



STS. CYRIL AND METHODY

MACEDONO-BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

JULY 2024

Њ ПУРФОРОС АНДВАСЕ ТЪ ПРАВИТН ЊИД



Saint Elijah the Prophet - 20 July

The Holy Prophet Elijah is one of the most famous people in the history of mankind. He is worshiped not only in Christianity and Judaism, but also in Islam.

In fact, the name of the Old Testament prophet is unknown. We know nothing about the origins of the Holy Prophet Elijah, about his genealogy, and it is even possible that the name Elijah is not his first name.

„Eliyahu“ in Biblical Hebrew means „Yahweh is my God.“ There is an opinion that the prophet adopted this name during the confrontation with the priests of the idol Baal.



They were brothers born in the province of Assia, Asia Minor. Their father was a pagan and their mother Theodotia was a Christian. Her husband died early, and the young widow lived a pious life, following the advice of St. Paul the Apostle, „A true widow trusts in God and abides in prayer day and night.“ Theodotia taught her children to live godly lives, taught them the reverent fear of God, and counseled them to strengthen themselves in the Christian virtues. Cosmas and Damian set themselves from an early age

to fulfill the Divine Law. When they grew up, they shone with their good works, and in order to be useful to their fellow-men, they undertook to study the art of medicine; they learned the magical properties of various herbs and became famous as physicians. The Lord Jesus blessed the two physicians and bestowed upon them miraculous healing power. The brothers were very humble people and healers. They did not seek earthly fame and greatness, nor did they seek riches. They took neither money nor gifts from the sick they healed, strictly fulfilling the Savior's advice to the apostles, „Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers... Freely ye have received, freely give“ (Mt 10:8). Because of their selflessness, St. John of God gave them the gifts they needed. The Church calls them „the spareless.“ As kindred brothers who performed one feat and achieved equal holiness, they were buried in one tomb. Later, a temple was built over this grave where many miracles were performed by their prayerful intercession.



Holy Martyr Nedelya-Ciriak was born in Asia Minor, probably in Nicomedia, capital of the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

She was the child of the pious parents Dorotheus and Eusebius, begotten by long prayers. From childhood she devoted herself to God and resolved to keep chastity all her life. She grew up a beautiful and clever virgin. Many young men sought her consent for marriage, but she refused them all, saying that she was betrothed to Christ and wanted to die a virgin.

Then a young man of a noble family, offended by her refusal, reported to the Emperor Diocletian that the whole family of the virgin Sunday professed the Christian faith. The emper-

or banished the parents to the town of He was martyred by St. Nedelya was subjected to cruel torture for her faith.

At her tomb she was allowed to pray before her death.

After the prayer she gave her soul to the Lord without being beheaded. This took place on July 7, 289.

The Bulgarian kings of Asen (XII-XIII centuries) carried her relics to the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, Tarnovo.

Her hagiography, written by St. Evtimius, Patriarch of Tarnovo, who translated the martyr's name from Greek into Bulgarian (Kyriakia-Nedelya). From that time to the present day in Bulgaria the custom of translating Greek names into Bulgarian has remained.





Saint Paisios was born on July 24, 1924 in Farasa, Cappadocia. He had eight other brothers and sisters. On August 7, 1924, one week before the inhabitants of Farasa left for Greece, the old man was baptized by St. Paul. Arsenios of Cappadocia, who insisted on giving him his name „to leave a heathen behind him,“ as he so eloquently put it.

Later, already in Greece, Arsenius graduated from school with very good grades and showed a clear desire to follow the monastic path. His first contact with Darwin's theory of evolution caused a tremor in his childish soul. As he himself later related, he began to pray insistently: „If Christ is God, he will now appear to me to make me believe!“. After this thought, Christ himself immediately appeared to him, in incorruptible light, looked at

him with much love, and said to him, „I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me shall not die, but live!“

After entering the army, Arsenius showed a sensitivity to the pain of people that became a major mark of his life path as he had much compassion for the sorrowing, supporting them with his prayer that miraculously touched their souls and eased their grief.

The Binder of God

Arsenius joined the army in 1945 during the Greek Civil War and served as a signalman. This was his prayer to Christ - that He would give him such service that „he would not kill a single man.“ However, when he happened to be involved in hostilities, he wanted to be on the front line so that those soldiers who had families would not go there. Most of his time in the army, however, was spent as a Signalman, which is why he is referred to as the „Signalman of God“ in many of his hagiographies. He got this nickname from his conversation with a soldier who denied the necessity of the monastic life, and Arsenius replied that monks were „the binders of God,“ referring to so-called intelligent prayer and their concern for the rest of humanity.



