From the Editor

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are pleased to present this issue of *Theosis* as a monthly spiritual reflection. This month, we feature the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus who are commemorated on August 4th. We also show and explain several sites around the ancient city of Ephesus in the photo essay.

This is the last issue of our fourth year of publication. Volume 5 will start next month. Please take note of the expiration date on your mailing envelope. If your subscription expires soon, please consider using the subscription form at the back of this issue to renew so we can save on sending renewal notices.

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The Seven Youths of Ephesus: Maximilian, Iamblicus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodianus (Constantine) and Antoninus, lived in the third century. St Maximilian was the son of the Ephesus city administrator, and the other six youths were sons of illustrious citizens of Ephesus. The youths were friends from childhood, and all were in military service together.

When the emperor Decius (249-251) arrived in Ephesus, he commanded all the citizens to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Torture and death awaited anyone who disobeyed. The seven youths were denounced by informants, and were summoned to reply to the charges. Appearing before the emperor, the young men confessed their faith in Christ.

Their military belts and insignia were quickly taken from them. Decius permitted them to go free, however, hoping that they would change their minds while he was off on a military campaign. The youths fled from the city and hid in a cave on Mount Ochlon, where they passed their time in prayer, preparing for martyrdom.

The youngest of them, St Iamblicus, dressed as a beggar and went into the city to buy bread. On one of his excursions into the city, he heard that the emperor had returned and was looking for them. St Maximilian urged his companions to come out of the cave and present themselves for trial.

Learning where the young men were hidden, the emperor
ordered that the entrance of the cave be sealed with stones so that the saints would perish from hunger and thirst. Two of the dignitaries at the blocked entrance to the cave were secret Christians. Desiring to preserve the memory of the saints, they placed in the cave a sealed container containing two metal plaques. On them were inscribed the names of the seven youths and the details of their suffering and death.

The Lord placed the youths into a miraculous sleep lasting almost two centuries. In the meantime, the persecutions against Christians had ceased. During the reign of the holy emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450) there were heretics who denied that there would be a general resurrection of the dead at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some of them said, “How can there be a resurrection of the dead when there will be neither soul nor body, since they are disintegrated?” Others affirmed, “The souls alone will have a restoration, since it would be impossible for bodies to arise and live after a thousand years, when even their dust would not remain.” Therefore, the Lord revealed the mystery of the Resurrection of the Dead and of the future
life through His seven saints.

The owner of the land on which Mount Ochlon was situated, discovered the stone construction, and his workers opened up the entrance to the cave. The Lord had kept the youths alive, and they awoke from their sleep, unaware that almost two hundred years had passed. Their bodies and clothing were completely undecayed.

Preparing to accept torture, the youths once again asked St Iamblicus to buy bread for them in the city. Going toward the city, the youth was astonished to see a cross on the gates. Hearing the name of Jesus Christ freely spoken, he began to doubt that he was approaching his own city.

When he paid for the bread, Iamblicus gave the merchant coins with the image of the emperor Decius on it. He was detained, as someone who might be concealing a horde of old money. They took St Iamblicus to the city administrator, who also happened to be the Bishop of Ephesus. Hearing the bewildering answers of the young man, the bishop perceived that God was revealing some sort of mystery through him, and went with other people to the cave.

At the entrance to the cave the bishop found the sealed container and opened it. He read upon the metal plaques the names of the seven youths and the details of the sealing of the cave on the orders of the emperor Decius.
Going into the cave and seeing the saints alive, everyone rejoiced and perceived that the Lord, by waking them from their long sleep, was demonstrating to the Church the mystery of the Resurrection of the Dead.

Soon the emperor himself arrived in Ephesus and spoke with the young men in the cave. Then the holy youths, in sight of everyone, lay their heads upon the ground and fell asleep again, this time until the General Resurrection.

The emperor wanted to place each of the youths into a jeweled coffin, but they appeared to him in a dream and said that their bodies were to be left upon the ground in the cave. In the twelfth century the Russian pilgrim Igumen Daniel saw the holy relics of the seven youths in the cave.

There is a second commemoration of the seven youths on October 22. According to one tradition, which entered into the Russian PROLOGUE (of Saints’ Lives), the youths fell asleep for the second time on this day. The Greek MENAION of 1870 says that they first fell asleep on August 4, and woke up on October 22.

There is a prayer of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in the GREAT BOOK OF NEEDS (Trebnik) for those who are ill and cannot sleep. The Seven Sleepers are also mentioned in the service for the Church New Year, September 1.
Homily LXVIII.
Matt. XXI. 33-44.

“Hear another parable. There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and dug a winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to receive the fruits. And the husbandmen took the servants, and beat some, and killed some, and stoned some. Again he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last he sent unto them his son, saying, It may be they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the Lord therefore of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those husbandmen? They say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus says unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner?”

1. Many things does He intimate by this parable, God’s providence, which had been exercised towards them from the first; their murderous disposition from the beginning; that nothing had been omitted of whatever pertained to a heedful care of them; that even when prophets had been slain, He had not turned away from them, but had sent
His very Son; that the God both of the New and of the Old Testament was one and the same; that His death should effect great blessings; that they were to endure extreme punishment for the crucifixion, and their crime; the calling of the Gentiles, the casting out of the Jews.

Therefore He puts it after the former parable, that He may show even hereby the charge to be greater, and highly unpardonable. How, and in what way? That although they met with so much care, they were worse than harlots and publicans, and by so much.

And observe also both His great care, and the excessive idleness of these men. For what pertained to the husbandmen, He Himself did, the hedging it round about, the planting the vineyard, and all the rest, and He left little for them to do; to take care of what was there, and to preserve what was given to them. For nothing was left undone, but all accomplished; and not even so did they gain, and this, when they had enjoyed such great blessings from Him. For when they had come forth out of Egypt, He gave a law, and set up a city, and built a temple, and prepared an altar.

“And went into a far country;” that is, He bore long with them, not always bringing the punishments close upon their sins; for by His going into a far country, He means His great long-suffering.

And “He sent His servants,” that is, the prophets, “to receive the fruit;” that is, their obedience, the proof of it by their works. But they even here showed their wickedness, not only by failing to give the fruit, after having enjoyed so much care, which was the sign of idleness, but also by showing anger towards them that came. For they that had not to give when they owed, should not have been indignant, nor angry, but should
have entreated. But they not only were indignant, but even filled their hands with blood, and while deserving punishment, themselves inflicted punishment.

Therefore He sent both a second, and a third company, both that the wickedness of these might be shown, and the love towards man of Him who sent them.

And wherefore sent He not His Son immediately? In order that they might condemn themselves for the things done to the others, and leave off their wrath, and reverence Him when He came. There are also other reasons, but for the present let us go on to what is next. But what means, “It may be they will reverence?” It is not the language of one ignorant, away with the thought! But of one desiring to show the sin to be great; and without any excuse. Since Himself knowing that they would slay Him, He sent Him. But He says, “They will reverence,” declaring what ought to have been done, that it was their duty to have reverenced Him. Since elsewhere also He says, “if perchance they will hear;” Ezekiel 2:5 not in this case either being ignorant, but lest any of the obstinate should
say, that His prediction was the thing that necessitated their disobedience, therefore He frames His expressions in this way, saying, “Whether they will,” and, “It may be.” For though they had been obstinate towards His servants, yet ought they to have reverenced the dignity of the Son.

What then do these? When they ought to have run unto Him, when they ought to have asked pardon for their offenses, they even persist more strongly in their former sins, they proceed to add unto their pollutions, forever throwing into the shade their former offenses by their later; as also He Himself declared when He said, “Fill ye up the measure of your fathers.” Matthew 23:32 For from the first the prophets used to charge them with these things, saying, “Your hands are full of blood;” Isaiah 1:15 and, “They mingle blood with blood;” Hosea 4:2 and, “They build up Sion with blood.” Micah 3:10

But they did not learn self-restraint, albeit they received this commandment first, “You shall not kill;” and had been commanded to abstain from countless other things because of this, and by many and various means urged to the keeping of this commandment.

Yet, for all that, they put not away that evil custom; but what say they, when they saw Him? Come, let us kill Him. With what motive, and for what reason? What of any kind had they to lay to His charge, either small or great? Is it that He honored you, and being God became man for your sakes, and wrought His countless miracles? Or that He pardoned your sins? Or that He called you unto a kingdom?

But see together with their impiety great was their folly, and the reason of His murder was full of much madness. “For let us kill Him,” it is said, “and the inheritance shall be ours.”
And where do they take counsel to kill Him? “Out of the vineyard.”

2. Do you see how He prophesies even the place where He was to be slain. “And they cast Him out, and slew Him.”

And Luke indeed says, that He declared what these men should suffer; and they said, “God forbid;” and He added the testimony [of Scripture]. For “He beheld them, and said, What is it then that is written? The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner; and every one that falls upon it shall be broken.” Luke 20:17-18 But Matthew, that they themselves delivered the sentence. But this is not a contradiction. For indeed both things were done, both themselves passed the sentence against themselves; and again, when they perceived what they had said, they added, “God forbid;” and He set up the prophet against them, persuading them that certainly this would be.

Nevertheless, not even so did He plainly reveal the Gentiles, that He might afford them no handle, but signified it darkly by saying, “He will give the vineyard to others.” For this purpose then did He speak by a parable, that themselves might pass the sentence, which was done in the case of David also, when He passed judgment on the parable of Nathan. But do thou mark, I pray you, even hereby how just is the sentence, when the very persons that are to be punished condemn themselves.

Then that they might learn that not only the nature of justice requires these things, but even from the beginning the grace of the Spirit had foretold them, and God had so decreed, He both added a prophecy, and reproves them in a way to put them to shame, saying, “Did ye never read, The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner? This is the Lord’s doing,
and it is marvellous in our eyes;” by all things showing, that they should be cast out for unbelief, and the Gentiles brought in. This He darkly intimated by the Canaanitish woman also; this again by the ass, and by the centurion, and by many other parables; this also now.

Wherefore He added too, “This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes,” declaring beforehand that the believing Gentiles, and as many of the Jews as should also themselves believe, shall be one, although the difference between them had been so great before.

Then, that they might learn that nothing was opposed to God’s will of the things doing, but that the event was even highly acceptable, and beyond expectation, and amazing every one of the beholders (for indeed the miracle was far beyond words), He added and said, “It is the Lord’s doing.” And by the stone He means Himself, and by builders the teachers of the Jews; as Ezekiel also says, “They that build the wall, and daub it with untempered mortar.” Ezekiel 13:10 But how did they reject Him? By saying, “This man is not of God; John 9:16 This man deceives the people;” John 7:12 and again, “You are a Samaritan, and hast a devil.” John 8:48

Then, that they might know that the penalty is not limited to their being cast out, He added the punishments also, saying, “Every one that falls on this stone, shall be broken; but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.” He speaks here of two ways of destruction, one from stumbling and being offended; for this is, “Whosoever falls on this stone:” but another from their capture, and calamity, and utter destruction, which also He clearly foretold, saying, “It will grind him to powder.” By these words He darkly intimated His own resurrection also.

