

# The Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)

23 March / 5 April

## Extracts from the Vigil Service:

*Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together, and we all take up Thy Cross and say: Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.*

*Today the Word and co-eternal Son of God the Father, whose throne is the heaven and whose footstool is the earth, humbles Himself and comes to Bethany, seated on a dumb beast, on a foal. Then the children of the Hebrews, holding branches in their hands, praise Him saying: ‘ Hosanna in the highest: blessed is He that comes, the King of Israel’.*

*Let us also come today, all the new Israel, the Church of the Gentiles, and let us cry with the Prophet Zechariah: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem; for behold, thy King comes unto thee: He is meek and brings salvation, and He rides upon the colt of an ass, the foal of a beast of burden. Keep the feast with the children, and holding branches in your hands sing His praises: Hosanna to the highest; blessed is He that comes, the King of Israel.*



*1st, 2nd 3rd Stichera of ‘Lord, I have cried’*

**Tropar of The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem, Tone 1:** In confirming the common Resurrection, O Christ God, Thou didst raise up Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion. Wherefore, we also, like the children bearing the symbols of victory, cry to Thee, O Vanquisher of death: Hosanna in the highest, blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

**Another Tropar of The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem, Tone 4:** As by baptism we were buried with Thee, O Christ our God, so by Thy Resurrection we were deemed worthy of immortal life; and praising Thee, we cry: Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**Kondak of The Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem, Tone 6:** Being borne upon a throne in heaven, and upon a colt on the earth, O Christ God. Thou didst accept the praise of the angels and the laudation of the children as they cry to Thee: Blessed is he that cometh to recall Adam.

**Vespers: Lord I have Cried, Tone 6, on 10: Feast 10 (Today the grace); G: Today the grace; N: Today the grace. 3 Readings for the Feast: Gen. 49:1-2, 8-12; Zeph. 3:14-19; Zech. 9:9-15. Aposticha: Feast (Rejoice and be glad, O city of Zion); G: Today the grace of the Holy Spirit; N: Today the grace of the Holy Spirit.**

**Matins Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11, 15-17**

### **Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9**

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

#### **IF THERE IS ANY VIRTUE AND ... ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY—MEDITATE ON THESE THINGS**

It is possible to grieve for our own sins and yet to rejoice in Christ. Or when your communion with God is not hindered, rejoice ...Is it best to envy, or to rejoice with one another? Let us search out all these things, and we will find that virtue, like a truly kind mother, places us in safety, while vice is a treacherous thing and full of danger ...That which is 'honourable' belongs to external virtue and that which is 'pure' to the soul ...If we will be at peace with each other, God will be with us ...Therefore we must make a beginning on our part, and then we will draw God towards us ...For he 'who digs a pit for his neighbour, falls into it' (Prov. 26:27) ...As we injure ourselves when we injure our neighbours, so by benefiting them, we benefit ourselves.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XIV on Philippians IV. B#57, pp. 246, 248, 249.*

### **Gospel - John 12: 1-18**

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, Because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!" Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

## THE ENTRY OF CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM

Brothers and sisters! So the Holy Church indicates for us spiritual spring. Winter is over. Ended is the state in which our heart was like ice, as if dead in languor, thirsting for Grace. And now, during the past six weeks the sun has been warming us more and more, and nature has gradually started to come back to life. And so our heart too should have come back to life.

Last night during the evening service, we sang, “Children were bearing the sign of Victory . . . “ What sign? Pussy willows, branches which had already budded, indicating that spring was coming, as if saying to us: Look here, joy is already beginning, happiness. So through the pussy willows, the Church has been saying to us: This is the beginning for you too; just be Christians, and think it over, and you will begin to see a sign. A sign of what? —that Christ is Risen.

And we, brothers and sisters, we close our eyes like an ostrich who puts his head under his wing. We don't want to think that a limit will come, just as it comes to old people: hands stop working, eyes stop seeing, ears stop hearing—a limit. The end will come. And it seems that in these moments, when we begin to recognize the approach of old age, we involuntarily compare it with winter, with snow. Yes, but after winter comes spring. And in a spiritual understanding: after our eyes close, then comes Eternal Life, the joy of Life with Christ. This is what last night's pussy willows were telling us about, “bearing the sign.” Abide not in grief; turn to joy. And now comes the moment when the Lord, by a special mystery, through Passion Week which we are approaching, will give us the feeling of this joy of Eternal Life.

