exile some years before. Edwin was baptised at Easter 627, after the birth of a daughter. Many thanes and others, in Yorkshire

and Lincolnshire, followed his example. Edwin continued the expansionist policies of his predecessor, extending his territory to the north at the expense of the Picts, to the west at the expense of the Cumbrians and the Welsh, from whom he captured Anglesey and Man; he also absorbed the British enclave of Elmet (near Leeds) into his kingdom. He became the first Northumbrian to be overlord of the southern kingdoms as well as the first Christian king of Northumbria. But the king whom he could not conquer, Penda of Mercia, eventually conquered and killed him. This was at the battle of Hatfield Chase in 633. Aided by the Christian Welsh king Cadwallon, Penda decisively defeated the Northumbrians: the massacres and disorders which followed were ended only by the accession of St. Oswald the following year. Like St. Oswald, St. Edwin was regarded by his people as a tribal hero as well as a model Christian king. His following was centred on York where the church he had built contained his head, and on Whitby, which had a shrine of his body. which was discovered by revelation and brought there from Hatfield Chase. The abbey of Whitby. ruled in turn by St. Edwin's daughter St. Enfleda and granddaughter St. Elfleda, was a burial-place for the royal house of Deira and the home of the writer of the first biography of St. Gregory the Great. Unfortunately its early liturgical books like those of other centres in Northumbria were lost, so there is no early calendar evidence for Edwin's feast. There was, however, at least one ancient church dedication and. centuries later, his recognition was approved by Gregory XIII implicitly through his being included among the English Martyrs in the famous wall-paintings at the English College, Rome.

**St. Wilfrid, archbishop of York (709)** - the son of a thegn of Northumbria had been educated at Lindisfarne.

**13 / 26 October – The Holy Martyrs Carpus and Papyrus** - Carpus was Bishop of Thyateira and Papyrus was a deacon. They were born in Pergamum, where they finally suffered for the Christian faith at the hands of the wicked governor, Valerius, in Decius' reign. Valerius bound them behind horses and dragged them off to Sardis, where he put them to harsh torture; but an angel of God appeared to them, healed them of their wounds and strengthened them. Carpus's servant, Agathodorus, followed his master with great sorrow until he also was taken for torture. After that, Valerius again bound them behind horses and dragged them from Sardis to Pergamum. When holy Carpus was tied to a tree and so terribly flogged that his whole body was laid open and his blood streamed down onto the ground, he smiled in the midst of these tortures. When they asked him why he smiled, the holy martyr replied that he saw the heavens open and the Lord sitting on his throne, surrounded by cherubim and seraphim. At the time of Papyrus's martyrdom, this holy martyr healed a man, blind in one eye, by his prayers. Many, seeing this, came to believe in Christ the Lord. Thrown before wild beasts, the martyrs remained unhurt. When they were thrown into a fiery furnace, Agathonica, Papyrus' sister, saw this and leapt into the flames. But the flames did not burn them. Finally, they were all beheaded with the sword in 251. Thus, after great spiritual endeavour, they received the wreath of glory in the Kingdom of Christ. The Hieromartyr Benjamin the Deacon; The Holy and Great Martyr Zlata of Meglin.

**14 / 27 October - Fast Day - Our Holy Mother Petka—Paraskeva** - This glorious saint was of Serbian birth, from the town of Epibata, between Silinaurus and Constantinople. St Petka's parents were wealthy and devout Christians, and had one son, Euthymius, who became a monk during his parents' lifetime and later became Bishop of Madytos. After her parents' death, the maiden Petka, always desirous of the ascetic life for the sake of Christ, left her home and went first to Constantinople and then to the Jordan wilderness, where she lived to old age in asceticism. Who can describe all the labours, the sufferings, the temptations from demons that Petka endured for many years? In her old age, an angel of God appeared to her and said: 'Leave the wilderness and go back to your home.' St Petka obeyed the voice from heaven, left her beloved wilderness and returned to Epibata. She lived a further two years there, still in ceaseless fasting and prayer, and then gave her spirit into God's hands and went to join the company of Paradise. She entered into rest in the eleventh century. Her wonderworking relics were, in the course of time, taken to Constantinople, Trnovo, Constantinople again and Belgrade. They are now in Romania, in the town of Jassy. St Petka's spring is to be found in Belgrade. The waters miraculously heal all the sick who, with faith in God and love for this saint, hasten to ask her aid; The Holy Martyrs Nazarius, Gervasius and Protasius.