Now the Prophet Isaiah says, that He blames the vineyard,
but here He accuses in particular the rulers of the people. And there indeed He says, “What ought I to have done to my vineyard, that I did not;” Isaiah 5:4 and elsewhere again, “What transgression have your fathers found in me?” Jeremiah 2:5 And again, “O my people, what have I done unto you? And wherein have I grieved you?” Micah 6:3 showing their thankless disposition, and that when in the enjoyment of all things, they requited it by the contraries; but here He expresses it with yet greater force. For He does not plead, Himself, saying, “What ought I to have done that I have not done?” but brings in themselves to judge, that nothing has been wanting, and to condemn themselves. For when they say, “He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen,” they say nothing else than this, publishing their sentence with much greater force.

With this Stephen also upbraids them, which thing most of all stung them, that having enjoyed always much providential care, they requited their benefactor with the contraries, which very thing itself was a very great sign, that not the punisher, but the punished, were the cause of the vengeance brought upon them.

This here likewise is shown, by the parable, by the prophecy. For neither was He satisfied with a parable only, but added also a twofold prophecy, one David’s, the others from Himself.

What then ought they to have done on hearing these things? Ought they not to have adored, to have marvelled at the tender care, that shown before, that afterwards? But if by none of these things they were made better, by the fear of punishment at any rate ought they not to have been rendered more temperate?

But they did not become so, but what do they after
these things? “When they had heard it,” it is said, “they perceived that He spoke of them. And when they sought to lay hands on Him, they were afraid because of the multitudes, for they took Him for a prophet.” For they felt afterwards that they themselves were intimated. Sometimes indeed, when being seized, He withdraws through the midst of them, and is not seen; and sometimes while appearing to them He lays a check upon their laboring eagerness; at which indeed men marveled, and said, “Is not this Jesus? Lo, He speaks boldly, and they say nothing unto Him.” But in this instance, forasmuch as they were held in restraint by the fear of the multitude, He is satisfied with this, and does not work miracles, as before, withdrawing through the midst, and not appearing. For it was not His desire to do all things in a superhuman way, in order that the Dispensation might be believed.

But they, neither by the multitude, nor by what had been said, were brought to a sound mind; they regarded not the prophet’s testimony, nor their own sentence, nor the disposition of the people; so entirely had the love of power and the lust of vainglory blinded them, together with the pursuit of things temporal.

3. ...

4. Where now are they who give themselves to devilish choirs, and harlot’s songs, and sit in theatres? For I am indeed ashamed to make mention of them; nevertheless, because of your infirmity it is needful to do even this. For Paul too says, “Like as you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.”

Come let us also therefore compare the company that is made up of harlot women, and prostituted youths on the
stage, and this same that consists of these blessed ones in regard of pleasure, for which most of all, many of the careless youths are taken in their snares. For we shall find the difference as great as if any one heard angels singing above that all-harmonious melody of theirs, and dogs and swine howling and grunting on the dunghill. For by the mouths of these Christ speaks, by their tongues the devil.

But is the sound of pipes joined to them with unmeaning noise, and unpleasing show, when cheeks are puffed out, and their strings stretched to breaking? But here the grace of the Spirit pours forth a sound, using, instead of flute or lyre or pipes, the lips of the saints.

Or rather, whatever we may say, it is not possible to set forth the pleasure thereof, because of them that are riveted to their clay, and their brick-making? Therefore I would even wish to take one of those who are mad about these matters, and to lead him off there, and to show him the choir of those saints, and I should have no more need for these words. Nevertheless, though we speak unto miry ones, we will try, though by word, still little by little, to draw them out of the slime and the fens. For there the hearer receives straightway the fire of illicit love; for as though the sight of the harlot were not enough to set the mind on fire, they add the mischief also from the voice; but here even should the soul have any such thing, it lays it aside straightway. But not their voice only, nor their countenance, but even their clothes do more than these confound the beholders. And should it be some poor man of the grosser and heedless sort, from the sight he will cry out ten thousand times in bitter despair, and will say to himself, “The harlot, and the prostituted boy, children of cooks and cobblers, and often even of slaves live in such delicacy, and I a freeman, and born of freemen, choosing honest labor, am not able so much as to imagine these
things in a dream;” and thus he will go his way inflamed with discontent.

But in the case of the monks there is no such result, but rather the contrary altogether. For when he shall see children of rich men and descendants of illustrious ancestors clothed in such garments as not even the lowest of the poor, and rejoicing in this, consider how great a consolation against poverty he will receive as he goes away. And should he be rich, he returns sobered, become a better man. Again in the theatre, when they see the harlot clothed with golden ornaments, while the poor man will lament, and bemoan, seeing his own wife having nothing of the kind, the rich will in consequence of this spectacle contemn and despise the partners of their home. For when the harlot present to the beholders garb and look, and voice and step, all luxurious, they depart set on fire, and enter into their own houses, thenceforth captives.

Hence the insults, and the affronts, hence the enmities, the wars, the daily deaths; hence to them that are taken captive, life is insupportable, and the partner of their home thenceforth unpleasing, and their children not as much objects of affection, and all things in their houses turned upside down, and after that they seem to be thrown into disorder by the very sunbeam.

But not from these choirs does any such dissatisfaction arise, but the wife will receive her husband quiet and meek, freed from all unlawful lust, and will find him more gentle to her than before this. Such evil things does that choir bring forth, but this good things, the one making wolves of sheep, this lambs of wolves. But as yet we have perhaps said nothing hitherto touching the pleasure.

And what could be more pleasant than not to be troubled or grieved in mind, neither to despond and groan?
Nevertheless, let us carry on our discourse still further, and examine the enjoyment of either kind of song and spectacle; and we shall see the one indeed continuing until evening, so long as the spectator sits in the theatre, but after this paining him more grievously than any sting; but in the other case forever vigorous in the souls of them that have beheld it. For as well the fashion of the men, and the delightfulness of the place, and the sweetness of their manner of life, and the purity, of their rule, and the grace of that most beautiful and spiritual song they have for ever instilled in them. They at least who are in continual enjoyment of those havens, thenceforth flee as from a tempest, from the tumults of the multitude.

But not when singing only, and praying, but also when riveted to their books, they are a pleasing spectacle to the beholders. For after they have ended the choir, one takes Isaiah and discourses with him, another converses with the apostles, and another goes over the labors of other men, and seeks wisdom concerning God, concerning this universe, concerning the things that are seen, concerning the things that are not seen, concerning the objects of sense, and the objects of intellect, concerning the vileness of this present life, and the greatness of that to come.

5. And they are fed on a food most excellent, not setting before themselves cooked flesh of beasts; but oracles of God, beyond honey and the honey comb, a honey marvellous, and far superior to that whereon John fed of old in the wilderness. For this honey no wild bees collect, settling on the flowers, neither do lay it up in hives digesting the dew, but the grace of the Spirit forming it, lays it up in the souls of the saints, in the place of honeycombs, and hives, and pipes, so that he that will may eat thereof continually in security. These bees then they also imitate, and hover around the honeycombs of
those holy books, reaping therefrom great pleasure.

And if you desire to learn about their table, be near it, and you shall see them bursting forth with such things, all gentle and sweet, and full of a spiritual fragrance. No foul word can those spiritual mouths bring forth, nothing of foolish jesting, nothing harsh, but all worthy of Heaven. One would not be wrong in comparing the mouths of them that crawl about in the market places, and are mad after worldly things, to ditches of some mire; but the lips of these to fountains flowing with honey, and pouring forth pure streams.

But if any felt displeased that I have called the mouths of the multitude ditches of some mire, let him know that I have said it, sparing them very much. For Scripture has not used this measure, but a comparison far stronger. “For adder’s poison,” it is said, “is under their lips, and their throat is an open sepulchre.” But theirs are not so, but full of much fragrance.

And their state here is like this, but that hereafter what speech can set before us? What thought shall conceive? The portion of angels, the blessedness unspeakable, the good things untold?

Perchance some are warmed now, and have been moved to a longing after this good rule of life. But what is the profit, when while you are here only, you have this fire; but when you have gone forth, you extinguish the flame, and this desire fades. How then, in order that this may not be? While this desire is warm in you, go your way unto those angels, kindle it more. For the account that we give will not be able to set you on fire, like as the sight of the things. Say not, I will speak with my wife, and I will settle my affairs first. This delay is the beginning of remissness. Hear, how one desired to bid farewell to them at his house,
1 Kings 19:20 and the prophet suffered him not. And why do I say, to bid farewell? The disciple desired to bury his father, Matthew 8:21-22 and Christ allowed not so much as this. And yet what thing seems to you to be so necessary as the funeral of a father? But not even this did He permit.

Why could this have been? Because the devil is at hand fierce, desiring to find some secret approach; and though it be but a little hindrance or delay he takes hold of, he works a great remissness. Therefore one advises, “Put not off from day to day.” Sirach 5:7 For thus shall you be able to succeed in most things, thus also shall the things in your house be well ordered for you. “For seek ye,” it is said, “the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33 For if we establish in great security them that overlook their own interests, and prefer the care of ours, much more does God, who even without these things has a care for us, and provides for us.

Be not thoughtful then about your interests, but leave them to God. For if you are thoughtful about them, you are thoughtful as a man; but if God provide, He provides as God. Be not so thoughtful about them as to let go the greater things, since then He will not much provide for them. In order therefore that He may fully provide for them, leave them to Him alone. For if you also yourself takest them in hand, having let go the things spiritual, He will not make much provision for them.

In order then that both these things may be well disposed for you, and that you may be freed from all anxiety, cleave to the things spiritual, overlook the things of the world; for in this way you shall have earth also with heaven, and shall attain unto the good things to come, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and might world without end. Amen.
Saint John Chrysostom
(347 A.D. - 407 A.D.)

St. John Chrysostom was born to a noble and wealthy family in Antioch in 347. His father, the descendent of an illustrious Greek family, bore the title of Magister Militum Orientis. He died while his son was still an infant. His mother, Anthusa, left a widow at the age of 20, refused to remarry, in order to devote herself to the rearing and education of her only son. Libanius, a famous rhetorician, and a philosopher named Andragatius were John’s teachers.

At the age of 18 he began practicing asceticism as opposed to law. Archbishop Meletius of Antioch allowed him, as an acolyte, to be attached to the Archbishop’s Palace. Later, the Archbishop tonsured John as a lector. When his mother died in 374, he entered a coenobic monastery nearby and later he spent two years as a hermit in a cave. His austere monastic practices enfeebled his health and about 380 he was obliged to return to Antioch. The following year he was ordained a deacon by Archbishop Meletius, and in 386 he was ordained a priest by Archbishop Flavian, Meletius’ successor. Thus at the age of 40 he began his 17 years as a preacher. His preaching later won him the title of Chrysostom (Golden Mouth). He was eloquent, so much so, that the people packed the churches to hear him. One of his most famous homilies
was “On the Statues.”

