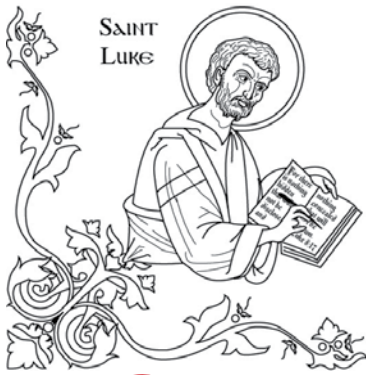


СОБОРЪ НОВЫХЪ ЛУЧЕШНИКОВЪ
И ИСПОВѢДНИКОВЪ РОССІЙСКИХЪ

ЗА ХРИСТА ПОСТРАДАВШИХЪ
ДВЛЕННЫХЪ И НЕДВЛЕННЫХЪ





ST. LUKE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Diocese of the South, Orthodox Church in America

1415 Woodstock Ave., Anniston, AL 36207

The Very Rev. Archbishop Father Basil Henry

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<https://stlukeanniston.org>

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **We welcome our visitors.** Please join us for a potluck meal after Liturgy so you can get to know us. Communion is for Orthodox Christians who have fasted before Liturgy but everyone is welcome to the blessed bread an Altar Server will offer.
- Grant, O Lord, a prosperous and peaceful life, health, salvation, and furtherance in all good things to all Thy servants who are celebrating birthdays, namesdays and anniversaries, and preserve them for **MANY YEARS!**
- Next week we will celebrate the Feast of our Lord's Entrance into the Temple. For this feast, also called **Candlemas**, bring candles for Father to bless after Liturgy. It is also the **Sunday of Zacchaeus**, the first harbinger of Lent.
- His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon has designated Sunday, January 26, 2025, as **Sanctity of Life Sunday** to be observed in the parishes of the Orthodox Church in America.

This Week's Fasting, Services and Scripture Readings

Mon., 1/27	Tues., 1/28	Wed., 1/29	Thurs., 1/30	Fri., 1/31	Sat., 2/1	Sun., 2/2
						Divine Liturgy 10 a.m.
					Great Vespers 4 p.m.	Brunch & Fellowship
James 2:14-26	James 3:1-10	James 3:11-4:6	James 4:7-5:9	1 Peter 1:1-2, 10-12, 2:6-10	1 Thessalonians 5:14-23	Hebrews 7:7-17
Mark 10:46-52	Mark 11:11-23	Mark 11:22-26	Mark 11:27-33	Mark 12:1-12	Luke 17:3-10	Luke 2:22-40

Service times are subject to change. Please check with Fr. Basil if in any doubt.



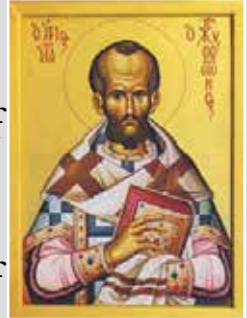
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SAINTS OF THE DAY

Sun., Jan. 26th, 2025 • Sun. of the New Martyrs of Russia

Martyrs Ananias the priest, Peter the prison guard, and seven soldiers, in Phoenicia (295); The Holy Two Martyrs of Phrygia; Venerable Ammon of Egypt (350), disciple of St. Anthony the Great; Venerable Symeon “the Ancient” of Mount Sinai (ca. 390); Saint Paula of Rome, monastic foundress in Palestine (404); Venerable Gabriel, Abbot of the monastery of Saint Stephanos in Jerusalem (ca. 490);