Now we worry about a piece of bread, about a roof over our heads, about our social conditions. And it seems to us that the meaning of life consists of this. But the Church says, Look at the pussy willows: leaves will sprout and later flowers and fruit. So it is even in a Christian soul. Everything we are busying ourselves with, all this will remain here. But with us there will go another stream of life—spiritual life. You should think about this. But is it so? Maybe it's not. Brothers, it is so! Today the Holy Church speaks to us through the Apostle. What does the Church say? She says: “Rejoice in the Lord always, (Phil. 4:4). Today, at the conclusion of Great Lent, she says to us, rejoice! Do you have this joy? If this is joy about Eternal Life, then yes, you will have this joy, because Christ is Risen. And all our sicknesses, our old age, our expectancy of death—all of this will dissolve. In what? In Christ. And when the moment of our departure comes (this is how we believe and what the Church says), God Almighty, the Giver of Life, will come to us and will perform for us the mystery of releasing our bonds, and we will enter eternal existence.

“Rejoice,” says the Apostle, “and again I say, Rejoice” (Phil. 4:4). See how the Apostle is exhorting us. But what is this? There is a condition: “Let all men know your meekness,”(trans. forbearance or moderation in English versions) continues the Apostle. Look here, spring has come to nature. But it will not stop here, it will go further; it will change into summer. And so it is with us—life goes on. “Let all men know your meekness.” This means that our life should move in such a way that pride will depart. It should dissolve in Christ's patience, in Christ's meekness. The Apostle says: May your meekness be of the Lord. And further, “Have no anxiety about anything,” but be always in prayer. Hear what promises the Lord gives. “Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your wishes (trans. requests in English version) be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6). What daring is given to us!

But what kind of wishes should our prayers express? If they are the wishes which people experience in sitting rooms, theatres, worldly amusements—then of course, brothers, the Lord desires something else for us, because all of this will remain here. This senselessness, this commotion, this quarrelling, this adversity, this rage, all this will remain here. And only joy will depart with us. This is joy: if you wish for meekness, humility, prosperity, brotherly love, Christian living, quiet—then pray! The Lord will be with you. Rejoice! The Holy Day is approaching. Tomorrow there will come great moments when the Sacrament is being performed. And so in our hearts will be revealed this joy: Christ is Risen! May this joy abide with us in a joyous feeling of Eternal Life.

Let us hasten, O believers, moving from one divine festival to another; from palms and branches to the fulfilment of the august and saving sufferings of Christ. Let us watch Him, bearing His sufferings voluntarily for our sake; and let us sing unto Him with worthy praise, crying, O Fountain of mercy, O Haven of Salvation, O Lord, glory to You.

*The One Thing Needful, Archbishop Andrei*

## Saints of the Week

**23 March / 5 April — The Hieromartyr Nikon** - Born in Naples of a pagan father and a Christian mother, he was an officer in the Roman army in Naples. He was not baptised, although his mother, unbeknown to his father, had instructed him in the Christian faith. Once, when he was setting off with his company to war, his mother advised him, if he were in trouble, to make the sign of the Cross and call on Christ to help him. And so, when Nikon's company was surrounded during the battle and close to final extermination, Nikon made the sign of the Cross and began to call upon Christ. At that moment he was filled with exceptional strength and rushed upon his opponents, killing some and putting the others to flight. Returning home, Nikon could not stop exclaiming in wonder: 'Great is the God of the Christians!' After he had brought joy to his mother with his report of the victory by the aid of Christ's Cross, he set sail in secret for Asia, where the Bishop of Cyzicus, Theodosius, baptised him. After his baptism, he shut himself up in a monastery and devoted himself to study and to asceticism. However, Bishop Theodosius had a vision before his death, in which he was told to consecrate Nikon as his successor. The aged Theodosius summoned Nikon immediately and ordained him deacon, and then priest and bishop. By divine providence Nikon came soon after this to Neapolis, where he found his mother still alive. On her death, he went to Sicily with nine disciples, one-time comrades in battle, and devoted himself to preaching the Gospel. There was a terrible persecution of Christians at that time, and Prince Quintianus seized Nikon and his companions and gave them over to great torture. One hundred and ninety of his disciples and friends were slain. The torturer tied Nikon to the tails of horses, threw him from a high cliff into a ravine, beat him and flayed him, yet Nikon survived all these tortures. He was finally slain with the sword and his body was abandoned in a field for the birds to eat, but a shepherd boy, possessed by a raging evil spirit, fell on the dead body of Christ's martyr, took hold of it, and was immediately healed. He spread the news about Nikon's body, and Christians came and buried it. St Nikon suffered and went to the Lord in the reign of the Emperor Decius.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Martyrs Philetus, Lydia, Macedon, Theoprepis, Cronides, and Amphilochius (†117-138); Martyr Dometius the Persian (4th C); Venerable Nikon, abbot of the Kiev Caves (†1088); St. Bassian, archbishop of Rostov (†1481); Righteous Basil of Mangazea (†1602); Monk-martyr Luke the New at Mytilene (†1802); Venerable Elena (Bakhteiv) of the Florovsk Ascension Convent in Kiev (†1834); New Hieromartyr Constantine Snyatinovsky, priest (†1918); New Hieromartyr priest Macarius Kvitkin (†1931); New Hieromartyr Stephen Preobrazhensky, priest (†after 1937); New Hieromartyr Basil Koklin, priest, Monk-martyr Elias (Viatin), Nun-martyrs Anastasia (Bobkova), Barbara (Konkina), and martyr Alexius Skorobogatov (†1938); Venerable Sergius (Srebriansky), confessor (†1948).