On February 26, 398 Chrysostom, against his will, was enthroned as Patriarch of Constantinople at the Cathedral of Haghia Sophia. Thus, he who hated power was now in the seat of power. He who fought against luxury and despised the Kings of this world, lived now in a luxurious Patriarchal Palace close to the Emperor’s Palace. His fiery and eloquent homilies, which attracted the masses of the people, provoked the wrath of many and especially the Byzantine Court. In one of his sermons Patriarch Chrysostom made reference to Empress Eudoxia by alluding that she was just another Jezebel. Eudoxia, who
spoke Greek with a Frankish accent, became his arch-enemy along with Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria, who had ordained Chrysostom a Bishop. Thus, in 403 at the Palace of Oak Tree (near Chalcedon), on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, a synod was convened by Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria, who had no ecclesiastical authority whatsoever over the See of Constantinople. Twenty-nine Egyptian Bishops came under the protection of Empress Eudoxia and condemned Chrysostom on the most absurd charges. He was dethroned as Patriarch and banished. Chrysostom surrendered to the Emperor’s officers, who then took him to the harbor and put him aboard a ship to be exiled at Hieron in Bithynia at the mouth of the Pontus. The next day riots of the people and earthquakes befell Constantinople. The Empress Eudoxia, being superstitious, attributed these happenings to Chrysostom’s banishment, and recalled him back at once.

The reconciliation was brief. Empress Eudoxia exiled Chrysostom on June 4, 404 to Caucasus, in the valley of the Taurus. In 407 he was transferred to Arabissus at the foot of the Caucasus, but died during the journey near Comana, in Pontus on September 14th, a little over the age of sixty. His last words were “Glory be to God in all things.” In 438, the saint’s remains were solemnly brought back to Constantinople where they were placed in the Church of the Apostles. Herein is the life of the saintliest man and the greatest preacher ever to grace the Patriarchal Throne of Constantinople. Let us therefore, reflect on the life of St. John Chrysostom whenever we chant the responses and hymns of the Divine Liturgy which he arranged and composed for our spiritual enrichment.
In the Latin Church the sacrament of Confirmation has been set adrift from Baptism, largely as an accident of history. As was explained in the previous section, in the ancient church the newly baptized were brought before the bishop for Chrismation or Confirmation. The Latin Church was keen to keep this living connection with the bishop and delayed Confirmation until the bishop could get to a particular church. Baptism, however, was not delayed and the relatively small number of bishops and the large number of converts resulted in Baptism and Confirmation becoming more and more separated in time. Eventually, the stage was reached when baptism was normally received as an infant and Confirmation was not received until the person was an “adult” and a theology began to form which saw this as a desirable state of affairs.

In the Byzantine Church the connection between baptism and Chrismation was maintained and the two sacraments, though separate, were always seen as intimately connected. In this, the Byzantine Church has tried to remain as close as possible to the practice of the early church. However, faced with the same practical problems as the Latin Church, compromises had to be made as the church grew. In the Byzantine Church the impossibility of a few Bishops confirming a large number of new Christians, both adults and infants, in a timely manner
(and the undesirability of a prolonged postponement to baptism) was solved by allowing the local priest to administer the sacrament of Chrismation with the connection to the Bishop being maintained through the blessing of the oil. Chrismation can only be administered with oil especially blessed for that purpose by the bishop. This reduces the connection of the bishop to the sacrament, and therefore to his people, but maintains the unity of Christian Initiation.

The procedure for Chrismation is the same in the Latin and Byzantine Churches. The candidate is anointed with specially blessed Chrism (myron), a fragrant oil, and hands are laid on him. It is true to say however, that in the Latin Church more emphasis is placed on the laying on of hands while the Byzantine Church places more emphasis on the anointing (hence the name Chrismation). This difference in emphasis probably has to do with the important connection between this sacrament and the bishop, a connection which goes back to apostolic times. In the Latin Church this connection is strongly maintained in the person of the bishop who lays his hands on each candidate, while in the Byzantine Church it is maintained by the oil used in anointing which is specially blessed for the purpose by the bishop.

While the Latin West has maintained the strong connection between the sacrament of Confirmation and the bishop, it has paid a high price for separating Confirmation from Baptism. The problem is that someone who has been baptized in infancy has been living as a Christian for many years, and has often been receiving the Eucharist for many years, before he is Confirmed. This has led to something of a crisis in the western understanding of Confirmation which has been described as “a sacrament searching for a theology.” The confusion
was caused by the temporal separation of the two sacraments. This was compounded by the ambivalence of many Protestant churches to infant Baptism and the dual meaning of the term ‘confirmation’. In these Protestant usages, Confirmation is seen as an adult commitment to Christ – you confirm as an adult the promises made for you as an infant. Confirmation thus moves from a sacrament of initiation to a Christian teenage rite of passage. This theology has influenced Roman Catholic theology with many understanding Confirmation as giving the grace to become an “adult Christian.” Confirmation became restricted, except in danger of death, to after the age of discernment (generally considered to be about seven years) and came to be considered as the sacrament of “Christian maturity.” The practice grew of delaying Confirmation until the teenage years.¹

Never the less, the Latin Church still insists on the unity of the sacraments of Christian initiation and rejects any understanding of these sacraments which separates them. Confirmation completes the initiation of the Christian begun at Baptism and it is certainly not to be understood as an adult validation of the promises made for the infant as Baptism – although this does occur as a precursor to the sacrament in order to remind the candidates of the unity of the two sacraments. The word confirmation is not to be understood here as “I confirm this commitment” but rather in the sense of “to establish more firmly, to ratify and make formally valid.”² It has an overtone of strength as when a horse breeder speaks of the “solid confirmation” of a race horse. He means that the horse

1 Following Vatican II, this trend has been reversed in many Latin Dioceses by reuniting Confirmation and the reception of First Holy Communion.
2 The Concise Oxford Dictionary.
is well built for speed and power. The key difference between these two understandings is that in the orthodox catholic understanding it is the Holy Spirit who confirms the Christians – Latin or Byzantine. It is He who ratifies them and establishes them more firmly in the Christian life, rather than it being the Christian who confirms their commitment.

To emphasize this, the Second Vatican Council directed that: The rite of Confirmation is to be revised also so that the intimate connection of this sacrament with the whole of Christian Initiation may more clearly appear”\(^3\) and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) restored the full unity of these sacraments, with Confirmation administered by the baptizing priest, in a manner similar to the practice of the Byzantine Church. However, since most Christians are baptized as infants, the sacramental theology of the Latin Church is still separated from its ritual expression in the life of the church. This can lead to confusion, especially in societies dominated by Protestant traditions.

The Byzantine Church has never separated these two sacraments and so has never suffered from this confusion. It remains understood in the same way as it was understood in the early church (as the sacrament which completes baptism and seals the new Christian with, and brings about the full indwelling and grace of, the Holy Spirit) and this understanding is expressed in its ritual practice.

As always, the Byzantine Church expresses its theology of Christian Initiation in an icon. (See following page) In this case the icon of Christian Initiation is the Baptism of Christ which shows not only John the Baptist pouring

\(^3\) Sacrosanctum Concilium.
water over Christ’s head in the act of baptism but also the Spirit descending from the Father to “anoint” Christ for his mission.

The unity and fullness of Christian Initiation is here in the icon since not only are the gospel origins of Baptism and Chrismation shown but the Eucharist is also prefigured since here, at the start of his public life, Christ is giving himself to the world. He is starting on the road which will lead to his crucifixion and resurrection.

Lord, when You were baptized in the Jordan, the veneration of the Trinity was revealed. For the voice of the Father gave witness to You, calling You Beloved, and the Spirit, in the guise of a dove, confirmed the certainty of His words. Glory to You, Christ our God, who appeared and enlightened the world.

_Troparion of the Epiphany_
Homiletic Reflections
By Father John Zeyack

Matthew 21:33-42

You know that today people have really been hurt by the stock market. People invest their money with the hope of a return. They trust that the executives and companies are going to use their money wisely and that they will run an honest company. Instead so many executives and corporate heads have dealt dishonestly and have used the monies invested for their own gain without thinking of the investors. They have betrayed their trust. They should be sought out, tried and, if found guilty, punished because they have not been honest, and they have betrayed a trust that people put in them.

From this, I think that we can understand the parable of Jesus in this morning’s Gospel reading. Here is a property owner. He invests his money into land and equipment, establishes a vineyard, puts a hedge around it and protects it from marauding animals. He puts in a tower to guard his investment and then leases out his property to tenant farmers.

When vintage time comes, he’s looking for a payback, he wants to receive a profit from what he has worked for and invested in. Look at what the tenants do. They forget who is the owner and who is the servant. They want it all for themselves and so they refuse to listen to the servants who come for their master’s share of the grapes. They even kill the owner’s son thinking that they could
get away with it. And so Jesus leaves us with a question: “What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard will do to those servants when he comes?” I don’t think that I want to be around.

St. Paul ends his first letter to the Corinthians, from which we read this morning, with this warning: “Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith and act like men. In a word be strong. Do everything with love.” Be responsible people! Know that you have to give an account for your life to God! That’s a reality that confronts all of us. What have we done with our lives? How have we protected, guarded, enhanced, and matured what we have received? Do we treasure what we have only for ourselves? Do we acknowledge the giver of all good gifts? Do we forget that we have been so blessed that we forget the giver?

Our liturgy calls us again and again to pay attention! “Be attentive!” Listen and watch for God is here acting on our behalf, teaching us how to live, and giving us the power to live according to His desire.

Did you ever let anyone borrow something and not get it back? Or get it back dirty or even damaged? Are you going to let them borrow something again? I don’t think so.

In the Old Testament there are so many stories about the vineyard. God is the owner. Israel, His people, is the vineyard. God tends and watches and protects His people. But He also expects them to give back glory and thanks, to be faithful to their God, to deal with one another honestly and with an attitude of service.

When the bishop begins the service he raises the candles in blessing and says, “O Lord, O Lord, look down from Heaven and see and visit this vineyard and perfect this vine which Your right hand has planted. Look down upon the son of man whom You have made strong!”
We are God’s vineyard. Our God has planted us here in this vineyard – we need to grow and become fruit bearing. We need to be strong in our faith, in our trust that God will watch over us, in our love for one another. We need to grow in faith, life and spiritual understanding so that we can bear the fruit of holiness, of goodness, of character, of being honest and upright people faithful to God and faithful to His Church.

If we forget God, if we forget that we belong to God, if we forget that we are His people, we risk thinking only about ourselves, and then we risk losing everything.

May we be faithful. May we be strong. May we worship with faith and with love.
The most eloquent verses of the Divine Office for the Feast of the Holy Conception are those ("At the Litija") that directly treat the conception of the Virgin Mary. It should be readily conceded that a reading in favor of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception not only suggest itself, but even can be claimed to be the most condign one. As we chant on the fittingness of the occasion:

It is fitting that the Queen of heaven and earth, who is more precious than the Cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, be conceived and remain immaculate as the angels, so that they who are servants of the Lord can boast of their own Queen, the Mother of God. Glory and praise to the Lord who willed it so, the Creator of all things.