St. John Chrysostom Jan. 27

Venerable Xenophon and his wife Mary, and their two sons Sts. Arcadius and John, of Constantinople (6th century); Saint Conon, Bishop and monastic founder on the Isle of Man (648); Saint Theofrid (Theofroy), a monk at Luxeuil in France who became Abbot of Corbie, and a Bishop (ca. 690); Saint Athanasius, honoured as a bishop in Sorrento in the south of Italy; Saint Alphonsus of Astorga, Bishop of Astorga in Spain (9th century); Saint Ansurius, Bishop of Orense in Galicia (925); Venerable Clement of Mt. Sagation (1111); Saint David the Builder (David III), King of Georgia (1125); Venerable Xenophon, Abbot of Robeika (Novgorod) (1262); Venerable Arcadius of Vyaznikovsky (1592); Saint Joseph (Naniescu) of Suceava, Metropolitan of Moldova, Romania (1902); New Nun-martyr Matushka Maria (Lelyanova) of Gatchina (1932); New Hieromartyr Cyril, Metropolitan of Kazan (1937); New Hieromartyr Arcadius (1938); Martyr John Popov (1938); Commemoration of the Great Earthquake at Constantinople (447-448), during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450); Translation of the relics (845) of Sts. Theodore the Confessor, Abbot of the Studion (826), and his brother Joseph the Confessor, Archbishop of Thessalonica (832); Repose of Metropolitan Gabriel of Novgorod and St. Petersburg (1801)

Divine Liturgy

of St. John Chrysostom

Troparia/Kontakia

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 6)

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave,
seeking Thy most pure body.
Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, //
glory to Thee.

Troparion to St. Luke the Evangelist (Tone 5)

The Holy Apostle, the all-hymned Luke,
who is acknowledged by the Church of Christ
as the recorder of the Acts of the Apostles
and the splendid author of the Gospel of Christ,
let us praise with sacred hymns
as a Physician who healeth the infirmities of man
and the ailments of nature,
who cleanseth spiritual wounds //
and prayeth unceasingly for our souls.

Troparion for New Martyrs of Russia (Tone 4)

Today the Church of Russia forms a chorus in joy,
praising her new martyrs and confessors;
hierarchs and priests, royal passion-bearers, right-believing princes and princesses,
venerable men and women, and all Orthodox Christians.
Having laid down their life for faith in Christ during the days of godless persecution,
they preserved the truth by the shedding of blood. //
By their protection, O long-suffering Lord, preserve our land in Orthodoxy till the end of the age.

Kontakion of the Resurrection (Tone 6)

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,
raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand,
He bestowed resurrection on the human race. //
He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Kontakion to St. Luke the Evangelist (Tone 2)

Thou becamest a disciple of God the Word,
with Paul thou didst enlighten all the world,
casting out its darkness//
by composing the Holy Gospel of Christ.

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

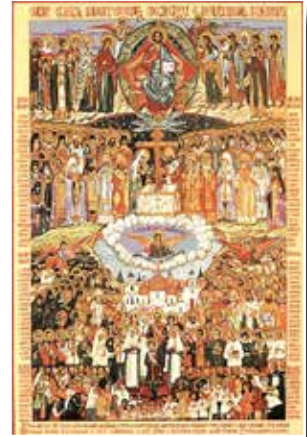
Kontakion to New Martyrs of Russia (Tone 3)

Today the new martyrs of Rus' stand in white robes before the Lamb of God,
and with the angels they sing to God the hymn of victory:
"Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and praise, and honor,
and power, and strength be to our God//
unto the ages of ages. Amen."

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

Kontakion for our Steadfast Protectress (Tone 6)

Steadfast Protectress of Christians,
constant Advocate before the Creator;
despise not the entreating cries of us sinners,
but in thy goodness come speedily to help us who call on thee in faith.
Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us//
O Theotokos, for thou dost always protect those who honor thee!



Scripture Readings

Prokeimenon

Tone 6

(for Sunday)

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance!

V. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!

Tone 7

(for the New Martyrs)

V. God is our refuge and strength, / a help in afflictions that severely befall us.

The Epistle Reading

1 Timothy 1:15-17

(for the Resurrection)

My son Timothy, this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Romans 8:28-39*(for the New Martyrs)*

Brethren, know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Alleluia*(for Sunday)***Tone 6**

V. He who dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God.

V. He will say to the Lord: "My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust."

Tone 4*(for the New Martyrs)*

V. The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them and delivered them out of all their troubles.

The Gospel Reading**Matthew 15:21-28***(for Sunday)*

At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Luke 21:8-19*(for the New Martyrs)*

The Lord said: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately." Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and

rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls."

