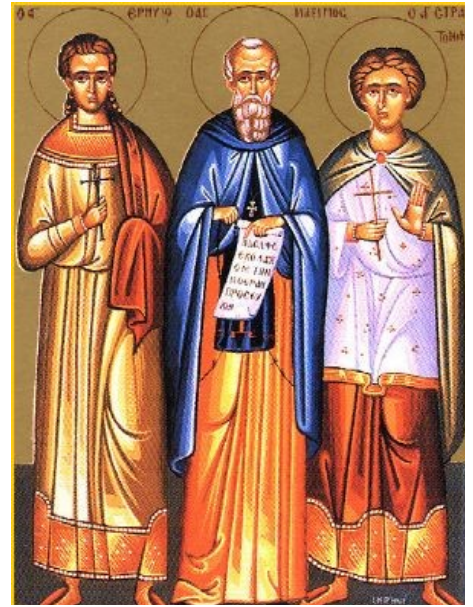


31st Sunday After Pentecost

Sunday After Theophany,

Holy Martyrs Hermylus and Stratonicus

13 / 26 January



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!

Theophany of our Lord, Troparion, Tone I —When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan,/ the worship of the Trinity was made manifest;/ for, the voice of the Father bare witness unto Thee,/ calling Thee His beloved Son;/ and the Spirit in the form of a dove/ confirmed the certainty of His word./ O Christ our God, Who hast appeared and enlightened the worlds,// glory be to Thee!

Troparion of Ss Hermylus and Stratonicus tone 3: O holy martyrs who have faithfully confessed/ the transcendent Trinity,/ renowned and invincible Hermylus/ and steadfast, godly Stratonicus:/ since you partake of the glory/ that surpasses understanding,/ pray that we may be granted great mercy.

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.

Kontakion of the Feast, Tone IV —Thou hast appeared today to the whole world,/ and Thy light, O Lord, hath been signed upon us/ who hymn Thee with understanding./ Thou hast come, Thou hast appeared,/ the Light unapproachable.

Kontakion of Ss Hermylus and Stratonicus tone 1: You drowned the enemy in the depths of your contests/ by your steadfastness, O noble Prize-winners./ You received your end in the streams of the river,/ hence were brought to the waters of incorruption./ You magnified Christ, O divine Hermylus/ and Stratonicus.

Matins Gospel IX

Epistle : Ephesians 4: 7-13

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

THE MEASURE OF CHRIST'S GIFT

But what does He say? 'According to the measure of Christ's gift' ...If then this or that man possesses any superiority in any spiritual gift, do not grieve at it, since his labour also is greater. He who had received five talents, had five required of him, whilst he who had received the two, brought only two, and yet received no less reward than the other. And therefore the Apostle here also encourages the hearer on the same ground, showing that gifts are bestowed not for the honour of one above another, but for the work of the Church, 'for the perfecting of the saints for the work of ministering to the building up of the body of Christ' ...By this He shows that it is not of his own intrinsic merit that one has received more and another less, but that it is for the sake of others, as God Himself has measured it.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XI on Ephesians IV,B#5,p. 103.

Second Epistle - 1 Timothy 1: 15-17

Gospel St. Matthew 4: 12-17

Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthali: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

“REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.”

With these profound and holy words, the incarnate Word began His preaching to fallen mankind. Outwardly, such simple teaching! But one must understand it with his very life: then these short and simple words which are contained in all of the Gospel will be revealed. Just as the holy Apostle Paul, when preaching the Gospel, which he did throughout almost all the known world, said that he testified “both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

Brethren! In order to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ repentance is needed; in order to remain in this salvific faith, repentance is needed; in order to be successful in it, repentance is needed; in order to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, repentance is needed.

All of this is clearly set forth in the Holy Scripture. Holy Scripture teaches us that “God sent His Son into the world ... that the world through Him might be saved,” that “he that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already,.” “That light (Christ) is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.” (John 3: 17-20) To those afflicted by the passion of vainglory the Scripture witnesses: “How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?”(John 5:44). Those bound by the passion of greed did not only not believe the Lord, but they even derided Him when He preached to them the important and most holy teaching concerning the remembrance of eternity, and the arranging of earthly matters in accordance to the immortality appointed for man. (Luke 16: 14) Those attracted to the evil passion of envy did not only not believe in the Lord, but they also conspired to kill Him, and they accomplished this. All those infected with vain and sinful vices, according to the unerring testimony of the Gospel, are cut off from participating in the spiritual wedding of the Son of God, making themselves unworthy of blessed union with Him (Matt. 22:5). “You can not serve God and Mammon!” (Luke 16:14); you cannot serve two masters, God and sin! “Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Gospel (Mark 1:15).