It is fitting that the unique and chosen woman be conceived without sin, and the power of Satan is now taken away; for the Mother of God will never bow before him. Glory and praise to the Lord who willed it so, the Creator of all things.

It is fitting that the Second Eve be created and remain without sin in the manner of the Second Adam; for the rebirth of the human race now takes place, just as the fall came through the first Adam and the first Eve. Christ has renewed all through his new birth, and it was Mary that gave birth to Him. Glory and praise to the Lord who willed
it so, the Creator of all things.

A last verse could have even been written by Blessed John Duns Scotus himself:

Before the nativity of the Son of God, it was fitting for the Father to bestow the most pure conception upon the Mother of God, who is betrothed of the Holy Spirit, that she might be filled with heavenly gifts in a manner beyond all other creatures. Glory and praise to the Lord who willed it so, the Creator of all things.

The prescribed Old Testament readings for the festal vespers are the standard ones for Marian feasts: Genesis 28:10–17; Ezekiel 43:27–44:4; and Proverbs 9:1–11. But it is interesting to note that the Ukrainian Basilian monks in their Vechirniia i Utreniiia (Vespers and Matins) of 1937 have changed these paremii to Genesis 3:1–15; Esther 7:1–10; and Judith 13:4–20. They thereby make a bold theological statement, namely, that in the Immaculate Conception one finds a formidable, indeed, implacable, adversary to Satan. Possibly the curse against the serpent says it all: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel” (Gen 3:15). From the numerous verses cited so far in this study, one would naturally picture the Virgin Theotokos as humble and demure, if not entirely retiring in disposition. Finding types of her in Esther and Judith, on the other hand, paints a whole different portrait of her. With prototypes as these the Virgin Theotokos takes on a true, combatant role in the war on all things satanic. In the passage from Esther, we find Queen Esther getting the Persian King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) to agree to have his vizier Haman, an archrival of the Jews, executed. In her eponymous book, we find Judith with her feminine wiles able to position herself in
the bedroom of a drunken Holofernes, the commander-
in-chief of the Assyrian King Nebuchadnezzar’s armies, where she decapitates him, the key action that facilitates the Jews’ eventual routing and slaughter of their Assyrian enemies.

The statement being made by these readings is a powerful one, indeed. But with the conception of the Virgin Theotokos a true turning around of fallen nature is effected. As we sing in the second sessional hymn at matins for the feast:

Behold! Today is the renewal of Adam; Eve exalts with joy. The dry and arid land has produced the most beautiful fruit of all: the One who brought forth the wheat of immortality for all the world; the One who put an end to the humiliating sterility. Let us also rejoice with them on this day.

This being said, it still must be remembered that the Virgin Mary is only the penultimate focus of the day, which, in the final analysis, only points to Jesus her Son. As she is the flower, he is the fruit. As it is stated both at vespers and matins:

On this day the royal purple appears, descending from the root of David. The mystical flower of Jesse buds forth; from her shall blossom Christ our God, the Savior of our souls.
Practicing Our Faith
By Marianne Sailus

“Assuming the Spirit of Martyrdom”

In this month of August, we celebrate three holydays. The two that will immediately come to mind are Transfiguration of Our Lord (August 6th) and the Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15th). What we may fail to realize is that August 29th is a Simple Holyday, yet an important one – The Beheading of the Forerunner and Baptist, John.

In the Kontakion for the day we pray, “The glorious beheading of the Forerunner was part of God’s saving plan that the coming of the Saviour might be announced even to those in Hades. Let Herodias mourn for she sought a lawless murder because she loved neither the Law of God nor eternal life, but only this false and fleeting life.” While at first glance, it may seem to us that these words may not apply to our lives, if we carefully read them, we may ask ourselves, “Are we more attached to this life and the law of man, or do we truly belong to Christ Jesus, and subject ourselves to His Law of Love?”

It is difficult, as a follower of Christ, to live in this world without being of this world. Each of us obviously lives in this world. But the ruler of this world (i.e., the Evil One) seeks to snatch our immortal souls – as he did that of Herodias. He wants us to place the fleeting happiness of this day and age above the eternal joy that can be found only in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, Who defeated Satan and granted us everlasting life.
To reach the goal of eternal life, St. John the Forerunner and Baptist removed himself as much as he could from the world in order to allow God to prepare him for the work he was to accomplish by announcing the Son of God to the world. Scripture tells us, “John the Baptist was in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptized by him in the River Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey” (Mark 1:4-6). This hardly sounds like a man with whom one would want to dine and party! Nonetheless, this is how John became an open vessel to receive the Word of God and proclaim Christ to the world.

But as with Christ Himself, St. John’s message was not a popular one. He proclaimed, “Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming retribution?”
Produce fruit in keeping with repentance, and do not presume to tell yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is being laid to the root of the trees, so that any tree failing to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire” (Matthew 3:7b-10). His was a message of repentance and sacrifice. Most people could not bring themselves to follow this message, including Herod, who took his brother’s wife as his own. So even though Herod was intrigued with John, when Herodias slyly had her daughter ask for the head of St. John the Baptist at a birthday party in Herod’s honor, rather than go back on the word he had promised her in front of many people, Herod granted her request. That is why, on this day, a pious practice is not to eat anything from a plate nor anything that is in the shape of a head (cabbage, lettuce, etc.).

When we think of martyrs, we think of St. John, Saints Peter and Paul, the saints of the early Church, etc. But how many unrecognized martyrs this very day will give their lives for Christ? The blood of Christian martyrs flows daily in the Middle East and elsewhere. Is it just a matter of time before we, too, will be faced with a choice to claim Christ or be killed? Only God Himself knows the answer to that question. But that is only one type of martyrdom. It is a second kind that many of us face frequently.

This second kind of “martyrdom” is not a blood-red martyrdom, but a “white martyrdom.” This refers to the revilement, expulsion, and rejection we may experience from others because we confess Jesus Christ as our Saviour and live our lives according the Commandments. When teens decide upon chastity rather than promiscuity, though all their friends are “doing it,” they are part of this
“white martyrdom.” When business people are honest and fair to their customers and employees, rather than cheat them to make a profit, and are mocked by those who step on others to make money, they are “white martyrs.” When parents put their children’s faith formation ahead of sports and recreational events, they may be seen by other parents as “foolish,” but through their example, they may actually be drawing others to God.

St. John Chrysostom writes, “This then let us also do, and let us weep for Herodias, and for them that imitate her. For many such revels now also take place, and though John be not slain, yet the members of Christ are, and in a far more grievous way. For it is not a head in a charger that the dancers of our time ask, but the souls of them that sit at the feast. For in making them slaves, and leading them to unlawful loves, and besetting them with harlots, they do not take off the head, but slay the soul, making them adulterers, and effeminate, and whoremongers.”

Perhaps our goal for this month may be two-fold. First, let us try to find ways each day to repent of our sins, as St. John the Baptist and Forerunner preached. This may include receiving the Mystery of Penance, which is the best way to leave behind our fallen ways and sinful passions, and to put love of God and service to others first in our lives. Next, may we also strive to put truth and holiness before popularity, achievement, and all types of pleasures. Through his intercession may we learn that all of the gains of this world are worth nothing, and rather cling to Christ Alone, Who is our only Way, Truth, and Life.
As I write this brief essay, the debate on global warming rages. Some scientists believe the earth is warming up while others do not. Some evidence points to global warming. Some recent reports show evidence of global cooling. It’s fair to say the scientific community is divided on the issue despite political, media, Hollywood and activist sentiment that play loose with the facts as they try to influence us toward a conclusion that the global warming is either true or false. My opinion is this – I don’t care about global warming.

The Sacredness of the Environment

Does my opinion surprise you? Does it seem callous? I suspect it does on the surface. I actually do care about global warming in the sense that if it is true then I care in that human beings need to take measures to correct this situation. The reason I don’t care about global warming in a sense is that it doesn’t make any difference to me in terms of how I view mine and everyone else’s shared responsibility for the care of planet. From a Christian point of view, the earth is God’s creation and gift for us and our job is to take care of it. If I am caring for the planet as I should, then I should be recycling, conserving energy, buying and using environmentally safe products and doing other actions that do not contribute to global warming or environmental decay. The truth of global warming should be irrelevant in terms of what already should be my positive motivation to care for the earth.
Genesis 1:26 reads:

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’” [italics mine].

I recently heard Father Olof Scott, the pastor of the St. George Orthodox Cathedral in Charleston, West Virginia and a physicist, state that the word dominion is a key word in this passage. He pointed out that God gave us dominion over the earth, not domination. Father Scott went on to say that mankind is to be in union with God in taking care of earth. We are to embrace our callings as stewards of creation and have synergy with Him in the care of His creation.

In other words, we are renters not owners and as such we need to take care of the property appropriately. It’s really that simple. That is why living sacramentally is so important. If we view the earth through a sacramental lens and understand all of creation as sacred because it is from God then we will have an attitude that leads us to care about it appropriately.

In addition to what I already mentioned, we should try to stay as informed as we can about the state of the earth and do our part to contribute to its well-being. As St. Paul wrote in Romans 8:20-22:

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
is a champion of the environment and was voted by Time Magazine (April 2008) as one of the hundred most influential people in the world (eleventh out of twenty on the list of world leaders) largely due to his concerns and work on behalf of the environment. He sees environmental issues as spiritual issues since God’s creation is part of God and should be viewed and cared for sacramentally with love and reverence.

**God and Science not God or Science**

In thinking about the environment, it made me also think of the larger issue of God and of science. A man once said to me that he doesn’t believe in God but he does believe in science. I heard a fictional doctor on television say she doesn’t believe in God but she does believe in medicine. This man, the writer who penned the fictional doctor’s dialogue, and many other people who don’t believe in God, always seem to frame their argument and attack on the belief in God, or perspective in terms of God or science.

God or science doesn’t make sense. It is one thing not to believe in God but to try to prove God doesn’t exist through science doesn’t work unless you believe the universe just created itself or existence somehow just sprung from non-existence randomly? The argument should always be framed God and science.

Science is possible because the universe is a divine creation. Therefore science is the study of God’s creation. And although God’s energies are present in the created universe, He is outside of his creation. To illustrate this, take out a piece of paper and draw a circle. The circle and the space inside it is the universe and science is a study of everything within the circle. God is outside of the circle but reflected within the circle. It’s somewhat like these chapters I write or any book. As the creator, something of me is present in what I create but I am outside of my creation. You can glean truths about me from what I
create but you can’t know me completely and fully unless I seek you out and introduce myself to you and invite you to know me. This is what God did in the person of Christ when He condescended to be part of His creation.

Further, as Frances Collins, the current head of the National Institutes of Health, points out, although science can be something that draws us to God, it is ultimately not the right tool just by itself to learn about God. He writes:

“If God exists, then He must be outside of the natural world, and therefore the tools of science are not the right ones to learn about Him. Instead, as I was beginning to understand from looking into my own heart, the evidence of God’s existence would have to come from other directions, and the ultimate decision would be based on faith, not proof?”