## **24 March / 6 April — Forefeast of the Annunciation —**

**Commemoration of the miracles at the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev** - Two friends, John and Sergius, swore brotherhood before the icon of the holy Mother of God in this monastery. John was a rich man, with a five-year-old son, Zachariah. John fell ill, and at his death commended his son to the care of Sergius, and left in Sergius's keeping a large sum of silver and gold for him to hand over to Zachariah when he had grown up. When Zachariah came of age, however, Sergius denied receiving anything from the deceased John. Then Zachariah said: 'Let him swear before the same icon of the most holy Mother of God, in front of which he accepted brotherhood with my late father, that he received nothing from John, and then I will seek nothing more from him.' Sergius agreed, but when he had sworn this and went up to kiss the icon, some force held him back and would not allow him to come near. Then, tormented all at once by a demon, he began to cry out: 'Holy fathers Antony and Theodosius, do not let this merciless angel destroy me!' The demon had attacked him by God's permission. He then told them of all the money which John had left. But when they opened the box, they found double the amount. Taking it, Zachariah gave it to the monastery and was himself tonsured as a monk. He lived a long time and was worthy of God's great gifts, entering peacefully into eternity.

**The Icon of the Mother of God "the Beclouded Mount"** - The Icon of the Mother of God "the Beclouded Mount" (Tuchnaya Gora): About 250-300 years ago this icon was situated in one of the men's monasteries of Tver' and was presented by the superior to Kosma Volchaninov in gratitude for the fine completion of work in the monastery church. This icon as an holy thing was passed on from generation to generation, but a certain impious grandson of Kosma removed it hanging the icon in an attic. His bride endured many insults from her husband and his relatives. In despair over her marriage she resolved to end it by suicide in a deserted bath-house. On the way there a monk appeared to her and said: "Whither goest thou, unhappy one? Return back; go, pray to the Mother of God of the Beclouded Mountain – and thou wilt live fine and in peace". The agitated young

wife, having returned home, told everything, not concealing even her interrupted intention. They started to search for the monk, but they did not find him, and no one besides her had seen him. This took place on the eve of the feast of the Annunciation to the Most Holy Mother of God. They immediately found the icon in the attic, cleaned off the dirt and set it up in the house in a place of veneration. In the evening the parish priest was invited, who made before the icon the all-night vigil, which from that time was done annually in the house on this day. For more than 150 years the icon was situated in the Volchaninov family. Ekatherina, daughter of Vasilii, the last of the Volchaninov line, entered into marriage with Georgy Ivanovich Konyaev, taking with her the icon of the Mother of God as a very dear inheritance. And in the Konyaev house moliebens and all-night vigils were done on 24 March and 7 November (probably, this was the day of the transfer of the icon from the monastery to the house of Kosma Volchaninov).

In 1863 near a cemetery church of the Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God it was decided to build a chapel in honour of Sainted Tikhon and the Monk Makarii of Kalyazinsk. The then owner of the icon, Georgy Konyaev (+ 1868, at age 97) wanted to bestow the health-bearing image of the Mother of God to the church. He turned to the clergy with a request to build still another chapel for the wonderworking image of the Mother of God of the "Beclouded Mount". Along with this he said: "I feel the very best place for it is the temple of the Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God, since the place on which the church was built, in olden times was called a Mount, as being the very highest place in the city. On this Mount in former times the inhabitants in time of flood took up their possessions and here saved themselves from ruin. Let the Queen of Heaven – the Beclouded Mountain – rest with your blessing upon this mountain and let all here buried be veiled with Her mercy". On 15 July 1866 the icon was transferred into the constructed chapel, which on the following day was consecrated by the Staritsk bishop Antony.

On the icon the Most Holy Mother of God is depicted standing on an half-circle elevation – a mountain; upon Her left arm – the Divine-Infant with blessing right hand. Upon the head of the Mother of God is a crown, and in Her hand a not-large mountain, on which are seen above churches with cupolas and crosses.