However, one who has believed in Christ, and has decided to continually prove his faith, by his actions, is also in need of repentance. What do you think, brethren; what is the first fruit of living faith? What is the first fruit of fulfilling the commandments of Christ? I will give you the answer of St. Simeon the New Theologian, who acquired his knowledge of truth through his holy experience. He said: "The careful fulfillment of the commandments of Christ teaches a man his own infirmities." Exactly! As soon as one who believes in Christ begins to fulfill the all-holy commandments of the Gospel, or also, to perform the works of renewed nature, his fallen nature is instantly revealed to him, which had been hidden from sight until then, and it enters into a sustained battle with the Gospel. The life of one who struggles for Christ is filled with unseen falls. He involuntarily confesses with the Apostle: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am!" (Acts 7: 22-24). From such an observation of oneself, blessed poverty of spirit is engendered within a Christian, rational, spiritual mourning appears, and a broken and humble heart is established, which God will not destroy (Ps. 50: 20). In living according to the Gospel, there appears in a man, as if naturally, the repentance commanded by the Gospel. Therefore, repentance is necessary not only in order to believe in Christ; it is necessary in order to have a living faith in Christ. "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

There remains to be explained: why is there such a close connection between the words of the Lord calling us to repent, and the announcing of the nearness of the Kingdom of heaven? Why is there not presented between them a kind of intermediate struggle, an intermediate condition? The reason is that our Lord Jesus Christ is "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) --- He has accomplished everything for our salvation. He has reconciled us with God; He has prepared and acquired for us the Heavenly Kingdom. We, mankind, have been presented with one work in the matter of our salvation: the work of accepting salvation, given to us by God free and complete, the work of repentance. The Heavenly Kingdom and the Heavenly King are ineffably close to us --- incomparably closer than we imagine. "Behold, I stand at the door" of the heart of man, exclaims this King, and I knock at it with My all-holy and almighty Word: "if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me (Rev. 3:20). The opening of the doors of the heart to the Heavenly King is accomplished—with repentance. "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov)

[Second Gospel - Luke 18: 35-43](#)

Saints of the week

13 / 26 January —Afterfeast of Theophany - The Holy Martyrs Hermylas and Stratonicus - The Emperor Licinius launched a violent persecution against the Christians. St Hermylas, a Christian and a deacon in one of the churches, was arrested and condemned to death. When he was told that he was being taken out to martyrdom, he rejoiced greatly. The Emperor threatened him in vain; Hermylas openly confessed his faith in Christ and, in reply to the Emperor's threats, said: "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man doeth unto me" (Ps. 117:6). After harsh torture, Hermylas was flung into prison. But the jailer was one Stratonicus, a secret Christian who was filled with whole-hearted compassion for Hermylas's sufferings. When he too appeared before the Emperor as a Christian, Licinius ordered that they both be thrown into the Danube. So Hermylas and Stratonicus were bound together in one net and cast into the river. After three days the river threw their bodies onto the bank, and fellow-Christians took them and buried them a little way outside Belgrade. These glorious martyrs suffered for Christ and entered into glory in the year 315.

St James, Bishop of Nisibis - In summer in an open field and in winter in a cave, St James lived as a hermit. On one occasion he went down into the city of Nisibis in Mesopotamia, to look into the faith and life of the Christians, and was there elected by the people as their bishop. He took part in the First Ecumenical Council in 325 and defended Orthodoxy against the Arians. It happened at one time that the pagan Persian army attacked Nisibis. St James went out onto the ramparts with the banner-icon from the church, himself raising it aloft and walking round the ramparts fearless of the arrows the enemy was aiming at him. Walking thus, the saint prayed to God to save the city and the faithful in it by sending flies and mosquitoes on the Persians, thus driving them away from the city walls. He did not, we see, seek the destruction of the enemy but some sort of catastrophe, no matter what, even some quite small occurrence, that would overcome them and remove them from the vicinity. God heard the prayer of His chosen one and sent a plague of flies and mosquitoes on the Persians, driving them away and saving the city of Nisibis. St James lived long and with honour, and died peacefully in great old age in the year 350.

St Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers - An ardent fighter against Arianism in the West, he suffered greatly for his choice of Orthodoxy. Of his writings on many subjects, the most important are those on the Holy Trinity. He entered into rest in the Lord in the year 367.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Irinarch of Rostov (1616). Venerable Eleazar of Anzersk Island at Solovki (1656). Martyr Peter of Anium, at Eleutheropolis (1st c.).

14 / 27 January — St Sava, Archbishop of Serbia - The son of Stefan Nemanja, the great Serbian national leader, he was born in 1169. As a young man he yearned for the spiritual life, which led him to flee to the Holy Mountain, where he became a monk and with rare zeal followed all the ascetic practices. Nemanja followed his son's example and himself went to the Holy Mountain, where he lived and ended his days as the monk Simeon. Sava obtained the independence of the Serbian Church from the Emperor and the Patriarch, and became its first archbishop. He, together, with his father, built the monastery of Hilandar and after that many other monasteries, churches and schools throughout the land of Serbia. He travelled to the Holy Land on two occasions, on pilgrimage to the holy places there. He made peace among his brothers, who were in conflict over their rights, and also between the Serbs and their neighbours. In creating the Serbian Church, he created the Serbian state and Serbian culture along with it. He brought peace to all the Balkan peoples, working for the good of all, for which he was venerated and loved by all on the Balkan peninsular. He gave a Christian soul to the people of Serbia, which survived the fall of the Serbian state. He died in Trnovo in the reign of King Asen, being taken ill after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Theophany in 1236. King Vladislav took his body to Mileseva, whence Sinan Pasha removed it, burning it at Vracar in Belgrade on April 27th, 1595.

St. Nina, enlightener of Georgia - Hearing of the Georgian people, the maiden Nina desired from her early years to travel to Georgia and baptise the Georgians. The Mother of God appeared to her and promised her that she would take her to that land. When the Lord opened the path to her, the young Nina indeed went to Georgia, where she very quickly gained the love of the people. She baptised Mirian, King of Georgia, his wife Nana and their son Bakar, who then zealously aided Nina in her missionary efforts. Nina travelled throughout Georgia in the course of her life, and succeeded in bringing all the people to the Christian faith—and this during a time of fearful persecution of Christians by the Emperor Diocletian. She rested from her many labours and entered into peace in the Lord in the year 335. Her grave is in a church in Samtavro. She performed many miracles both during her lifetime and after her death.

Our Holy Fathers, the Martyrs of Sinai and Raithu - These holy fathers were killed by the Saracens, those of Sinai in the fourth century and the others in the fifth century.

St. Kentigern Mungo - Bishop, founder of the See of Glasgow, born about 518; died at Glasgow, 13 January, 603. His mother Thenaw was daughter of a British prince, Lothus (from whom the province of Lothian was called); his father's name is unknown. According to Jocelyn's life of Kentigern, the saint was born at Culross in Fife, and brought up until manhood by St. Serf (or Servanus) at his monastery there; but Skene shows that this connection between the two saints involves an anachronism, as St. Serf really belongs to the following century. At the age of twenty-five we find Kentigern (the name means "head chief", but he was popularly known as Mungo — in Cymric, Mwyn-gu, or "dear one"), beginning his missionary labours at Cathures, on the Clyde, the site of modern Glasgow. The Christian King of Strathclyde, Roderick Hael, welcomed the saint, and procured his consecration as bishop, which took place about 540. For some thirteen years he laboured in the district, living a most austere life in a cell at the confluence of the Clyde and the Molendinar, and making many converts by his holy example and his preaching. A large community grew up around him, became known as "Clasgu" (meaning the "dear family") and ultimately grew into the town and city of Glasgow. About 553 a strong anti-Christian movement in Strathclyde compelled Kentigern to leave the district, and he retired to Wales, staying for a time with St. David at Menevia, and afterwards founding a large monastery at Llanelwy, now St. Asaph's, of which he appointed the holy monk Asaph superior in succession to himself. In 573 the battle of Arthuret secured the triumph of the Christian cause in Cumbria, and Kentigern, at the earnest appeal of King Roderick, returned thither, accompanied by many of his Welsh disciples. For eight years he fixed his see at Hoddam in Dumfriesshire, evangelizing thence the districts of Galloway and Cumberland. About 581 he finally returned to Glasgow, and here, a year or two later, he was visited by St. Columba, who was at that time labouring in Strathclyde. The two saints embraced, held long converse, and exchanged their pastoral staves. Kentigern was buried on the spot where now stands the beautiful cathedral dedicated in his honour. His remains are said still to rest in the crypt.