Some people will never believe in God unfortunately even though is makes no logical sense and defies the evidence around them. As St. Paul also writes in Romans 1:20:

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

C.S. Lewis points out that the atheistic theory which says that all our thoughts are solely the products of a mechanical nature is a theory which has itself been arrived at by trusting reason. But, if the theory is true, there is no ground for believing that reason is trustworthy. Hence, there is no ground for believing the theory is true. Basically if God doesn’t exist and all is random we can’t trust our own thoughts. Others say there is no such thing as God or absolute truth. If anyone ever says this to you, respond by saying nicely “are you absolutely sure?”
The City of Ephesus, Asia Minor

Ephesus: Ancient City Ruins
The ancient city of Ephesus is located very close to Kusadasi, Turkey, a resort near the Aegean Sea. The city was considered one of the largest cities of the Greeks in Asia Minor. It was home for the Temple of Artemis and was declared one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Ephesus, ancient city between Rome and the Holy Land
Now the ruins of the city are a major attraction for tourists and for travelers on Mediterranean Cruises. The city of Ephesus is also a sacred place for Christians, associated with many biblical figures including the Virgin Mary, Saint John the Evangelist, and Saint Paul the Apostle.
**Ephesus**
The city of Ephesus in ancient times was the center of commerce and travel. It was located at Aegean Sea just in front of Cayster River. Three main roads end at the seaport. One road goes towards east to Babylon through Laodicea, another road goes to north through Smyrna, and the third one goes to Meander Valley.

**Temple of Artemis**
The Temple of Artemis is called as one of the Seven Wonders in the Ancient World. The temple was made for the goddess of the hunt. Now only its foundation remains along with a few large columns. These area of temple that these columns surround is 425 feet long, 220 feet wide, with a height of 60 feet.

*One of the remaining columns of the Temple of Artemis*
Celsus Library
The Library of Celsus was built during 115 to 135 A.D. The restored portion of the library is the highlight of ruins of Ephesus city and the architecture common among Roman style libraries. The interior size of the library is 50 feet by 80 feet. It held almost 15,000 scrolls. The library was designed for Celsus, the proconsul in Asia Minor, whose sarcophagus is positioned under the apse.

Ephesus - Terrace Houses
During the time period of Augustus, the residential homes of wealthy Ephesians were fully decorated with beautiful mosaics and frescoes. The houses of Ephesus had very stylish and luxurious bathrooms, kitchens, and well decorated bedrooms and trilliums. The houses were built against the mountainess south portion of the city and the roofs were designed with a terrace. All of the houses of the city were settled up until the 7th Century.
Closeup of the Library

Terrace houses
Commercial Agora
The commercial square area known as Agora was 360 square feet square. The area was built during the Hellenistic period of the city. It was covered from all sides with arched shops that were almost 40 feet in depth. The area is located near the harbor and was the most important trade center of the city.

Theater
The theater of the city also dates from the Hellenistic period, but it was later renovated under the direction of the Roman emperors. It holds almost 25,000 people. The Ephesus Great Theater was basically made for theatrical performances and later some alterations were made which allowed gladiators to fight inside the theater.
Main Theater from the side

Upper main street of Ephesus, with homes on both sides
The House of Mary
The House of the Virgin Mary is a Catholic and Muslim shrine located on Mt. Koressos in the vicinity of Ephesus, 7 kilometres (4.3 mi) from Selçuk.

The house was discovered in the 19th century by following the explanations in the reported visions of Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824), a Roman Catholic nun and visionary, which were published as a book by Clemens Brentano after her death. The Catholic Church has never pronounced in favor or against the authenticity of the house, but nevertheless maintains a steady flow of pilgrims since its discovery. Anne Catherine Emmerich was Beatified by Pope John Paul II on October 3, 2004.

Catholic pilgrims visit the house based on the belief that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was taken to this stone house by Saint John and lived there until her Assumption (according to Catholic Church) or Dormition (according to entrance to the House of Mary
the Orthodox Church).

The shrine has merited several papal Apostolic Blessings and visits from several popes, the earliest pilgrimage coming from Pope Leo XIII in 1896, and the most recent in 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI.

**Inside the House of Mary**

**Site of the Third Ecumenical Council - Ephesus**

The Council of Ephesus was a council of Christian bishops convened in Ephesus in AD 431 by the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II. This third ecumenical council, an effort to attain consensus in the Church through an assembly representing all of Christendom, confirmed the original Nicene Creed, and condemned the teachings of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople. He taught that the Virgin Mary may be called the Christotokos, “Birth Giver of Christ” but not the Theotokos, “Birth Giver of God”. It met in June and July 431 at the Church of Mary in Ephesus.
Back wall of the Church of Mary of the Third Council

From the back of the Altar, the high place of the bishop
Common Troparia for Days of the Week

Common for Monday - Holy Angels

Troparion - Tone 4:
Leaders of the heavenly armies, although we are unworthy, we always beseech you to fortify us by your prayers and to shelter us beneath the wings of your sublime glory. Watch over us who bow to you and cry out fervently: Deliver us from danger. For you are the commanders of the powers on high.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
Leaders of God’s armies and ministers of divine glory, commanders of angels and guides of mortals, plead on our behalf for what we need and for great mercy; since you are the leaders of the heavenly hosts.

Common for Tuesday - the Holy Forerunner John

Troparion - Tone 2:
The memory of the righteous is celebrated with praise, but for you, O Forerunner, the Lord’s testimony is enough. You were shown to be more honorable than the prophets since you were deemed worthy to baptize in the waters the Lord you had proclaimed. Therefore, you fought for the truth and with joy proclaimed the good news to those in Hades, that God has appeared in the flesh to take away the sins of the world and to grant us great mercy.

Kontakion - Tone 3:
Today she who once was barren gives birth to Christ’s forerunner. He himself is the fulfillment of all prophecy; for in the Jordan, he imposed his hand upon the Word of God whom the prophets had foretold and was shown to be his prophet, herald, and forerunner.
Common for Wednesday- Holy Cross

Troparion - Tone 1:
Save your people, O Lord, and bless your inheritance. Grant victory to your Church over evil and protect your people by your cross.

Kontakion - Tone 4:
Christ our God, who were willingly raised upon the cross, grant your mercies to the new people who bear your name. By your power grant joy to the Church. Give her victory over evil with your invincible trophy, the weapon of peace, as an ally.

Common for Thursday - the Apostles and St. Nicholas

Troparion of the Apostles - Tone 3:
O holy apostles, intercede with the merciful God that he may grant our souls forgiveness of sins.

Troparion of Nicholas - Tone 4:
Your life has shown you to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of gentleness, and a teacher of moderation. You acquired greatness through humility and wealth through poverty. O Father and Archbishop Nicholas, intercede with Christ our God to save our souls.

Kontakion of the Apostles - Tone 2:
Lord, you have received your steadfast and inspired preachers, the foremost of your apostles, into the enjoyment of your good gifts and repose. You preferred their sufferings and death above any sacrifice. For you alone know the secrets of the heart.

Kontakion of Nicholas - Tone 3:
You were renowned as a priest in Myra, O holy Nicholas; for you fulfilled the Gospel of Christ, O venerable Father. You risked your life for your people and saved the innocent from death. Thereby you have been initiated into the mysteries of God’s grace.
**Common for Friday -- Holy Cross**

**Troparion - Tone 1:**
Save your people, O Lord, and bless your inheritance. Grant victory to your Church over evil and protect your people by your cross.

**Kontakion - Tone 4:**
Christ our God, who were willingly raised upon the cross, grant your mercies to the new people who bear your name. By your power grant joy to the Church. Give her victory over evil with your invincible trophy, the weapon of peace, as an ally.

**Common for Saturday -- the Saints and the Departed**

**Troparion of the Saints - Tone 2:**
Apostles, martyrs, and prophets, bishops, venerable and righteous saints, you have finished the course and have kept the faith. Since you can approach the Savior with confidence, we ask you to beseech his goodness on our behalf, for the salvation of our souls.

**Troparion for the Departed - Tone 2:**
O Lord, in your goodness, remember your servants and forgive whatever sins they committed in their life; for no one is sinless but you alone. You have the power to grant rest to the departed.

**Kontakion for the Departed - Tone 8:**
With the saints, O Christ, give rest to your servants, where there is no pain, sorrow, nor mourning, but life everlasting.

**Kontakion of the Saints - Tone 8:**
To you, O Lord, Gardener of all creation, the world offers the God-bearing martyrs as the first fruits of nature. Through their prayers and through the Theotokos preserve your Church, your dwelling-place, in perfect peace, O most merciful One.
Menalogion: Calendar of Saints and Daily Prayers

According to the Typicon of Archpriest David Petras

MONDAY, AUGUST 1

The Procession of the Wood of the Venerable and Life-creating Cross. The Holy Seven Machabees, their Mother Solomonia and the Elder Eleazar.

Common for the Holy Cross

Troparion - Tone 1:
Save your people, O Lord, and bless your inheritance. Grant victory to your Church over evil and protect your people by your cross.

Kontakion - Tone 4:
Christ our God, who were willingly raised upon the cross, grant your mercies to the new people who bear your name. By your power grant joy to the Church. Give her victory over evil with your invincible trophy, the weapon of peace, as an ally.

Common for Many Martyrs

Troparion - Tone 1:
O Lord who love us all, accept the sufferings which your saints endured for you. As we pray, heal all our pains.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
You appeared as bright lamps, O godly martyrs. You enlightened all creation with the brilliance of your miracles. As you free us from sickness and drive away forever the depths of darkness, pray without ceasing to Christ our God for all of us.

Readings:
Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):

The procession of the Wood of the venerable and life-creating Cross. This feast was established in the reign of the Greek Emperor Manuel, as a memorial of Greek victory over the Saracens. The procession with the relic of the Precious Cross was made from the imperial palace to the church of Hagia Sophia; there the relic remained for fourteen days, and was then carried back in procession to the church in the palace grounds.

The holy seven Maccabees, their mother Solomonia, and the elder Eleazar at Antioch in Syria, under Antiochus Epiphanes the king. For the sake of keeping the law of the Lord with unconquered faith, they were cruelly handed over to death with their mother. She suffered with her sons as they were martyred, one by one, and was crowned with them, as it is written in the second book of the Maccabees [2 Mac. 7]. Likewise is commemorated St. Eleazar, one of the first scribes, a man of advanced age. In that same persecution, refusing to eat forbidden meat on account of his love for the Torah of the Lord, he achieved a most glorious death rather than a shameful life; he voluntarily went to his punishment, leaving an excellent example of virtue.
TUESDAY, AUGUST 2

Common for a Tuesday (See pages 55-57)

Common for an Apostle

Troparion - Tone 3:
O holy Apostle Stephen, intercede with the merciful God that he may grant our souls forgiveness of sins.