**Also commemorated on this day:** St. Artemon, bishop of Seleucia of Pisidia (2nd C); Venerable Zachariah the Recluse of Egypt (4th C); Venerable Sennuphius the Standard-Bearer (4th C); Venerable Thomas, abbot (†542); Venerable Caimin of Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) (†c.644); St. Severus of Catania (†811); Venerable James the Confessor (9th C); Venerable Zachariah of the Kiev Caves (14th C); Martyrs Stephen and Peter of Kazan (†1552); Hieromartyr Parthenius, patriarch of Constantinople (†1657); New Hieromartyr Alexander Fleginsky, priest (†1918); New Hieromartyr Vladimir Pankin, priest (†1920); Eight Martyrs in Caesarea, Palestine; Venerable Martin of the Thebaid;



**25 March / 7 April — The Annunciation of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary — Wine & Oil allowed but not fish an account of the feast falling in Holy Week -** When the most holy Virgin had lived and served in the Temple at Jerusalem for eleven years, and was by then fourteen years old—when, that is, she was entering on her fifteenth year—the priests informed her that, according to the Law, she could no longer remain in the Temple but must be betrothed and marry. But, to the great surprise of all the priests, the most holy Virgin replied that she had dedicated herself to God and wished to a maiden remain till death and enter into wedlock with no-one. Then, by God's providence and under His inspiration, Zacharias, the high priest and father of the Forerunner, in consultation with the other priests, chose twelve unmarried men from the tribe of David so that they might entrust the Virgin Mary to one of them to preserve her virginity and care for her. She was thus entrusted to Joseph, an old man from

Nazareth and a kinsman of hers. In his house, the most holy Virgin continued to live in the same manner as in the Temple of Solomon, passing her time in the reading of the sacred Scriptures, in prayer, in pondering on the works of God, in fasting and in handwork. She scarcely ever left the house, nor took an interest in worldly matters or events. She generally conversed very little with anyone, and never without a particular need. She was close friends only with the two daughters of Joseph. But when the time prophesied by the Prophet Daniel had come and when God was pleased to fulfil the promise made to Adam when He drove him out of Paradise, and to the prophets, the mighty Archangel Gabriel appeared in the chamber of the most holy Virgin, at the precise moment (as some priestly writers have related) that she was holding open on her lap the book of the Prophet

Isaiah and pondering on his great prophecy: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son'. Gabriel appeared to her in angelic light and said to her: 'Rejoice, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee!', and so forth, just as is related in the Gospel of the divine Luke. With this angelic greeting and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the salvation of mankind and the renewal of creation were set in motion. The Archangel turned the first page of the story of the New Testament with the word 'Rejoice!', to show by this the joy that the New Testament signifies for mankind and for all things created. And therefore the Annunciation is looked upon as a joyous, as well as a great, feast.



**Patriarch Tikhon** (in the world, Vassily Ivanovich Bellavin) was born in 1865 in the district of Pskov. He was very religious and a good pupil, always willing to help his fellow students. When he entered seminary at the age of 19, his fellow students prophetically nicknamed him “the patriarch”. He was tonsured in 1891, and in 1898, at the tender age of 33, he was consecrated Bishop of the Aleutian-Alaskan Diocese in North America. He laboured tirelessly for his flock, earning their great love and respect. In 1907 he was recalled to Russia and raised to the rank of Archbishop. When war broke out Archbishop Tikhon was based in Vilno, Poland. He participated eagerly in all organisations which helped soldiers and the wounded, and visited the injured and dying at the front lines. In 1914 he was elected Archbishop of Moscow and in 1917 he was raised to the rank of Metropolitan. Shortly thereafter he was chosen by lot to be the first patriarch for 217 years. The consecration was performed in the ancient Patriarchal Cathedral. What a burden the new patriarch had to bear! Patriarch Tikhon was probably the greatest martyr of the Russian Church during the period of its persecution by the communists. As Patriarch of All Russia for eight years, he was invested with tremendous power and consequent responsibility. During that period he lived a selfless life, scarcely a free man, and in the end became another victim, for the sake of his faith and the whole Russian Church. He died on March 25, 1925. Holy New Martyr Tikhon, pray for us!

**Our Holy Father Justin, Abbot of Chelije Monastery in Valjevo, Serbia** - was born into a pious & priestly family on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1894. His name in the world was Blagoje. A church-minded youth, he entered seminary at the age of 11, where he studied under the then Hieromonk Nikolai Velimirovic, who was also his Father Confessor, and who was the most influential person throughout his life. After his graduation, the young Blagoje served as a student nurse during WW1. He was tonsured in 1916, receiving the name Justin. He then studied in Russia, forming a great love for Russian spirituality and piety, especially that of the common people. He then studied at Oxford, England, afterwards returning to teach in Seminary in Serbia, and undertake further study in Greece. He was ordained deacon in 1920 and priest in 1922. Many were attracted to this humble priestmonk, coming to him for confession and spiritual guidance. Father Justin had close contact at this time with two luminaries of the Russian Church: Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) and the then Bishop John Maximovitch. A great intellect and ascetic, his labours enriched the Serbian Church. Worthy of special mention is his three volume exposition of the Orthodox Faith in Serbian, *The Dogmas of the Orthodox Church*, published in 1932. After WW2, Father Justin was exiled from Belgrade by the communists. He lived in several monasteries before settling in Chelije in 1948., where he remained until his repose on March 25, 1979. This women’s monastery flourished under his guidance. Many pious people travelled from all over the world to hear him preach and teach the correct Orthodox Faith. He was a pillar of Orthodoxy and a true Holy Father of the 20th Century.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable Savvas the New of Kalymnos (†1948).