Also commemorated on this day: New Martyrs bishop Ambrosius (Gudko) and others slain at Raithu Monastery near Kazan (1918). Venerable John confessor (1961). Venerable Joseph Analytinus of Raithu Monastery (4th c.). Venerable Theodulus, son of Venerable Nilus of Sinai (5th c.). Venerable Stephen, abbot of Chenolakkos Monastery near Chalcedon (716). Martyr Agnes. St. Meletius, bishop of Ryazan, missionary to Yakutia (1900).

15 / 28 January — Our Holy Father Paul of Thebes - Born of wealthy parents in Lower Thebes in Egypt in the reign of the Emperor Decius, he and a sister of his together inherited all their parents' property. But his brother-in-law, an idol-worshipper, plotted to seize Paul's half of the inheritance. He therefore threatened Paul that he would betray him to the authorities as a Christian if he did not hand over his share of the property. This misfortune, coupled with the examples of self-sacrifice by the Christian martyrs that Paul saw with his own eyes, induced him to give his half of the property to his sister and go off into the desert, where he lived in asceticism until his death. The spiritual heights attained by this giant of a monk are testified to by no less a person than St Antony the Great, who once visited Paul and saw how the wild animals and birds of the air ministered to him. Returning from this visit, Antony said to his monks: 'Woe is me, my children, a sinful and false monk, who am a monk in name only. I have seen Elias, I have seen John in the desert, and I have seen Paul—in Paradise!' St Paul lived 113 years, and entered peacefully into rest in the Lord in the year 342.

Our Holy Father John Kalyvites (The Hut-Dweller) - He was born in Constantinople in the early part of the 5th century, of rich and eminent parents whose only child he was. Drawn by inclination to the spiritual life, the young John fled with a monk to a monastery in Asia Minor. He spent six years in this monastery in the greatest restraint, prayer and obedience to the superior. Then the devil attacked him with the temptation to leave the monastery and return to his parents, to live with them as a nobleman. He indeed returned to his parents' home, but dressed as a beggar. He saw his parents, but, not wishing to reveal himself to them as their son, remained as a beggar in their courtyard, living off the crumbs that the servants threw him and enduring much ridicule from all. He lived thus for three years, praying God that He would save the souls of his father and mother. When he fell ill and felt death approaching, he revealed himself to his parents. They recognised him by a precious Gospel-book which they had given him in childhood and which he had kept with him as his sole possession. And so this young man, albeit so rich, saved his soul and those of his parents, overcame the devil and entered into rest in the Lord in about the year 450.

St. Ita, hermitress (570) - called the "Brigid of Munster"; born in the present County of Waterford, about 475; d. 15 January, 570. She became a nun, settling down at Cluain Credhail, a place-name that has ever since been known as Killeedy--that is, "Church of St. Ita"--in County Limerick. Her austerities are told by St. Cuimin of Down, and numerous miracles are recorded of her. She was also endowed with the gift of prophecy and was held in great veneration by a large number of contemporary saints, men as well as women. When she felt her end approaching she sent for her community of nuns, and invoked the blessing of heaven on the clergy and laity of the district around Killeedy. Not alone was St. Ita a saint, but she was the foster-mother of many saints, including St. Brendan the Voyager, St. Pulcherius (Mochoemog), and St. Cummin Fada.