The Canaanite Woman

Matthew 15:21–28

*From The Explanation of the Gospel of St. Matthew
by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria*

21-23. Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region, and cried unto Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon." But He answered her not a word. Why did He not allow the disciples to go by way of the Gentiles [Mt. 10:5], while He Himself went to Tyre and Sidon, which were Gentile cities? Learn then, that He did not go there to preach, since, as Mark says, "He hid Himself" [Mk. 7:24]. But rather, when He saw that the Pharisees had not accepted His words about food, He went to the Gentiles. The woman said, "Have mercy, not on my daughter, who is unconscious, but on me who am suffering and experiencing these terrible things." And she did not say, "Come and heal," but "Have mercy." He did not answer her a word, not out of contempt, but to show that He had come, in the first place, for the Jews, and to shut the mouths of those Jews who might later slanderously accuse Him of doing good to Gentiles. He also refrained from answering her so that He might reveal the persevering faith of the woman.

23-24. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, "Send her away; for she crieth after us." But He answered and said, "I am sent only unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The disciples were oppressed by the cry of the woman and so begged Christ to send her away. They did this, not out of a lack of compassion, but rather with the desire to persuade the Lord to have mercy on her. But He said, "I am sent only unto the Jews, who are lost sheep because of the wickedness of those shepherds to whom they have been entrusted." In this manner He discloses more fully the faith of the woman.

25-27. Then came she and fell prostrate before Him, saying, "Lord, help me." But He answered and said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." And she said, "Yea, Lord, yet even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters table." When the woman saw that her advocates, the Apostles, had not succeeded, again she approaches fervently and calls upon the Lord. Christ speaks of her as a dog, because the Gentiles led an unclean life and were involved with the blood of meat sacrificed to idols, while the Jews He speaks of as children. But she answers wisely and indeed profoundly, "Even though I am a dog and not worthy to receive a loaf of bread, that is, a mighty act and a great sign, nevertheless grant this to me which is a small thing by comparison with Thy power, though to me it is great. For crumbs are not large in the eyes of those who eat loaves, but to dogs they are large, and they feed on them."

28. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. Now Jesus shows the reason why He put off healing her at the beginning: So that the faith and understanding of the woman might be made manifest, Christ did not immediately give His assent at the beginning and even drove her away. But now when her faith has been revealed she hears the words of praise, "Great is thy faith." By saying, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," Christ showed that if she had not had faith she would not have obtained her request. So, too,

if we desire to obtain something, nothing prevents us from obtaining what we desire. Notice that even if saints should ask on our behalf, as the Apostles did for the woman, still, we accomplish even more when we ask for ourselves. The Canaanite woman is also a symbol of the Church gathered from among the Gentiles. For Gentiles who first were even driven away, later were advanced to the rank of sons and were deemed worthy of the Bread, I mean, the Body of the Lord; while the Jews became dogs, thinking that they were being fed by the crumbs, that is, the minute and insignificant details of the letter of the law. Tyre means “besieged,” Sidon, “they who hunt,” and Canaan, “made ready by humility.” Therefore the Gentiles, who were besieged by evil in that the demons were among them hunting for souls, were also made ready by humility. For the righteous were made ready for the heights of the kingdom of God.



“For Thy sake we are killed all day long”

Romans 8:28-39

From *The Explanation of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*
by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

8:28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to their¹ purpose. While Paul’s earlier words (such as, “*the creature was made subject to vanity, but it will be made incorruptible,*” and, *we know not what we should pray for*) were a kind of comfort to the Romans in their hardship, as we have discussed, here he speaks openly: “*All things, even the things that seem difficult or unpleasant, work together for good to them that love God*” He does not say that *they that love God* will never undergo any hardships; on the contrary, they will undergo such things, but God uses hardships *for the good* of those that undergo them. Then, since what Paul has just said seems so unbelievable, he goes on to confirm it from past experience: *To them who are the called according to their purpose.* “God called you while you were still away and made you part of his household. How much more will he help you now, since he has already called you near!” People are *called according to their purpose*, that is, “by their own free will.” It is not enough to merely be called (for otherwise everyone would be saved, since everyone is called);² the exercise of our free will is required as well.