**26 March / 8 April — Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel** - The Holy Archangel Gabriel - The herald of the incarnation of the Son of God, he is one of the seven great angels who stand before the throne of God. He revealed to Zacharias the birth of the Forerunner, and said of himself: 'I am Gabriel that stands in the presence of God' (Lk. 1:19). His name, Gabriel, signifies 'man of God'. Speaking about the Annunciation, the holy Fathers comment that an angel with such a name was sent to signify who He was, and of what nature He was, who would be born of the most pure Virgin. He would be the Man of God, the Man-God, the strong and mighty God. Others have found that it was this same Gabriel who announced the conception of the Virgin Mary to Joachim and Anna, and that it was he who taught Moses in the wilderness to write the Book of Genesis. The holy Fathers considered that Gabriel belongs to the foremost and highest order of the heavenly powers, the seraphim, since the seraphim stand closest to God. And so he is one of the seven seraphim closest to God. The names of these seven are: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Selathiel, Jegudiel and Barachiel. Some would add Jeremiel to this

number. Each has his own particular service, but all are equal in honour. Why did God not send Michael? For the reason that Michael's service is the suppression of the enemies of God's truth, while Gabriel's is the annunciation of the salvation of the human race.

**The Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Srem** - It is thought that Irenaeus was a Slav. He was married and had children prior to becoming a bishop. He suffered for Christ during the reign of Maximian. At the time of horrible sufferings, his relatives stood around him crying and begged him to spare himself and them [that is, to deny Christ]. But this wonderful priestly-martyr loved the wounds of Christ more than all the riches of this world. At the same time Seren, a certain gardener in Srem, also suffered at the hands of Prince Probus, as did Afrius suffer in Regia. Because Irenaeus did not want to deny his faith, Prince Probus ordered that he be hurled from a bridge into the Sava river, where this shepherd of Christ's flock died and took up habitation among the citizens of heaven. He honourably suffered in the year 304 A.D.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Hieromartyr Montanus, priest, and his wife Maxima, at Sirmium (†304); Hieromartyrs Bathusius and Bercus, priests, Monk-martyr Arpilus, and the martyred laymen Abibus, Agnus, Reasus, Igathrax, Iscoeus, Silas, Signicus, Sonerilas, Suimbalus, Thermus, and Phillus, and the martyred women Anna, Alla, Larissa, Monco, Mamica, Uirko, Animais, Gaatha the queen of the Goths, and Duklida in Crimea (†c.375); Venerable Malchus of Syria (4th C); St. Braulio, bishop of Saragossa (†646); St. Ludger, bishop Mimigernaford (†809); Venerable Basil the New (†c.944); Martyr George of Sofia (†1437); New Martyr Parasceva Kochneva (†1939); 'Melitina' Icon of the Mother of God.

**27 March / 9 April — The Holy Martyr Matrona** - She was an orphan, and a servant in the house of a certain Jew in Salonica. The wife of this Jew constantly derided Matrona for her faith in Christ, and urged her to cast Christ aside and go to the synagogue. But the humble Matrona went about her work conscientiously, not replying to her mistress and secretly praying to Christ our God. On one occasion the Jewess discovered that Matrona had gone to church unbeknown to her, and demanded, in a great rage, to know why she had gone to the church and not the synagogue. 'Because God is alive in the Christian Church, but He has departed from the synagogues of the Jews', replied Matrona. Enraged by such a courageous answer, the Jewess thrashed her and locked her in a dark chamber, and in addition to that had her bound. But the next day she found her unbound by the power of God and kneeling in prayer, praising God. Then she locked her up again for the second time until she died of hunger. Then that wicked woman took the body of the holy maiden and threw it to the ground from the top of her house. Christians took the body of the martyr and buried it, and the bishop, Alexander, when he had learned of the many miracles worked by the holy martyr, built a church over her grave. As for the evil Jewess, she soon received her just reward, when, standing on the same spot from which she had thrown Matrona's body, she slipped and fell onto the cobbled pavement and was smashed to pieces.