Kontakion - Tone 4:
O Apostle Stephen, the Church has gained you for all time as a brilliant star, enlightening it with the multitude of your miracles. Therefore, we cry out to Christ: O most merciful Lord, save those who in faith honor the memory of your apostle.

Readings:
Epistle, 2 Corinthians 5:15-21; Gospel, Mark 1:16-22.

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):

The translation of the relics of the holy protomartyr and archdeacon Stephen. Tradition says that the body of St. Stephen was taken by the Rabbi Gamaliel, a secret disciple of Christ’s, and buried in a cave in the town of Capargamala. In AD 415, Gamaliel appeared in a dream to the priest Lucian in that town, and revealed the burial place of the Protomartyr. They were later translated from Palestine to Constantinople.
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3
Our Venerable Fathers Isaac, Dalmatus and Faustus.

Common for a Wednesday (see pages 55-57)

Common for Many Venerables

Troparion - Tone 4:
God of our fathers, you always deal with us in your kindness. Take not your mercy away from us; but through their prayers guide our life in peace.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
Passing through the stormy waves, you remained dry. You drowned the bodiless enemies in the mighty streams of your tears. O venerable fathers, filled with God’s wisdom, you have received the gift of miracles. Pray without ceasing for all of us.

Readings:

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):
Our venerable fathers Isaac, Dalmatus, and Faustus. Dalmatus was an officer in the Roman army who abandoned all and entered the monastery where Isaac was abbot. His only son, Faustus, entered with him. Dalmatus followed Isaac as hegumen of the monastery, and took part in the Third Ecumenical Council (431), battling against the Nestorian heresy. (5th century)
THURSDAY, AUGUST 4
The Holy Seven Children of Ephesus. The Holy Venerable Martyr Eudoxia.

Common for a Thursday (see pages 55-57)
Common for Many Martyrs

Troparion - Tone 1:
O Lord who love us all, accept the sufferings which your saints endured for you. As we pray, heal all our pains.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
You appeared as bright lamps, O godly martyrs. You enlightened all creation with the brilliance of your miracles. As you free us from sickness and drive away forever the depths of darkness, pray without ceasing to Christ our God for all of us.

Readings:
Epistle, 2 Corinthians 7:1-10; Gospel, Mark 1:29-35.

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):
The holy seven children of Ephesus. During the persecution of the emperor Decius, seven young soldiers refused to sacrifice to idols. Tradition says that their names were: Maximilian, Iamblichus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodianus, and Antoninus. They concealed themselves in a cave outside of Ephesus, and the emperor had them sealed into the cave to kill them. In the reign of the Christian emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450), there arose a dispute about the veracity of the Christian teaching on the resurrection of the dead. The youths awoke, testified to the true teaching, and one week later died. (250 and 454)
FRIDAY, AUGUST 5
Prefestive Day of Transfiguration. The Holy Martyr Eusignius.

Prefestive of Transfiguration

Troparion - Tone 4:
Let us go forth to welcome the Transfiguration of Christ; let the faithful joyfully anticipate the feast and exclaim: The day of divine gladness has arrived; the Lord ascends Mount Tabor and the beauty of his divinity flashes like lightning.

Kontakion - Tone 4:
Today all mortal nature radiates divinity at the divine Transfiguration and cries out with gladness: Christ is transfigured, saving all.

Common for a Martyr

Troparion - Tone 4:
Your martyr Eusignius, O Lord our God, in his struggle, received an incorruptible crown from you. With your strength, he brought down the tyrants and broke the cowardly valor of demons. Through his prayers, O Christ our God, save our souls.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
O victorious martyr Eusignius, you arose as a bright star not misleading the world but announcing Christ the Sun by your rays. You have extinguished all error. Give us light as you pray without ceasing for all of us.

Readings:
Epistle, 2 Corinthians 7:10-16; Gospel, Mark 2:18-22.
SATURDAY, AUGUST 6
THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

For the Transfiguration

Troparion - Tone 7:
You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, revealing as much of your glory to your disciples as they could behold. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, let your everlasting light also shine upon us sinners. O Giver of Light, glory to you!

Kontakion - Tone 7:
You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God; and your disciples beheld as much of your glory as they could bear, that when they would see you crucified they would understand that you suffered willingly; so they would preach to the world that you are truly the radiance of the Father.

Readings:
Epistle, 2 Peter 1:10-19; Gospel, Matthew 17:1-9.

Festal Explanation:

THE TRANSFIGURATION in which Christ Jesus, beloved only-begotten Son of the eternal Father, manifested his glory in the presence of the holy Apostles Peter, James, and John, with the Law and the prophets bearing witness in the persons of Moses and Elijah. This was done so that, while sharing the servile humility of our state he might intimate our glorious restoration through grace. Thus it might be announced to the ends of the earth that the image of God, in which humanity was created, even as it was corrupted in Adam, would be restored in Christ.
SUNDAY, AUGUST 7
TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Postfestive Day of Transfiguration. The Holy Venerable Martyr Dometius.

Resurrection Tone 3

Troparion:
Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; for the Lord has shown the might of his arm. By his death the Lord has trampled Death; he has become the first-born of the dead; he has delivered us from the depths of Hades and has granted great mercy to the world.

Kontakion:
Today, you arose from the grave, O merciful Lord; you led us out of the gates of Death. Today, Adam exults and Eve rejoices. With them, the prophets and patriarchs ever praise the might of your divine power.

For the Transfiguration (see page 64)

Common for a Venerable Martyr

Troparion - Tone 8:
In you, O father, the divine image was strictly preserved; taking up your cross, you followed Christ. You taught us by example how to spurn the flesh, for it passes away, and how to care for the soul, which is immortal. Therefore, O venerable Dometius, your soul rejoices with the angels.
Kontakion - Tone 2:
As a venerable and proven ascetic, as an honorable and renowned martyr, a model of the desert life, O ever exalted Dometius, we sing worthy hymns of praise to you; for you have trampled serpents.


**Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):**
The holy venerable martyr Dometius. Born a pagan in Persia in the time of the Emperor Constantine, he was baptized as a young man. So enchanted was he with the True Faith that he left all earthly things and became a monk in a monastery near Nisibis. Made a deacon by his archimandrite, he became a solitary. He was martyred by the emperor Julian the Apostate, by being walled up alive into his cave. (363)

**MONDAY, AUGUST 8**
Postfeste Day of the Transfiguration. The Holy Confessor Emilian, Bishop of Cyzice.

*For the Transfiguration  (see page 64)*

*Common for a Confessor*

**Troparion - Tone 8:**
Guide to Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and holiness, luminary for the world, inspired adornment of bishops, O wise Emilian, harp of the Spirit, you enlightened all by your teachings; intercede with Christ our God to save our souls.
**Kontakion - Tone 2:**
Divinely wise Emilian, you practiced self-control and stilled the desires of the flesh, O holy father. You flourished in faith and flowered like the tree of life in Paradise.

**Readings:**
Epistle, 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Gospel, Mark 3:6-12.

**Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):**
The holy confessor Emilian, bishop of Cyzice. In the time of the emperor Leo the Armenian, Emilian defended the orthodox teaching about the holy icons. This brought about his exile, where for five years he endured many ills and much humiliation for the sake of Christ. (820)

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 9**
Postfestive Day of Transfiguration. The Holy Apostle Matthias.

*For the Transfiguration (see page 64)*

**Common for an Apostle**

**Troparion - Tone 3:**
O holy Apostle Matthias, intercede with the merciful God that he may grant our souls forgiveness of sins.

**Kontakion - Tone 4:**
O Apostle Matthias, the Church has gained you for all time as a brilliant star, enlightening it with the multitude of your miracles. Therefore, we cry out to Christ: O most merciful Lord, save those who in faith honor the memory of your apostle.

**Readings:**
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10
Postfestive Day of Transfiguration. The Holy Martyr and Archdeacon Lawrence of Rome.

For the Transfiguration (see page 64)

Common for a Martyr

Troparion - Tone 4:
Your martyr Lawrence, O Lord our God, in his struggle, received an incorruptible crown from you. With your strength, he brought down the tyrants and broke the cowardly valor of demons. Through his prayers, O Christ our God, save our souls.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
O victorious martyr Lawrence, you arose as a bright star not misleading the world but announcing Christ the Sun by your rays. You have extinguished all error. Give us light as you pray without ceasing for all of us.

Readings:
Epistle, 2 Corinthians 9:12-10:7; Gospel, Mark 3:20-27.

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):
The holy martyr and archdeacon Lawrence of Rome, who desired the fellowship of Pope Sixtus even in martyrdom. As St. Leo the Great relates, when ordered to hand over the treasures of the Church, he instead showed to the foolish tyrant the poor. As archdeacon, it was his ministry to care for them, and on a great number of whom he had lavished the necessities of life and clothing. The third
day after his arrest, he conquered the flames for the sake of the faith of Christ. In honor of his triumph even the instruments of his execution were transformed. His body is buried in Rome in the Campo Verano in the cemetery called by his name. (258)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11
Postfestive Day of Transfiguration. The Holy Martyr Euplus.

For the Transfiguration (see page 64)

**Common for a Martyr**

**Troparion - Tone 4:**
Your martyr Euplus, O Lord our God, in his struggle, received an incorruptible crown from you. With your strength, he brought down the tyrants and broke the cowardly valor of demons. Through his prayers, O Christ our God, save our souls.

**Kontakion - Tone 2:**
O victorious martyr Euplus, you arose as a bright star not misleading the world but announcing Christ the Sun by your rays. You have extinguished all error. Give us light as you pray without ceasing for all of us.

**Readings:**
Epistle, 2 Corinthians 10:7-18; Gospel, Mark 3:28-35.

**Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):**
The holy martyr Euplus at Catania in Sicily. In the persecution of Diocletian the emperor, as it is told, he was cast into prison by the governor Calvisian while he held the volumes of the Gospels in his hand. When he was interrogated again, he answered that he rejoiced to bear the Gospels in his heart, and was beaten to death with cudgels. (308)
FRIDAY, AUGUST 12
Postfestive Day of Transfiguration. The Holy Martyrs Photius and Anicetus. Today we also remember St. Maximus the Confessor, because of the Otdanije (Leave-taking) tomorrow.

For the Transfiguration (see page 64)

Common for Many Martyrs

Troparion - Tone 1:
O Lord who love us all, accept the sufferings which your saints endured for you. As we pray, heal all our pains.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
You appeared as bright lamps, O godly martyrs. You enlightened all creation with the brilliance of your miracles. As you free us from sickness and drive away forever the depths of darkness, pray without ceasing to Christ our God for all of us.

Common for a Confessor

Troparion - Tone 8:
Guide to Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and holiness, luminary for the world, inspired adornment of monks, O wise Maximos, harp of the Spirit, you enlightened all by your teachings; intercede with Christ our God to save our souls.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
Divinely wise Maximos, you practiced self-control and stilled the desires of the flesh, O holy father. You flourished in faith and flowered like the tree of life in Paradise.

Readings:
Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):

The holy martyrs Photius and Anicetus, who bore witness to the Christian Faith before the emperor Diocletian. Both of them were tortured, and then imprisoned for three years. Eventually they were thrown into an enormous burning furnace in the year 305.