8:29-30. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called. God *foreknows* those who are worthy to be *called*, and so he then *predestinates* them. Therefore, his *foreknowledge* comes first, then his predestination (predestination means “God’s good and immutable will”). For instance, God *foreknew* that Paul would be worthy of the calling of the gospel, and so he *predestinated* [proorizō], or immutably *determined* [horizō], and made sure his *calling*. Henceforth, he *conforms to the image of his Son* those whom he foreknows to be worthy. For what the only-begotten Son is by nature, they also become by grace, and are likewise called “*sons of God*.”³ He is the firstborn among many brethren according to the economy, and the only-begotten Son according to his divinity. For now that he has assumed flesh and anointed [chrio] it by the full presence of the *Anointer* [chriōn], it has become our firstfruits, and the condemned nature has been sanctified in *Christ* [christos]. Therefore it is right to call Christ *the firstborn*, and us his *brethren*. **And whom he called, them he also justified.** By delivering them from their sins through the *washing of regeneration* and making them righteous.⁴ **And whom he justified,**



them he also glorified. By counting them worthy of adoption and granting them the other gift in addition.

8:31. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Do you see how here at least he is obviously talking to people who are suffering? It is as if he is saying, “If we have been found worthy of such great blessings even while we were still his enemies, how much more so once we have been justified and glorified! *And if God be for us, who can be against us?* Even if the whole world should rise against us, the wisdom of God would turn the uprising to our salvation and glory.”

8:32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? “Leaving aside the other things that I just mentioned, that he has *justified* and *glorified* us consider this: *He spared not his own Son*, that is, “his only-begotten, his beloved, who is of him by nature” (for he also has adopted sons through baptism), *but delivered him up for us all*. *Us all*, that means, “the noble, the common, the lowly, and the exalted.” And he did not simply *deliver him up*, but *delivered him up* to be slain. *How then shall he not also freely give us all things?* Will he who *gave us* the Master not *give us* his belongings? Thus, if there is anything he does not give us, it must not be good for us, and that is why he does not give it to *us*.” So do not crave relief when you have to suffer for Christ. If it is what is best, you will receive it.

8:33-34. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? Among other persecutions, the Jews were also accusing the Christians of being fickle for converting so readily to Christianity. Paul responds, “*God has elected [eklegomai] you—who shall lay any thing to your charge for God’s election [eklogē]?* When a human craftsman chooses [eklegomai] a tool, no one will second-guess his decision. So if God has *elected [eklegomai] you, who shall lay any thing to your charge?*” **It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again.** Paul does not say, “*It is God that forgives sins,*” but rather, *It is God that justifieth*, which is far greater. So we should not fear any that persecute us or ridicule us, for God has elected us and made us *just*. And *it is Christ*, the Son of God, *that died* for us, *yea rather, that is risen again*. *Who is he that condemneth* those who have been found worthy of such glory? **Who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.** Paul says, who also maketh intercession for us, to show how much Christ loves us. For even though he has fulfilled the economy of his incarnation, he has not broken his bonds of affection toward mankind, but continues to plead our case. That is what it means that he *maketh intercession*. This word does not imply that the glory of the only-begotten Son is diminished, for Paul prefaces it by saying, *who is even at the right hand of God* (which points to his majesty). Thus, he includes the word *intercession* for no other reason than to show the Son’s love for us, as I said. Paul also says of the Father, *as though God did beseech you by us*.⁵ Does *God beseeching* diminish his glory? No, it simply shows God’s ineffable affection for us. Some interpret the phrase, *maketh intercession for us*, as saying that Christ still wears his body and has not put it aside (as the Manichaeans speculate), and this itself is his mediation and *intercession* with the Father. When the Father sees his body, he is reminded of the love for mankind that made his Son take it on, and is moved to compassion and mercy. Paul says this, as he often does, to comfort the broken, and demonstrate to them that *the spirit maketh intercession for us*, and the Father *spared not his own Son*. Rather, he justified and glorified us, and the Son *maketh intercession for us*. So we must not lose heart or be downcast.

8:35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or

famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Having shown how unspeakably great the love of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit is toward us, Paul continues on in rapture: “*Who shall separate us from the love of God?* Nothing can take us away from the God who has loved us so dearly and found us worthy of such provision!” Even if Paul had not enumerated all these things, the simple words *tribulation or distress* would have sufficed to indicate whatever could do us harm.