**Venerable John "The Discerner"** - John was a woodsman until his twenty-fifth year and then, driven by an insatiable desire for constant prayer, withdrew into the wilderness where he lived until his death, during his ninetieth year. He was a corporeal being but lived as an incorporeal being. He discerned the heart of every person who came to him and was able to discern their name, their desires, and their thoughts. He prophesied to Emperor Theodosius the outcome of his battles. He prophesied for generals, monastics, and for all who found it necessary to know what was hidden for them in the darkness of future days. A prince once begged John to receive his wife who especially wanted to meet him. The saint did not allow empty inquisitiveness but appeared to the wife of the prince in a dream showing her what he was like. When the woman described her vision in the dream to her husband, he confirmed that, indeed, this was the likeness of the saint. To every visitor, he taught humility as the basis of the virtues, always citing examples from life of how pride has toppled many exalted characters into dust and led them into serious sins. He endured many assaults of evil spirits. On one occasion, Satan appeared to him with a myriad of demons under the guise of shining angels. They pressured him to worship Satan, lying to him, saying that it [Satan] is Christ. But John answered wisely, "I bow down and worship my King, Jesus Christ, everyday. If that were He, He would not demand me to do so now, especially since I already worship Him." Following these words, all the evil powers vanished as smoke. He died peacefully kneeling in prayer in his ninetieth year.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Prophet Hanani (10th C. BC); Martyrs Manuel and Theodosius (†304); Venerable Paphnutius of Heraclea (4th C); St. Paul, bishop of Corinth (9th C); St. Ephraim, archbishop of Rostov (†1454); Venerable Alexander of Voche (15th C); St. Anthony, metropolitan of Tobolsk (†1740); Venerable Cyricus of Thrace.

**28 March / 10 April — Our Holy Father, the Martyr Eustratius of the Kiev Caves** - He was very wealthy, but, moved by the love of Christ, gave away all his goods for His sake, entered the Monastery of the Caves and became a monk. When the Polovtsians conquered Kiev in 1097, they looted the monastery, slew many Christians and monks and gave Eustratius and other of the faithful to a certain Jew in the town of Khorsun as slaves. This Jew mocked the Christian faith and tried to compel the Christians to convert to the Jewish faith. Seeing that they had no other alternative, they all decided to starve to death rather than deny the true Faith. Eustratius encouraged the Christians in this decision. They all perished from hunger, some after three days, some after four and some after seven days. Eustratius, accustomed to fasting, remained the only one alive, and survived fourteen days without food. Infuriated that he had lost the money he had paid for the slaves, the Jew took his revenge by having Eustratius nailed to a cross. But Eustratius gave thanks to God from the cross and predicted an imminent and vicious death for the Jew. Possessed by a furious anger, the Jew stabbed him with a spear. And thus the holy man of God gave his soul to his Saviour. They cast his body into the sea, but it rose to the surface and many were the great miracles performed over it. Soon after this, the Byzantine Emperor commanded that the Jews in Khorsun be punished for their wickedness towards the Christians, and the torturer of the Christians was hanged on a tree and received the wages of Judas.

**The Miraculous Occurrence of Taxiotis** - Taxiotis was a soldier from Carthage. He spent his entire life in grievous sins but finally repented, left the military service and lived a God-pleasing life. While he was with his wife on his estate near the city, he committed adultery with the wife of his farm worker. Afterwards, he was bitten by a snake and died immediately. Taxiotis was dead for six hours after which he arose. Then, on the fourth day, he spoke and related how and what kind of level of judgment he had passed through until he came to the level of judgment [Mitarstvo] for adultery. There, he fell into the dark abode of demons from which he was led out by an angel who attested on his behalf and was sent back in the flesh to repent for his latest sin. He repented for forty days, going from church to church, beating his head against the doors and thresholds, always crying and telling of the terrible sufferings which sinners undergo in the other world. He implored men not to sin but to repent for those sins already committed. On the fortieth day, with rejoicing, Taxiotis took up habitation into the Kingdom of the Merciful God.

**Also commemorated on this day:** Venerable Hilarion the New, abbot of the Pelekete monastery (†c.754); Martyrs Priscus, Malchus, and Alexander (†260); Martyrs Jonah and Barachisus and those with them in Persia: Zanithas, Lazarus, Maruthas, Narses, Elias, Marinus, Abibus, Sivsithina, and Sabbas (†c.330); St. Hesychius the Theologian, priest of Jerusalem (†434); Venerable Stephen the Wonderworker (†815); Martyr Boyan, prince of Bulgaria, Hieromartyrs George, bishop, Parodus and Peter, priests (†833); Venerable Hilarion of Gdov (†1476); St. Dionysius the Merciful, bishop of Larissa (†1510); St. John, bishop of Manglisi, Georgia (†1751); Righteous Nicholas Postnikov, priest and confessor (†1931); New Hieromartyr Nikolai Piskanovsky, priest (†1935); Hieromartyr Basil Malinin, priest (†1938); Martyr John Chernoff (†1939).