St. Maurus, disciple of St. Benedict (584); in Wales - Deacon, son of Equitius, a nobleman of Rome, died 584. Feast, 15 Jan. He is represented as an abbot with crozier, or with book and censer, or holding the weights and measures of food and drink given him by his holy master. He is the patron of charcoalburners, coppersmiths etc. -- in Belgium of shoemakers -- and is invoked against gout, hoarseness etc. He was a disciple of St. Benedict, and his chief support at Subiaco. He is described as a model of religious virtues, especially of obedience.

Also commemorated on this day: New Hieromartyr Michael, priest (1942). New Hieromartyr Benjamin, bishop of Romanov (1930). Monk-martyr Pansophius of Alexandria (249-251). St. Prochorus, abbot in Vranski Desert on the river Pchinja in Bulgaria (10th c.). St. Gabriel, founder of Lesnovo Monastery, Serbia-Bulgaria (980). St. Gerasimus, patriarch of Alexandria (1714). St. Maximus, bishop of Nola (250). St. Salome of Udjarma, and St. Perozhavra of Sivia, Georgia (4th c.). Venerable Barlaam of Keret Lake near the White Sea (16th c.).

16 / 29 January — Veneration of the Precious Chains of the Holy and All-glorious Apostle Peter - Today we commemorate the chains with which Peter was shackled by the lawless Herod and which, when an angel appeared to him in prison, fell from him (Acts 12:7). The faithful kept these chains, both in memory of the great Apostle and also because of their healing power, for many of the sick were healed by touching them (as with the towel of the Apostle Paul: Acts 19:12). The Patriarch of Jerusalem, St. Juvenal, made a gift of these chains to the Empress Eudocia, the exiled wife of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger. She divided them in half, sending one half to the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople and the other to her daughter, the Empress Eudoxia, wife of Valentinian of Rome. This Eudoxia built the Church of St Peter and placed these chains in it, together with those in which Peter was shackled before his death under the Emperor Nero.

The Holy Martyrs Speusippus, Eleusippus, Meleusippus and their grandmother Leonilla - They suffered for Christ in France in the reign of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161 - 180). The three brothers were triplets. At first only Leonilla was a Christian, while her grandsons were pagans. After much exhortation on the part of the pious Leonilla and a local priest, the three brothers were baptised.

Being baptised, they began with youthful fervour to witness to their faith, and in their zeal went out and smashed all the idols in the area. Accused and brought before the judge, they acknowledged their action and openly confessed their faith in Christ. The judge threw them into prison, then summoned their grandmother and directed her to go to the prison and counsel her grandsons to deny Christ and worship idols. Leonilla went off without a word to the prison, but instead of advising her grandsons to deny the true Faith, she set about encouraging them not to give up, but to persevere to the end in all their sufferings and die for Christ. When the judge examined them again and saw their yet stronger steadfastness in the Faith, he condemned them to death. All three were first hanged on one tree, where they hung 'like the strings of a lute', and after that flogged and then finally burned. A woman, Jovilla, stirred by the courage of these martyrs, cried out: 'I too am a Christian!' They immediately seized her and beheaded her with a sword, together with the aged Leonilla.

St. Honoratus, archbishop of Arles & founder of the Lerins Monastery - b. about 350; d. 429. It is believed that he was born in the north of Gaul and that he belonged to an illustrious pagan family. Converted to Christianity with his brother Venantius, he embarked with him from Marseilles about 368, under the guidance of a holy person named Caprasius, to visit the holy places of Palestine and the lauræ of Syria and Egypt. But the death of Venantius, occurring suddenly at Methone, Achaia, prevented the pious travellers from going farther. They returned to Gaul through Italy, and, after having stopped at Rome, Honoratus went on into Provence and, encouraged by Leontius, Bishop of Fréjus, took up his abode in the wild island of Lérins with the intention of living there in solitude. Numerous disciples soon gathered around him and thus was founded the monastery, which has enjoyed so great a celebrity and which was during the fifth and sixth centuries a nursery for illustrious bishops and remarkable ecclesiastical writers. Honoratus's reputation for sanctity throughout the south-eastern portion of Gaul was such that in 426 after the assassination of Patroclus, Archbishop of Arles, he was summoned from his solitude to succeed to the government of the diocese, which the Arian and Manichaean heresies had greatly disturbed. He appears to have succeeded in re-establishing order and orthodoxy, while still continuing to direct from afar the monks of Lérins. However, the acts of his brief pontificate are not known. He died in the arms of Hilary, one of his disciples and probably a relative, who was to succeed him in the See of Arles. His various writings have not been preserved, nor has the rule which he gave to the solitaries of Lérins.