8:36. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Paul does not want them to think that their *tribulation or distress* is because God has abandoned them, so he quotes the prophet who foretold these things. He shows that it is a tremendous comfort to know that our suffering is *for God’s sake*—much more when *we are killed all the day long*. That is to say, “*we are willing to be killed* (since it is physically impossible).” To be *killed* means “to be sacrificed to God,” which is also implied by the words *as sheep for the slaughter*. Just as *sheep* do not resist when they are *slaughtered*, neither do we.

8:37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Paul says that *we are killed*, but he also gives this consolation so that no one should be weighed down in despair with human concerns. He does not say “we are conquerors,” but rather *we are more than conquerors*. That is, “*we conquer with ease, without sweat or toil, in all these things by which they conspire against us.*” For this is complete victory—when we triumph over our pursuers even as they persecute us. And have no doubt: it is God who strives with us. But he has also *loved us*. Thus it is no wonder that *we are more than conquerors* in the midst of all our troubles.

8:38-39. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from our love for God,⁶ which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Paul only mentions his own *love for God* after stating that *God has loved us*, lest he seem to be saying something great about himself. “We so cling to our *ithat* not only can nothing *separate* us from the hardships of this life that we inherit along with it, but no tyrant can even threaten us with future *death* in hell or promise us everlasting *life* to try to *separate us from God*. And why should I restrict myself to kings and tyrants? Not even *angels*, nor all the celestial *powers* can turn us away! Not *things present, nor things to come, nor height* (that is, ‘things of heaven’), *nor depth* (that is, ‘things of earth’), neither glory nor ignominy.” Some people take *height* to mean “the kingdom of heaven,” while *depth* is the opposite of this. “But even if there were another *creation* as vast as the visible and the invisible realms, it would not be able to *separate* me from that *love*.” Paul is not meaning to imply that angels would make a person fall away from Christ, but is merely portraying a hypothetical situation. He is intentionally exaggerating to show the extent of his *love for God*. And not that love that the Jews claim to have, but the *love in Christ Jesus*. For the Jews also claim to *love God*, but not *in Christ Jesus*. For they do not believe in *Christ*.

1. KJV: his. The pronoun is absent in the Greek and must be supplied in translation. Theophylact sees it as “the called person’s purpose,” not “God’s purpose”.

2. Cf. Matt 22: 14.

3. Cf. Ps 81:6 [82:6].

4. Tit. 3:5

5. 2 Cor. 5:20

6. KJV: *the love of God*. Theophylact understands the ambiguous genitival construction as subjective (“our love for God”), rather than objective (“God’s love for us”). This is indicated in the translation.

The New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia

We commemorate today the Assembly of Russia's New Martyrs and Confessors – all those who martyred in the years of severe persecutions against the faith and the Church of Christ. It is a great occasion for the whole Church as we remember tragic events but at the same time celebrate because the era which continued in our country for 70 years in the 20th century also revealed to the world a great assembly of confessors and new martyrs. They preferred dying to renouncing Christ and today they pray for us and our Motherland in the triumphant heavenly Church.

The persecution started immediately after the 1917 October Revolution when the Bolsheviks took over. The persecution against the faithful was purposeful and long and excelled in cruelty all the previous persecutions against the Church including those by Roman emperors in the 1st, 2nd and 3d centuries. The theomachist regime did everything to destroy religion and the Church, her people and those who bore the grace-giving spirit of Christ that used to nourish our Motherland for centuries.

It was a brutal and bloody repression because the authorities sought to fully exterminate the Church. They proceeded from the utterly fantastic and antihuman idea that religion was a vestige of the past and should die out on its own, but if it did not die on its own it should be helped to die as soon as possible.

The Bolsheviks created an antihuman and criminal ideology to guide the rulers of our country for decades. This ideology led to millions of victims, the people of different beliefs and social status. They began with the class struggle against nobility and merchants followed by the dispossession of well-to-do peasants, then resettlement and destruction of whole ethnic communities. One destruction campaign followed the other and these criminal actions continued for several decades.