**King Harold II, the last Orthodox king of England and those killed with him at Hastings (1066)**. His family fled to Kiev and his daughter, Princess Gytha married the Grand Duke of Kiev, Vladimir Monomakh.

**15 / 28 October – Our Holy Father, the Martyr Lucian, Priest of Antioch** - Born of noble parents in Syrian Samosata, he received in his youth a very wide education, both secular and spiritual, and was a man eminent both for his learning and for his strict ascetic life. Giving his goods away to the poor, he supported himself by the writing of works of instruction, feeding himself thus by the work of his hands. He did a very great service to the Church in the work which he undertook of the correcting of the Hebrew text of the Scriptures in many places, texts which heretics had taken the opportunity to twist and corrupt according to their wicked teaching. Because of his learning and his great spirituality, he was ordained priest in Antioch. In the time of Maximian's persecution, when St Anthimus of Nicomedia and St Peter of Alexandria were put to torture, St Lucian was also on the list of those whom the Emperor wanted to have killed. Lucian fled the city and hid, but a jealous heretic priest, Pancratius, revealed his whereabouts. The persecution was terrible at that time, and not even tiny children were safe. Two boys, who would not eat food offered to idols, were thrown into a bath of boiling water, where, under torture, they gave their holy souls into God's hands. A disciple of Lucian's, Pelagia (see Oct. 8th), to preserve her virginal purity from the dissolute authorities, gave her soul into God's hands, and her body fell from the roof of her house. Lucian was taken to Nicomedia, to appear before the Emperor. On the way, he managed to bring forty soldiers to Christ by his counsel, and they all died a martyr's death. After interrogation and flogging, St Lucian was thrown into prison, where he was tortured by hunger. He scorned hunger', writes St John Chrysostom of Lucian. Let us also scorn luxury and destroy the lordship of the stomach; that we may, when the time comes for us to meet such torture, be prepared beforehand, by the help of a lesser asceticism, to show ourselves worthy of glory in the hour of battle.' He received Communion in prison on the Theophany, and on the following day gave his soul into God's hands, on January 7th, 312; Our Holy Father Euthymius the New.

**16 / 29 October - Fast Day - The Holy Martyr Longinus** - the centurion who stood at the Cross of Our Lord - The divine Matthew the Evangelist, describing the Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, says: 'Now when the centurion and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that were done, they feared greatly, saying: "Truly this was the Son of God" ' (Matt. 27:54). That centurion was this blessed Longinus, who, with two other of his soldiers, came to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. He was the officer in command both at the Lord's crucifixion on Golgotha and in the watch that guarded the tomb. When the Jewish elders learned of Christ's Resurrection, they bribed the soldiers to spread the falsehood that Christ had not risen, but that His disciples had stolen His body. The Jews tried to bribe Longinus also, but without success. Then the Jews resorted to their usual practice: they conspired to kill Longinus. Discovering this, Longinus took off his army belt, received baptism from the apostles together with his two friends, and with them secretly left Jerusalem and went to Cappadocia. There he gave himself to fasting and prayer and, as a living witness of the Resurrection of Christ, turned many pagans to the true Faith by his testimony. He then went off to a village where his father had property, but the wicked Jews would not even there leave him in peace. In response to slander on their part, Pilate sent soldiers to behead Longinus. Holy Longinus foresaw in his spirit the approach of his executioners and, going out to meet them, took them to his home without telling them who he was. The soldiers lay down to sleep, and St Longinus spent the whole night preparing for death. In the morning, he went and brought his two friends, dressed himself in white grave-clothes, told the others in the house what was happening and showed them a place on a hillock to bury him. He then revealed himself to the soldiers as the Longinus whom they were seeking. The soldiers were embarrassed and ashamed, and would not think of beheading Longinus, but he laid it on them to carry out their superior's command, and he and his two friends were beheaded. Longinus's head was taken by the soldiers to Pilate; Pilate gave it to the Jews and they flung it onto a dung-heap outside the city. Our Holy Father Longinus the Lover of Labour; St. Gall, Irish monk and enlightener of Switzerland (c.630).