**29 March / 11 April — St Mark the Confessor, Bishop of Arethusa** - St Gregory the Theologian and Blessed Theodoretus have given us an account of his sufferings. According to these accounts, Mark destroyed some pagan temples and brought many to the Christian faith during the reign of the Emperor Constantine. But when the Emperor Julian came to the throne and quickly became an apostate from the Faith, some of the inhabitants of Arethusa renounced Christ and lapsed into paganism. They rose up against Mark because he had demolished the temple and demanded that he either rebuild it or pay them a very large sum of money. As Mark refused to do either the one or the other, he was flogged and flayed and dragged through the streets. They then cut off his ears with strong, fine threads, stripped him naked, smeared him with honey and left him bound to a tree in the summer heat for the wasps, mosquitoes and hornets to eat. The martyr of Christ endured all this without complaint. He was quite old, and his face shone like an angel of the Lord. The pagans lowered the price of their temple again and again, finally demanding a quite insignificant amount which Mark could easily have given. But he refused to give even a single coin for that purpose. His endurance made a great impression on the citizens, and they began to admire him for it and to feel sorry for him, and gradually reduced the price of their temple to nothing just to allow him to remain alive. Finally, they let him go free and, one by one, all came to him to receive instruction and become Christians again. A deacon, Cyril, also suffered at this time for a similar cause in

Heliopolis at the foot of mount Lebanon. He had broken some idols at the time of the liberation of Christianity and was cruelly tortured under Julian for this. The pagans were so enraged with him that, after they had killed him, they tore out his teeth and ripped open his stomach. Many others suffered on the same day as St Cyril. The evil pagans cut their bodies into small pieces, coated them with barley and fed them to the pigs. But retribution came swiftly upon them; all their teeth fell out and their mouths emitted an unbearable stench.

**Venerable John the Hermit** - John was the son of Juliana, a Christian woman in Armenia. As a young boy, he left his mother and withdrew into the wilderness, completely enflamed with love toward Christ the Lord. In the wilderness, he first surrendered himself to the guidance of a spiritual director, Pharmutius, who had been found so worthy before God that an angel of God brought him bread daily. Afterwards, the young John distanced himself and withdrew into solitude. He lowered himself into a dry well where he spent ten years in fasting, prayer and vigils. St. Pharmutius brought bread from the angel and gave it to him. So that John would not become proud, the angel of God did not want to give bread to the young John personally, but rather through his spiritual father Pharmutius. After ten years of difficult mortification in the well, St. John presented himself to the Lord. His relics revealed itself to be wonder-working. He lived and was glorified by God and men in the fourth century.

**Also commemorated on this day:** St. Eustathius the Confessor, bishop of Bithynia (9th C); Venerable Jonah (†1480) and Mark (15th C) of the Pskov Caves Monastery; New Hieromartyr Paul Voinarsky and with him Paul and Alexius Kirian (†1919); Righteous Michael Victorov, priest and confessor (†1933).

### † Daily Scripture Readings †

**Monday** – Matins Gospel: Matt. 21:18-43 (§84-88); Sixth Hour: Ezek. 1:1-20  
Vespers: Ex. 1:1-20; Job 1:1-12; Gen. 28:10-17; Ezek. 43:27-44:4; Prov. 9:1-11  
Liturgy: Matt. 24:3-35 (§98-101)

**Tuesday** – Matins Gospel: Luke 1:39-49,56 (§4); Sixth Hour: Ezek. 1:21-2:1  
Vespers: for Great Tuesday: Ex. 2:5-10; Job 1:13-22; for the Feast: Ex. 3:1-8; Prov. 8:22-30  
Epistle: Heb. 2:11-18 (§306); Gospel: for the Feast: Luke 1:24-38 (§3); Matt. 24:36-26:2 (§102-107)

**Wednesday** – Matins Gospel: John 12:17-50 (§41 mid. to the start of §44); Sixth Hour: Ezek. 2:3-3:3  
Vespers: Ex. 2:11-22; Job 2:1-10; Gospel: Matt. 26:6-16 (§108)

**Thursday** – Matins Gospel: Luke 22:1-39 (§108 mid.-§109); First Hour: Jer. 11:18-12:5, 9-11, 14-15  
Vespers: Ex. 19:10-19; Job 38:1-23, 42:1-5; Isa. 50:4-11; Epistle: I Cor. 11:23-32 (§149)  
Gospel: (composite): Matt. 26:1-20 (§107); John 13:3-17; Matt. 26:21-39; Luke 22:43-45; Matt. 26:40-27:2