Our venerable father Maximus the Confessor, in the fortress of Skhemaris on the river Hippus in the summit of the Caucasus. Along with two of his disciples, both named Anastasius, after a harsh imprisonment and many tortures, he was exiled to the region of Lazica and rendered his spirit to God. (662)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13
Otdanje (Leave-taking) of the Feast of the Transfiguration. Our Venerable Father Maximos the Confessor.

For the Transfiguration

Troparion - Tone 7:
You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, revealing as much of your glory to your disciples as they could behold. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, let your everlasting light also shine upon us sinners. O Giver of Light, glory to you!

Kontakion - Tone 7:
You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God; and your disciples beheld as much of your glory as they could bear, that when they would see you crucified they would understand that you suffered willingly; so they would preach to the world that you are truly the radiance of the Father.

Readings:
Epistle, 1 Corinthians 2:5-9; Gospel, Matthew 22:15-22.
SUNDAY, AUGUST 14
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Prefes-
Translation of the Relics of our Father Theodosius,
Hegumen of the Pecherskaja Lavra.

Resurrection Tone 4

Troparion:
The joyful message of the resurrection was heard by the women disciples from the angel; and being freed from the ancestral curse, they boasted to the apostles: Death is despoiled; Christ our God is risen, giving great mercy to the world.

Kontakion:
O my Savior and Redeemer, as God, you raised from the grave all those who were in chains and destroyed the gates of Hades; and, as Lord, you arose on the third day.
Prefestive for the Dormition

Troparion - Tone 4:
O peoples, clap your hands in anticipation and
dance with faith and joy. Gather together today in
eagerness and jubilation, and let us all exult with
godly glee, for the Theotokos, whom we always glo-
lify in hymns, is about to be taken up in glory from
earth to heaven.

Kontakion - Tone 4:
Celebrating your glorious memory today, the world
mystically dances for joy and cries out to you, O
Theotokos: Rejoice, Virgin, Boast of Christians.

Common for a Prophet

Troparion - Tone 2:
As we celebrate the memory of your prophet Mica,
O Lord, we implore you to save our souls through
his prayers.

Kontakion - Tone 4:
Your pure heart was enlightened by the Spirit and
became a vessel of radiant prophecy. Because you
saw as present the events yet to come we honor
you, O blessed and glorious Prophet Mica.

Readings:
Epistle, 1 Corinthians 16:13-24;
Gospel, Matthew 21:33-42.

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):
The holy prophet Micah. Of the tribe of Judah and from
the village of Morasth, he was a contemporary of the
prophets Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea. He denounced the
vices of his people, foretold the fall of Samaria, and was
a seer of the coming Messiah. He named Bethlehem
as the birthplace of the Messiah. He was buried in his
own village, and his relics were found in the time of the
emperor Theodosius.
MONDAY, AUGUST 15
THE DORMITION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY, THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY.

For the Dormition

**Troparion - Tone 1:**
Theotokos, in giving birth you preserved virginity; and in your falling asleep you did not forsake the world. You are the Mother of Life and have been transferred to life, and through your prayers you deliver our souls from death.

**Kontakion - Tone 2:**
The grave and death did not detain the Theotokos. She intercedes without rest and is our unfailing hope of protection; for he who dwelt in the womb of the Ever-Virgin transferred to life the Mother of Life.


**Festal Explanation:** THE DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY. Tradition relates that the Mother of God died in Jerusalem, after a visit with all of Christ’s apostles. They carried her coffin to the Garden of Gethsemane where it was placed into a tomb. The apostle Thomas came late, and asked that the tomb might be opened so that he could reverence her body. When opened, the tomb was found empty except for the winding sheet.
TUESDAY, AUGUST 16
Postfestive Day of the Dormition. Translation of the Icon of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, the icon not made by human hands, from Edessa to Constantinople (944). The Holy Martyr Diomedes.

For the Dormition (see page 74)

For the Icon
Troparion - Tone 2:
We bow before your sacred image, O gracious Lord, and beg forgiveness for our offenses, O Christ our God. For you, of your own free will, deigned to ascend the cross in your human nature to deliver from the bondage of the enemy those whom you have created. Therefore, we gratefully cry to you: By your coming to save the world, O Savior, you have filled all with joy.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
We have come to realize the extent of your victory, the inexpressable plan of your perfect incarnation, and to recognize this miraculous and unpainted icon as a banner of that divine triumph. With hearts full of love we kiss it with homage and piety.


For the Dormition (see page 74)

Common for a Martyr

**Troparion - Tone 4:**
Your martyr Myron, O Lord our God, in his struggle, received an incorruptible crown from you. With your strength, he brought down the tyrants and broke the cowardly valor of demons. Through his prayers, O Christ our God, save our souls.

**Kontakion - Tone 2:**
O victorious martyr Myron, you arose as a bright star not misleading the world but announcing Christ the Sun by your rays. You have extinguished all error. Give us light as you pray without ceasing for all of us.

**Readings:**
Epistle, 2 Corinthians 13:3-13; Gospel, Mark 4:35-41.

**Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):**
The holy martyr Myron, at Cyzicus in Hellespont. He was a priest, who, as it is related, was beheaded under Decius the emperor and Antipater the governor after many tortures. (250)
THURSDAY, AUGUST 18

For the Dormition (see page 74)
Common for Many Martyrs

Troparion - Tone 1:
O Lord who love us all, accept the sufferings which your saints endured for you. As we pray, heal all our pains.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
You appeared as bright lamps, O godly martyrs. You enlightened all creation with the brilliance of your miracles. As you free us from sickness and drive away forever the depths of darkness, pray without ceasing to Christ our God for all of us.

Readings:

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):
The holy martyrs Florus and Laurus. Brothers in the flesh as well as in the spirit, they were zealous Christians and stonemasons by craft and were martyred for the Faith. (2nd century)
FRIDAY, AUGUST 19
Postfestive Day of the Dormition. The Holy Martyr Andrew the Tribune and His Companions.

For the Dormition (see page 74)

Common for Many Martyrs

Troparion - Tone 1:
O Lord who love us all, accept the sufferings which your saints endured for you. As we pray, heal all our pains.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
You appeared as bright lamps, O godly martyrs. You enlightened all creation with the brilliance of your miracles. As you free us from sickness and drive away forever the depths of darkness, pray without ceasing to Christ our God for all of us.

Readings:

Synaxarion
(Lives of the Saints):

The holy martyr Andrew the Tribune and his companions, in Cilicia, who, as it is related, having gained victory over the Persians by divine intervention, were converted to Christ and accused with this name (i.e., of Christian) and were slaughtered under Maximian the emperor in the narrows of the Taurus Mountains by the army of Seleucus the governor.
SATURDAY, AUGUST 20

For the Dormition (see page 77)

Common for a Prophet

Troparion - Tone 2:
As we celebrate the memory of your prophet Samuel, O Lord, we implore you to save our souls through his prayers.

Kontakion - Tone 4:
Your pure heart was enlightened by the Spirit and became a vessel of radiant prophecy. Because you saw as present the events yet to come we honor you, O blessed and glorious Prophet Samuel.

Readings:
Epistle, 1 Corinthians 4:1-5;

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):
The holy prophet Samuel. Fifteenth and last of the Judges of Israel, he lived approximately eleven hundred years before Christ. Born in the tribe of Levi, son of Elkanah and Hannah, he was promised to the Lord by his till-then barren mother. At the age of twelve, Samuel had his first revelation from the Lord God. Samuel preached repentance to the children of Israel, and led the people to victory over the Philistines. Asked by the people to give them a king, he warned them that God was the only true king of Israel, but they insisted. It was Samuel who anointed Saul son of Kish as the first King of Israel, and David son of Jesse as its second and greatest ruler. He died in Ramah and was buried there.
SUNDAY, AUGUST 21
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Postfes-
The Holy Martyr Bassa.

Resurrection Tone 5

Troparion:
O faithful, let us praise and adore the Word eterna-
al with the Father and the Spirit, and born of the
Virgin for our salvation. For he chose to ascend the
cross in the flesh and to suffer death, and to raise
the dead by his glorious resurrection.

Kontakion:
O Savior, you descended into Hades. You crushed
its gates as the Almighty. You raised the dead and
destroyed the sting of Death as the Creator. You
delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of us all.
Therefore, all cry out to you: O Lord, save us!

For the Dormition (see page 74)

Common for an Apostle

Troparion - Tone 3:
O holy Apostle Thaddeus, intercede with the merci-
ful God that he may grant our souls forgiveness of
sins.

Kontakion - Tone 4:
O Apostle Thaddeus, the Church has gained you for
all time as a brilliant star, enlightening it with the
multitude of your miracles. Therefore, we cry out
to Christ: O most merciful Lord, save those who in
faith honor the memory of your apostle.

Common for a Woman-Martyr

Troparion - Tone 4:
Your lamb Bassa, O Jesus, cries out in a loud
voice: I love you, my Bridegroom; I seek you with
painful longing; I am crucified with you; in your baptism, I am buried with you; I suffer for you that I may reign with you; and I die for you that I may live with you. Receive me as a spotless sacrifice im-molated with love for you. By her prayers, O mer-ci-ful One, save our souls.

**Kontakion - Tone 2:**
All the faithful find spiritual healing in your all-holy temple. O renowned virgin-martyr Bassa, with a loud voice we sing to you: Pray without ceasing to Christ our God for all of us.

**Readings:**

**Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):**
The holy apostle Thaddeus was one of the Seventy, not the same as the Jude Thaddeus who was one of the Twelve. He went to Edessa in Syria and preached the Gospel, there and throughout Syria and Phoenicia, and fell asleep in the Lord in Beirut.

The holy martyr Bassa was the wife of a pagan priest, secretly Christian. She brought up her sons in the Faith as well. Her husband handed her over to the torturers with her sons. They were beheaded in the persecution of Maximian. (3rd century)
MONDAY, AUGUST 22

Postfesteve Day of the Dormition. The Holy Martyr Agathonicus and His Companions. Today we also commemorate the Holy Martyr Lupus because of the leave-taking of the Feast tomorrow.

For the Dormition (see page 77)

Common for Many Martyrs

Troparion - Tone 1:
O Lord who love us all, accept the sufferings which your saints endured for you. As we pray, heal all our pains.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
You appeared as bright lamps, O godly martyrs. You enlightened all creation with the brilliance of your miracles. As you free us from sickness and drive away forever the depths of darkness, pray without ceasing to Christ our God for all of us.

Common for a Martyr

Troparion - Tone 4:
Your martyr Lupus, O Lord our God, in his struggle, received an incorruptible crown from you. With your strength, he brought down the tyrants and broke the cowardly valor of demons. Through his prayers, O Christ our God, save our souls.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
O victorious martyr Lupus, you arose as a bright star not misleading the world but announcing Christ the Sun by your rays. You have extinguished all error. Give us light as you pray without ceasing for all of us.