St. Fursey, of Burgh Castle, enlightener of East Anglia - Son of an Irish prince, Fursey became abbot of a monastery in Tuam, Co. Galway, but it was as a missionary in England and France that he achieved a European fame overshadowed only by Columbanus. He was welcomed to East Anglia c. 630 by King Sigebert, who granted land for a monastery at Burgh Castle in Suffolk. Becoming ill, Fursey fell into a trance and, according to Saint Bede the historian, quit his body from evening till cock-crow and was found worthy to behold the chorus of angels in Heaven. Fursey's visions of Heaven and Hell, experienced throughout his life and widely recounted, are thought to have inspired Dante's Divine Comedy. After some years in East Anglia, Fursey set out on a pilgrimage to Rome. He was well-received by Clovis, king of the Franks, whose palace mayor, Erconwald, persuaded the saint to build a monastery at Lagny, outside Paris. Fursey died c. 648 at Mazerolles, where he had once miraculously restored a nobleman's son to life. Erconwald had the body brought to Péronne in Picardy, where it awaited entombment while a new church was built. Four years later, when the body was buried near the altar, it was found to be completely free from decomposition;

Tropar of St Fursey of Burgh Castle, tone 5: Establishing thy monastery in a Roman fortress thou didst teach men that the Orthodox Faith is a true bastion/ against the onslaughts of every evil force, O Father Fursey./ Wherefore pray to God for us/ that we may all be bastions of the Faith/ standing firm against the rising tide of falsehood,/ that our souls may be saved.

Kondak of St Fursey of Burgh Castle, tone 4: Thou didst need the walls of stone/ to defend the Faith against its pagan enemies, O Father Fursey,/ but pray for us that we may have a spiritual wall around us/ to defend the Faith against its enemies./ Following thee and praising thy eternal memory,/ we stand firm against every error, ever singing:/ Rejoice, beloved of God, our Father Fursey.

St. Dunchaid O'Braoin, abbot of Clonmacnoisen - Born in Westmeath; died at Armagh, 988. Saint Dunchaid was an anchorite until 969, when he was chosen abbot of Clonmacnoise Monastery. In his old age he retired to Armagh, where he died.

Also commemorated on this day: Blessed Maximus of Totma (Vologda), fool-for-Christ (1650). New Hieromartyr John priest (1919). Martyr Danax the Reader in Macedonia (2nd c.). Venerable Romilos, monk of Mt. Athos and Ravanica (Serbia) (1375), disciple of St. Gregory of Sinai, and with him Sts. Nestor, Martinus, Daniel, Sisoës, Zosimas, and Gregory. New Hieromartyr Damascene of Hilandar on Mt. Athos and Gabrovo. St. Sigebert, king of the East Angles, martyr (635). St. James of Tarentaise (429). New Martyr Nicholas of Mitylene (1777).