**17 / 30 October - The Holy Prophet Hosea** - The son of Beerli of the tribe of Issachar, he lived and prophesied more than eight hundred years before the birth of Christ. His inspired words are found in his book, which contains fourteen chapters. He strongly rebuked Israel and Judah for their idolatry, foretold God's punishment for their sin, the destruction of Samaria and Israel for their apostasy but the showing of God's mercy on the tribe of Judah. He foresaw the end of the sacrifices of the Old Covenant, and the coming of the Lord and the rich gifts that He would bring to earth. He lived to great old age, and entered peacefully into rest; The Holy Martyrs Cosmas & Damian, the Unmercenaries; Our Holy Father, the Martyr Andrew; St. Lazarus the Four Days-Dead; Martyrs Ethelred & Ethelbert, princes of Kent, England (c.640).

### **HOMILY** **on the voice of the Lord upon the waters**

*The voice of the Lord is upon the waters* (Psalm 29:3).

*The voice of the Lord* was heard over Jordan, when St. John baptized the Savior. On the Sea of Galilee, when there were storms and winds, *the voice of the Lord* was heard, and the tempest was calmed and the winds ceased. *The voice of the Lord* was heard at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, and the water was changed into wine. *The voice of the Lord* was heard at the Red Sea, and the sea parted and a path was opened for the people of God. *The voice of the Lord* was heard in the wilderness, and water flowed from a dry rock. Given all this, what does *the voice of the Lord is upon the waters* mean? It means that the element, water, is the work of God; and through it, God works miracles when He wills, and how He wills. No less are the other elements the work of God: fire, air and earth. And God is Lord over them all, and through them He works miracles when He wills, and how He wills.

God the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of fire at Pentecost. In the furnace at Babylon, the flames lost their power at the sound of *the voice of the Lord*, and did not harm the blessed children. Fire was sent down from heaven to consume the sacrifice of Gideon (Judges 6). Elias brought down fire from the heavens (II Kings 1:10). The bush burned and was not consumed (Exodus 3). Fire from heaven came down and consumed Elias's sacrifice to God (I Kings 18:38). A fiery pillar went before the Israelites (Exodus 13, 14). All of this was according to the word of the Lord.

The earth opened up and swallowed the unrighteous Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16:32). The earth opened and hid Elizabeth and the infant child John from the sword of Herod. The earth quaked when the Lord breathed His last on the Cross, and the graves opened up (Matthew 27:51-52).

The Lord ascended into the heavens through the air (Luke 24:51). The holy apostles were carried through the air to Jerusalem, from various parts of the world. An angel took the Prophet Habakkuk to Babylon through the air in an instant (Bel and the Dragon 1:35). And all of this was in accord with *the voice of the Lord*: by the Lord's command. When will men be as obedient to *the voice of the Lord* as the irrational elements of nature are? Then again, "the waters" is to be interpreted as meaning "men"-men who are obedient to *the voice of the Lord*-the apostles and the saints. Like water, they covered the earth with the preaching of Christ our God. Like water, they assuaged the thirsty world with the effusion of the fountain of eternal life, and the world was restored and blossomed. Upon them, just as upon ordinary water, numerous miracles were manifested; for they were submissive to the will of God, obedient to the voice of God, just like water.

O Lord Jesus Christ, help us to be obedient to Thy voice. Help us to be ashamed before lifeless elements that obey Thee better than we do.

**To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**