Readings:
Epistle, Galatians 2:11-16; Gospel, Mark 5:24-34.
Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):
The holy martyr Agathonicus and his companions. Agathonicus was a citizen of Nicomedia and a Christian. He preached against idolatry and instructed many in the Faith. Under the emperor Maximian, Agathonicus and his companions were crucified.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 23

For the Dormition

Troparion - Tone 1:
Theotokos, in giving birth you preserved virginity; and in your falling asleep you did not forsake the world. You are the Mother of Life and have been transferred to life, and through your prayers you deliver our souls from death.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
The grave and death did not detain the Theotokos. She intercedes without rest and is our unfailing hope of protection; for he who dwelt in the womb of the Ever-Virgin transferred to life the Mother of Life.

Readings:

(Lives of the Saints):
The holy martyr Lupus was a servant of St. Demetrius of Salonica. When his master was beheaded by the emperor Maximian, Lupus dipped the hem of his garment and his ring into his master’s blood. Through these relics he worked many miracles, even though he was not yet baptized. Having miraculously received the Holy Mystery, he was beheaded. (306)
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24**

The Holy Bishop-Martyr Eutyches, Disciple of St. John the Theologian.

*Common for a Wednesday (see pages 55-57)*

*Common for a Bishop-Martyr*

**Troparion - Tone 4:**
You shared in the apostles’ way of life and succeeded to their throne, divinely inspired bishop. You found access to contemplation in the active life. Therefore, you rightly taught the word of truth and struggled for the faith to the shedding of your blood. O priest-martyr Eutyches, pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

**Kontakion - Tone 4:**
You lived piously as a bishop, and followed the path to martyrdom. Filled with divine wisdom, you put out the fire of sacrifice to idols. You were a defender of your flock. Therefore, to honor you we mystically sing: Our father Eutyches, by your prayers, deliver us always from tribulation.

**Readings:**

**Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):**
The holy martyr Eutyches, disciple of St. John the Theologian. Although he was not included among the Seventy, he was called an apostle by virtue of having been a disciple of the great Apostles, and because he showed true apostolic zeal in the service of the Gospel. He was tortured and finally beheaded in Sebastopol.
THURSDAY, AUGUST 25

Return of the Relics of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew.
The Holy Apostle Titus.

Common for a Thursday (see pages 55-57)
Common for Two or More Apostles

Troparion - Tone 3:
O holy apostles, intercede with the merciful God that he may grant our souls forgiveness of sins.

Kontakion - Tone 4:
Wise apostles of the Lord, you became branches of the vine of Christ, bearing clusters of virtues and pouring out the wine of salvation for us. Partaking of it, we are filled with joy. As we celebrate your glorious memory, pray that we be granted great mercy and forgiveness of sins.

Readings:
Epistle, Galatians 3:23-4:5; Gospel, Mark 6:30-45.

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):

Return of the relics of the holy apostle Bartholomew. They were stolen by the Armenians, and then taken to the town of Lipara. At the time of Theophilus the Iconoclast, they were translated again, this time to the town of Benevento. From there they were taken to Rome.

The holy apostle Titus is counted one of the Seventy. Born in Crete, he was baptized by the Apostle Paul. He served Paul in such sincerity of heart that Paul called him his son (Titus 1:4) as well as his brother (II Cor. 12:18).
FRIDAY, AUGUST 26
The Holy Martyrs Adrian and Natalia. Our Blessed Mother Mariam Bawadi.

Common for a Friday (see pages 55-57)

Common for Two or More Martyrs

Troparion - Tone 1:
O Lord who love us all, accept the sufferings which your saints endured for you. As we pray, heal all our pains.

Kontakion - Tone 2:
You appeared as bright lamps, O godly martyrs. You enlightened all creation with the brilliance of your miracles. As you free us from sickness and drive away forever the depths of darkness, pray without ceasing to Christ our God for all of us.

Readings:
Epistle, Galatians 4:8-21;
Gospel, Mark 6:45-53.

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):
The holy martyrs Adrian and Natalie were both of noble families in Nicomedia, and had been married only thirteen months before their martyrdom. They were tortured during the persecution of the emperor Maximian.
SATURDAY, AUGUST 27

Our Venerable Father Pimen.

Common for a Saturday (see pages 55-57)

Common for a Venerable

**Troparion - Tone 8:**

In you, O father, the divine image was strictly preserved; taking up your cross, you followed Christ. You taught us by example how to spurn the flesh, for it passes away, and how to care for the soul, which is immortal. Therefore, O venerable Pimen, your soul rejoices with the angels.

**Kontakion - Tone 2:**

You armed yourself in a godly way with purity of soul, and you wielded unceasing prayer as a mighty spear, piercing the armies of demons. Our father Pimen, pray without ceasing for all of us.

**Readings:**


**Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):**

Our venerable father Pimen. An Egyptian by birth, he became one of the greatest of the Egyptian desert fathers. The renown of his asceticism spread throughout the civilized world. (5th century)
SUNDAY, AUGUST 28
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Our Venerable Father Moses the Ethiopian. Our Holy Father Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

Resurrection Tone 6

Troparion:
Angelic powers appeared at your tomb, and the guards became like dead men. Mary stood at the tomb seeking your most pure body. You despoiled Hades without a challenge. You, the Giver of Life, met the Virgin. O Lord, risen from the dead, glory to you!

Kontakion:
Christ our God, the Life-giver, with his life-giving hand raised the dead from the valley of death, granting resurrection to all of us. He is the Savior of All, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of All.

Common for a Venerable Troparion - Tone 8:
In you, O father, the divine image was strictly preserved; taking up your cross, you followed Christ. You taught us by example how to spurn the flesh, for it passes away, and how to care for the soul, which is immortal. Therefore, O venerable Moses, your soul rejoices with the angels.
Kontakion - Tone 2:
You armed yourself in a godly way with purity of soul, and you wielded unceasing prayer as a mighty spear, piercing the armies of demons. Our father Moses, pray without ceasing for all of us.

Readings:

Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):
Our venerable father Moses the Ethiopian. He was at first the leader of a band of robbers, but repented and became a great ascetic. He gave himself up utterly to work, prayer, vigils, and fasting. He was ordained a priest in his old age, and then founded a monastery of his own. He was martyred by barbarians looking for loot. (405)

MONDAY, AUGUST 29
THE BEHEADING OF THE HOLY PROPHET, FORERUNNER AND BAPTIST JOHN.

For the Feast of the Beheading of Saint John

Troparion - Tone 2:
The memory of the righteous is celebrated with praise, but for you, O Forerunner, the Lord’s testimony is enough. You were shown to be more honorable than the prophets since you were deemed worthy to baptize in the waters the Lord you had proclaimed. Therefore, you fought for the truth and with joy proclaimed the good news to those in Hades, that God has appeared in the flesh to take away the sins of the world and to grant us great mercy.
**Kontakion - Tone 5:**
The glorious beheading of the Forerunner was part of God’s saving plan that the coming of the Savior might be announced even to those in Hades. Let Herodias mourn for she sought a lawless murder because she loved neither the Law of God nor eternal life, but only this false and fleeting life.

**Readings:**

**Festal Description**
Because John had denounced Herod Antipas for putting away his own wife and marrying the wife of his brother Philip, Herod imprisoned John. At a feast in honor of Herod’s birthday, his stepdaughter Salome danced for him. Herod promised her anything; her mother Herodias told her to ask for the head of John on a platter. This martyrdom is commemorated on this day because a church was dedicated on this day to the Forerunner’s beheading by the emperor Constantine and his mother Helena.
TUESDAY, AUGUST 30

For the Feast of the Beheading of Saint John

Troparion - Tone 2:  
The memory of the righteous is celebrated with praise, but for you, O Forerunner, the Lord’s testimony is enough. You were shown to be more honorable than the prophets since you were deemed worthy to baptize in the waters the Lord you had proclaimed. Therefore, you fought for the truth and with joy proclaimed the good news to those in Hades, that God has appeared in the flesh to take away the sins of the world and to grant us great mercy.

Kontakion - Tone 5:  
The glorious beheading of the Forerunner was part of God’s saving plan that the coming of the Savior might be announced even to those in Hades. Let Herodias mourn for she sought a lawless murder because she loved neither the Law of God nor eternal life, but only this false and fleeting life.

Common for Two or More Bishops

Troparion - Tone 4:  
God of our fathers, you always deal with us in your kindness. Take not your mercy away from us; but through their prayers guide our life in peace.
**Kontakion - Tone 8:**
The Church glorifies you in song as teachers of virtue and the splendor of hierarchs. By your prayers, grant growth in virtue and deliverance from the snares of evil for you are invincible.

**Readings:**
Epistle, Galatians 5:11-21; Gospel, Mark 7:5-16.

**Synaxarion (Lives of the Saints):**
Our holy fathers Alexander, John, and Paul the Younger, patriarchs of Constantinople. Alexander took part in the First Ecumenical Council. (340) John the Faster governed the Church in the days of the wicked emperor Anastasius. (595) Paul IV governed the Church for five years and then took the Great Schema to repent for his early support of the Iconoclasts. (784)

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31**
The Deposition of the Venerable Belt of the Most Holy Mother of God.

*Common for the Mother of God*

**Troparion - Tone 4:**
Let us humble sinners now flee with fervor to the Theotokos. Let us prostrate in repentance and cry out from the depths of our souls: O Lady, help us and have mercy on us. Hurry to assist us for we are perishing because of our many sins. Do not turn us away empty-handed for you alone we have as our protectress.

**Kontakion - Tone 6:**
We have no other help and no other hope but you, most pure Virgin. You are our help; in you we hope and we praise you. We are your servants; do not let us be put to shame.
Readings:
Epistle, Hebrews 9:1-7;

Synaxarion
(Lives of the Saints):

The deposition of the venerable Belt of the Most Holy Mother of God. At the time of her dormition, the Theotokos left her belt to the apostle Thomas. This was later taken to Constantinople and kept in a sealed casket in the church of Blachernae. In the time of the emperor Leo the Wise, the casket was opened and the belt placed on the Empress Zoe, who recovered from a life-threatening illness.
Contributors

Saint John Chrysostom
He lived from c. 349-407 and was Archbishop of Constantinople. He was an important Early Church Father and known for his preaching, public speaking, the Divine Liturgy text, and his ascetic sensibilities.

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Sources

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Website of the Orthodox Church in America.

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Homily on Matthew 21:33-44 from the website New Advent.

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Sections from the book titled The Holy Theotokos found at www.ecpubs.com.

Practicing Our Faith
Reflections by the author written for Theosis.

Sacramental Living
Sections from the book of the same title found at www.ecpubs.com. Also available in CD and DVD.

Churches of the East: A Photo Essay
Photos from the internet.

Menologion Calendar of Saints
Based on the Typicon of Archpriest David Petras for the Byzantine Catholic Ruthenian Church. Prayer texts are from the Faithful’s Prayer Book, used with permission. The Synaxarion is excerpts from the Monthly Menaion of the MCI of Pittsburgh.
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