17 / 30 January —Our Holy Father Antony the Great - He was an Egyptian, born about 250 in a village called Quemen-el-Arons near Heracleopolis. After the death of his rich and noble parents, he shared his inherited possessions with his sister, who was still in her minority, made sure that she was cared for, gave away his half of the inheritance to the poor and, at the age of twenty, consecrated himself to the life of asceticism that he had desired from childhood. At first he lived near his own village but then, in order to escape the disturbance of men, went off into the desert, on the shores of the Red Sea, where he spent twenty years as a hermit in company with no-one but God, in unceasing prayer, pondering and contemplation, patiently undergoing inexpressible demonic temptations. His fame spread through the whole world and around him gathered many disciples whom he, by word and example, placed on the path of salvation. In eighty-five years of ascetic life, he went only twice to Alexandria: the first time to seek martyrdom during a time of persecution of the Church, and the second at the invitation of St Athanasius, to refute the Arians' slanderous allegations that he too was a follower of the Arian heresy. He departed this life at the age of 105, leaving behind a whole army of disciples and followers. And, although Antony was unlettered he was, as a counsellor and teacher, one of the most learned men of his age, as also was St Athanasius the Great. When some Hellenic philosophers tried to test him with literary learning, Antony shamed them with the question: 'Which is older, the understanding or the book? And which of these is the source of the other?' The shamed philosophers dispersed, for they saw that they had only book-learning without understanding, while Antony had understanding. Here was a man who had attained perfection insofar as man is able on earth. Here was an educator of educators and teacher of teachers, who for a whole eighty-five years perfected himself, and only thus was able to perfect many others. Full of years and great works, Antony entered into rest in the Lord in the year 356. St. Anthony teaches: "Learn to love humility, for it will cover all your sins. All sins are repugnant before God but the most repugnant of all is pride of the heart. Do not consider yourself learned and wise; otherwise, all your effort will be destroyed and your boat will reach the harbour empty. If you have great authority, do not threaten anyone with death. Know, that according to nature, you too are susceptible to death and that every soul sheds its body from itself as the final garment." In Byzantium there existed an unusual and instructive custom during the crowning of the emperors in the Church of the Divine Wisdom [St. Sophia]. The custom was that when the patriarch placed the crown on the emperor's head, at the same time, he handed him a silk purse filled with dirt from the grave. Then, even the emperor would recall death and to avoid all pride and become humble.

Also comemorated on this day: Venerable Anthony, abbot of Dymsk (Novgorod) (1224). New Hieromartyr Victor priest (1931). New Hieromartyr Paul priest (1938). Venerable Anthony of Chernoezersk, monk (16th c.). Emperor St. Theodosius the Great (395). Venerable Anthony of Krasny Kholm, monk (1481). Venerable Anthony the Roman, of Novgorod (1147). Venerable Achilles the Confessor, hermit of Egypt (5th c.). St. Macarius Kalogeras, hierodeacon of Patmos (1737).

18 / 31 January — St Athanasius the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria - Born in Alexandria in 296, he had from childhood an inclination to the spiritual life. He was a deacon with Archbishop Alexander and accompanied him to Nicaea, to the First Ecumenical Council in 325. At this Council, Athanasius became famed for his learning, his devotion and his zeal for Orthodoxy, and contributed very greatly to the containing of the Arian heresy and the strengthening of Orthodoxy. After the death of Alexander, Athanasius was chosen as Archbishop of Alexandria. He remained in his archiepiscopal calling for more than forty years, although he was not on the archiepiscopal throne the whole time. He was persecuted by heretics through almost the whole of his life, particularly by the Emperors Constantius, Julian and Valens, by Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia and many others, and by the heretic Arius and his followers. He was forced to hide from his persecutors in a well, a grave, private houses and the deserts. Twice he was forced to flee to Rome. Only just before his death did he have a peaceful period as a good shepherd with his flock, which truly loved him. There are few saints who have been so callously slandered and so criminally persecuted as St Athanasius. But his great soul endured all with patience for the love of Christ and at last emerged victorious from all these terrible and lengthy struggles. He often went to St Antony for advice and moral support, revering him as his spiritual father. He suffered greatly for the truth, until the Lord gave him rest in His kingdom as His faithful servant, in the year 373.

St. Dermot, abbot - (also known as Diarmaid) - 6th century. Ruins of six churches can be seen on Inchcleraun (Innis Clothran) in Louch Ree, where Saint Dermot founded a monastery. His burial site there became a pilgrimage centre. It is believed that Dermot was a native of Connaught and of royal blood.

St. Nennius - One of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland, he was a disciple of St. Finian. The only other thing known about him is that he was born in Ireland.

Also commemorated on this day: Venerable Cyril, schemamonk, and Venerable Maria, schemanun (1337) (parents of St. Sergius of Radonezh). New Hieromartyr Michael priest (1919). New Hieromartyr Eugene priest (1930). New Hieromartyrs Vladimir, Nicholas, Sergius Alexander priests (1938). Venerable Athanasius, abbot of Syanzhema (Valaam) (1550). Venerable Athanasius of Novolok, monk (16th-17th c.).