**Friday** - Matins: (1st) John 13:31-18:1 (§46-§58); (2nd) John 18:1-28 (§58); (3rd) Matt. 26:57-75 (§109); (4th) John 18:28-19:16 (§59); (5th) Matt. 27:3-32 (§111); (6th) Mark 15:16-32 (§67); (7th) Matt. 27:33-54 (§113); (8th) Luke 23:32-49 (§111); (9th) John 19:25-37 (§61); (10th) Mark 15:43-47 (§69); (11th) John 19:38-42 (§62); (12th) Matt. 27:62-66 (§114)  
First Hour: Zech. 11:10-13; Gal. 6:14-18 (§215 mid.); Matt. 27:1-56 (§110-§113)  
Third Hour: Isa. 50:4-11; Rom. 5:6-11 (§88 mid.); Mark 15:16-41 (§67-§68)  
Sixth Hour: Isa. 52:13-54:1; Heb. 2:11-18 (§306); Luke 23:32-49 (§111)  
Ninth Hour: Jer. 11:18-23, 12:1-5, 9-11, 14-15; Heb. 10:19-31 (§324); John 18:28-19:37 (§59-§61)  
Vespers: Ex. 33:11-23; Job 42:12-17; Isa. 52:13-54:1; I Cor. 1:18-2:2 (§125); (composite) Matt. 27:1-38 (§110); Luke 23:39-43; Matt. 27:39-54; John 19:31-37; Matt. 27:55-61

**Saturday** – Matins: Ezek. 37:1-14; I Cor. 5:6-8 (§133); Gal. 3:13-14 (§206); Matt. 27:62-66 (§114)  
Vespers: Gen. 1:1-13; Isa. 60:1-16; Ex. 12:1-11; Jonah 1:1-4:11; Josh. 5:10-15; Ex. 13:20-22, 14:1-31, 15:1-19; Zeph. 3:8-15; I Kings 17:8-24; Isa. 61:10-62:5; Gen. 22:1-18; Isa. 61:1-9; II Kings 4:8-37; Isa. 63:11-64:5; Jer. 31:31-34; Dan. 3:1-88  
Epistle: Rom. 6:3-11 (§91)  
Gospel: Matt. 28:1-20 (§115)

The divine services are performed according to this outline on the first three days of Holy Week — Great Monday, Great Tuesday, and Great Wednesday. However, each of these three days has its own special commemorations, and its own liturgical hymns and readings of corresponding content.

On Great Monday we recall the chaste Joseph, sold into Egypt by his brothers out of envy, as a prefiguration of Christ, and the Lord's curse of the barren fig tree, as a prefiguration of the Jewish synagogue, which condemned the Lord to death.

On Great Tuesday we recall the parable of the Lord concerning the ten virgins, the talents, the second coming of the Lord, and the last judgment.

On Great Wednesday we recall how the sinful woman anointed the Lord in Bethany, in the house of Simon the Leper, and the betrayal of Judas which took place immediately thereafter. In the hymns the deed of the repentant harlot and of the disciple-betrayer are movingly and edifyingly compared. On Tuesday and Wednesday Great Compline is served; the vesture for these first three days is black, as for mourning.

On Great Thursday we recall the Mystical Supper, the humility of the Lord, expressed in His washing the feet of His disciples, and the establishment of the mystery of His Body and Blood.

On Great Friday we commemorate the holy and saving passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who for our sake willingly endured spitting, beating, blows, mockery, and death on the cross.

The service for Great Saturday is a reverent vigil at the tomb of the Lord. On this day is commemorated the Lord's resting in the tomb and His descent into Hades.

*Archbishop Averky*

### **The Passion Gospels:**

- 1) Jn. 13:31-18:1 (Farewell conversation of the Savior with His disciples and His high-priestly prayer for them).<sup>5</sup>
- 2) Jn. 18:1-28 (the Seizure of the Savior in the Garden of Gethsemane and His suffering at the hands of the high priest Annas).
- 3) Mt. 26:57-75. (Suffering of the Savior at the hands of the high priest Caiaphas and Peter's denial of Christ).
- 4) Jn. 18:28-19:16 (Suffering of the Lord in the court of Pilate).
- 5) Mt. 27:3-32 (The despair of Judas by the new suffering of the Lord by Pilate and the judgment for His crucifixion).
- 6) Mk. 15:16-32 (Leading the Lord to Golgotha and his suffering on the cross).
- 7) Mt. 27:33-54 (The continuation of the narrative about the Lord's suffering on the cross, the wonderful signs accompanying His death).
- 8) Lk. 23:32-49 (The Prayer of the Savior on the cross for His enemies and the repentance of the wise thief).
- 9) Jn. 19:25-37 (Words of the Savior from the cross to the Theotokos and Apostle John and the repetition of the narrative of His death and perforation).
- 10) Mk. 15:43-47 (Removal of the body of the Lord from the cross).
- 11) Jn. 19:38-42 (Participation of Nicodemus and Joseph in the burial of the Savior).
- 12) Mt. 27:62-66 (Posting of the guards at the tomb of the Savior and the sealing of the tomb).

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