The Russian Orthodox Church was only one of the targets of that suicidal campaign waged by the authorities against their own people. But it was the Church who showed great courage and spiritual heroism, which has been imprinted in people's memory and glorified by the Church today by canonizing Russia's holy new martyrs and confessors.

The machine of persecution swallowed not only innocent people but also those who themselves were guilty of the crimes. Indeed, persecutors are known to become persecuted sometimes. We do not see any heroism in the actions of these people in the awareness that they were victimized by the world they themselves created. Those whom we glorify were not guilty of anything except for their faith in Christ, their service of the Church, their love of God and their efforts to guide the people of God to salvation. The people we glorify as Russia's new martyrs and confessors are not all the victims of those terrible years but those who remained faithful to the Lord to the end, who were not broken by the machine of repression, who did not renounce Christ even under torture and in prison, who did not betray their loved ones, as was often the case.

We do not know how many they were, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands or millions, because the whole truth about those years will never be revealed. All the archives will never be opened so that the records could reveal who remained faithful to the end and who stumbled. Besides, there are many forgeries in the transcripts of interrogation we use to restore the story of a particular new martyr. Some recorded as renouncers did not actually renounce their faith. The full story of the feat performed by the saints is known to the Lord

alone. But the Church has glorified all the new martyrs and confessors, those we know, those whose feat is documented and those who are known only to God. Among them were bishops and ordinary priests and monastics. There were also a great many lay people who did not renounce Christ even under torture.

The feat performed by the holy new martyrs and confessors is a spiritual treasure to be carefully preserved and revered by our Church. We do not know what times await us ahead. It is wrong to believe that the Church will now and forever enjoy welfare, peace and the good will of the powers that be, because times may change as it happens in history. Our Orthodox Church lived in very different situations and there always were those who were ready to follow to the end the path of Golgotha together with Christ. We pray today that the grace of God may never abandon our people, as it happened after a great many of them rejected the faith, Christ and the Church. We pray that this rejection may never be repeated in our history. We pray that we may hand down to our posterity the Orthodox faith we have inherited at such a dear price.

Translation of the relics of Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

St. John Chrysostom, the great ecumenical teacher and hierarch, died in the city of Comana in the year 407 on his way to a place of exile. He had been condemned by the intrigues of the empress Eudoxia because of his daring denunciation of the vices of those ruling over Constantinople. The transfer of his venerable relics was made in the year 438, thirty years after the death of the saint, during the reign of Eudoxia's son emperor Theodosius II (408-450).

Saint John Chrysostom had the warm love and deep respect of the people, and grief over his untimely death lived on in the hearts of Christians. Saint John's disciple, Saint Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople (434-447), during services in the Church of Hagia Sophia, preached a sermon praising Saint John. He said, "O John, your life was filled with sorrow, but your death was glorious. Your grave is blessed and reward is great, by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ O graced one, having conquered the bounds of time and place! Love has conquered space, unforgetting memory has annihilated the limits, and place does not hinder the miracles of the saint."

Those who were present in church, deeply touched by the words of Saint Proclus, did not allow him even to finish his sermon. With one accord they began to entreat the Patriarch to intercede with the emperor, so that the relics of Saint John might be brought back to Constantinople.

The emperor, overwhelmed by Saint Proclus, gave his consent and gave the order to transfer the relics of Saint John. But those he sent were unable to lift the holy relics until the emperor realized that he had sent men to take the saint's relics from Comana with an edict, instead of with a prayer. He wrote a letter to Saint John, humbly asking him to forgive his audacity, and to return to Constantinople. After the message was read at the grave of Saint John, they easily took up the relics, carried them onto a ship and arrived at Constantinople.

The coffin with the relics was placed in the Church of Holy Peace (Hagia Eirene). When Patriarch Proclus opened the coffin, the body of Saint John was found to be incorrupt. The emperor approached the coffin with tears, asking forgiveness for his mother, who had banished Saint John. All day and night people did not leave the coffin.

In the morning the coffin was brought to the Church of the Holy Apostles. The people cried out, "Father, take up your throne." Then Patriarch Proclus and the clergy standing by the relics saw Saint John open his mouth and say, "Peace be to all." Many of the sick were healed at his tomb.