Venerable Marcian of Cyrrhus in Syria, monk (ca. 303). Martyr Xenia. St. Maximus of Serbia, metropolitan (1516). Venerable Silvanus, of Palestine, monk. St. Leobardus of Marmoutier (6th c.). Martyr Theodula and her companions Helladius, Boethius, Evagrius and Macarius of Anazarbus in Cilicia, (304). St. Ephraim the Lesser, the Philosopher (1101). Venerable Hieromonk Alexi (Shushania) of Teklati (1923). St. Joachim, patriarch of Turnovo (1235).

19 January / 1 February — Fast Day - Our Holy Father Macarius the Great - He was an Egyptian and one of the contemporaries of St Antony the Great. His father was a priest. He married in obedience to his parents' wishes, but his wife died very soon and he went off into the desert of Scetis, where he spent sixty years in toil and struggle, both physical and spiritual, for the Kingdom of heaven. When he was asked why he was so thin, both when he ate and when he fasted, he replied: 'From fear of God!' He succeeded so greatly in purifying his mind from evil thoughts and his heart from evil desires that God endowed him with abundant wonderworking gifts, such that he even raised the dead from the grave. His humility made men and demons marvel. A demon once said to him: 'There is only one thing in which I cannot excel you: that is not in fasting, for I never eat, nor in vigils, for I never sleep.' 'Then what is it?' asked Macarius. 'Your humility', replied the demon. Macarius often said to his disciple, Paphnutius: 'Condemn no man, and you will be saved.' He lived for ninety years. Before his death, St Antony and St Pachomius appeared to him from the other world and told him that he would die in nine days' time. And so it came to pass. Cherubim also appeared to him before his death and revealed the heavenly, blessed world to him in a vision, praised his labours and virtues and told him that they had been sent to take his soul to the heavenly Kingdom. He entered into rest in the year 390.

St. Branwallader (Breward) of Cornwall and the Channel Islands, bishop of Jersey, (6th C.) - the day of the translation of his relics. Saint Branwallader was a Celtic or Welsh monk, who is said to have been a bishop in Jersey. It is believed that Branwallader worked with Saint Samson (f.d. July 28) in Cornwall and the Channel Islands, where he is remembered at Jersey in St. Brelade. He may also have travelled with Samson to Brittany in northern France. In the Exeter Martyrology, Branwallader is described as the son of the Cornish king, Kenen.

Also commemorated on this day: St. Mark, archbishop of Ephesus (1444). Blessed Theodore of Novgorod, fool-for-Christ (1392). Venerable Macarius the Roman of Novgorod (1550). New Hieromartyr Peter priest (1918). New Hieromartyr Nicholas priest (1930). Martyr Theodore (1940). Venerable Macarius of the Kiev Caves (12th c.). Venerable Macarius, deacon of the Kiev Caves (13th-14th c.). Opening of the relics of Venerable Sabbas of Storozhev or Zvenigorod (1652). Virgin-martyr Euphrasia of Nicomedia (303). Venerable Macarius of Alexandria (394). Venerable Anton the Stylite of Martqophi, Georgia (6th c.). St. Arsenius, archbishop of Kerkyra (Corfu) (953). Venerable Euthymius, confessor (20th c.). St. Fillan (Foelan) of Strathfillan (VIII) (Celtic & British). Translation of the relics (950) of St. Gregory the Theologian (389). Martyr Anthony Rawah the Qpraisite (8th c.).

‡ Daily Scripture Readings ‡

Monday - Matthew 10:1-8 (Matins Gospel); James 2:14-26; Mark 10:46-52; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16 (St. Nina); Matthew 25:1-13 (St. Nina)

Tuesday - James 3:1-10; Mark 11:11-23

Wednesday - James 3:11-4:6; Mark 11:23-26; James 4:7-5:9; Mark 11:27-33; Acts 12:1-11 (Apostle); John 21:15-25 (Apostle)

Thursday - Matthew 11:27-30 (Matins Gospel); Hebrews 13:17-21 (Venerable Anthony); Luke 6:17-23 (Venerable Anthony)

Friday - 1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12; 2:6-10; Mark 12:1-12; Hebrews 13:7-16 (St. Athanasius and St. Cyril); Matthew 5:14-19 (St. Athanasius and St. Cyril)

Saturday - 1 Thessalonians 5:14-23; Luke 17:3-10