The holiness and miracles of the elder

According to the Church, miracles have never been proof of holiness, but holiness is impossible without miracles. During his lifetime and/or after his death, the saint experienced his neighbor's suffering as his own and could not remain a silent witness before God to another's pain. And God heard his prayer because the saint loved his neighbor so much that he was willing to sacrifice something of himself and even himself for the sake of the other. This is also the essence of Christ's work, which all in the Church should follow.

HOLY MARTYR MARINA - JULY 17



Saint Marina was born in Antioch of Pisidia of noble parents, but not faithful, and marred by pagan wickedness. The father, Edesius, was an idolatrous priest. He gave his daughter Marina, left motherless at birth, to a nurse living in a village fifteen miles from the city. When the girl grew up, she proved to be beautiful in a physically and even more beautiful in a soul: she was distinguished by prudence and good-nature.

As at that time persecution was raised against the Christians, the hierarchs and clerics, teachers of the word of God, hid themselves for fear of the tormentors, some in deserts and mountain caves, others among the common people in the villages, disguised as beggars, but wherever they could, teaching, though secretly, the holy faith and converting many from pagan error to Christ.

For the faith of Christ she put her fair head under the sword and was beheaded, while her soul was taken and taken to the heavenly dwellings.

Thus, on the seventeenth of July, the holy martyr Marina completed her martyrdom. And the suffering was described by an eyewitness, the servant of God Theotimus, who saw the whole ordeal.



The holy prophet Elijah was a preacher of the One God at the time when Ahab and his wife Jezebel reigned in Israel. They were idolaters - offering sacrifices to the pagan deity Baal. Jezebel was a Phoenician by descent.

The Phoenicians worship Baal and Jezebel herself is his priestess. The king and queen are clearly inciting the people to idolatry. The prophet Elijah openly rebukes them and thereby earns the queen's loathing. As punishment for the king's obstinance in idolatry, the Lord sends a sweltering upon Israel. For three years there is neither rain nor dew from the skies. The drought is only ended by the prayer of the holy prophet Elijah, which puts the priests of Baal to shame.

This happens under the following circumstances: the prophet gathers the people of Israel and the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel, and proposes to build two altars, one to God and one to Baal; and to offer sacrifices on them, but not to kindle fire. If Baal burns his sacrifice with fire from heaven, then he is the true god. If

the Lord burned His sacrifice, then He is the true God. Of course, Baal does not „accept“ his sacrifice. And fire from God consumes not only the sacrifice, but the wood and the stone altar, and even the trench of water that Elijah commanded to be made around the altar.

The people of Israel repent and glorify God, and Elijah single-handedly kills all the priests of Baal because they are leading the people into idolatry. He then prays to the Lord for rain and the Lord hears his prayer.

About the holy prophet Elijah it says specifically in the Bible that he was taken alive to heaven

: „...suddenly there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and they separated them one from another (Elisha from the prophet Elijah), and Elijah was caught up in a whirlwind to heaven“ (2 Kings 2:11).

Saint Elijah the prophet is the forerunner of Christ according to the Church tradition, which is based on the prophecy of Malachi: „Behold, I will send unto you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes“ (Mal. 4:5), Elijah the prophet will be the forerunner of the Second Coming of Christ on earth and will be killed for his preaching.

By this he will repeat the fate of St. John the Baptist, who comes „in the spirit and power of Elijah“ (Lk. 1:17) as the forerunner of the Savior. Christ says: „Elijah shall come first, and shall settle all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but

did unto him as they would: so shall also the Son of man suffer of them“ (Matt. 17:11-12).

That the prophet Elijah was a herald of Christ is evidenced by his miracles. During the drought sent because of the sins of King Ahab and the people of Israel, he lived in the home of the widow of Zarephath of Sidon, who was a Gentile by descent. This is a foreshadowing of Christ's coming to the perishing nation of Israel - He is rejected by the Israelites but accepted by the Gentiles.

In the widow's home, Elijah resurrects her only son, who is dying of a serious illness. In the same way, Christ raises the dead in His earthly life.

The Holy Scriptures tell of another miracle that took place in the widow's house - while the prophet lived there, the oil in the pot did not diminish and the flour in the jar did not run out (see 1 Kings 17:14, 16). This is a foreshadowing of the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes with which the Lord fed the multitudes who came to hear Him (see Matt. 14:15-21; Matt. 15:32-38)

The holy prophet Elijah was the interlocutor of Christ and

The Gospel testifies to his being the greatest among the prophets, due to the fact that only he and Moses were privileged to converse with Christ during His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor.

The Holy Prophet Elijah in Judaism

Already in ancient, pre-Christian Judaism there is a tradition of the prophet Eliyahu, who is the forerunner of the Mashiach (Messiah). This tradition has survived to this day. Moreover, it is believed that Elijah will not only return to earth before the Messiah's coming, but will anoint Him as king (for after the centuries-long break in dynasties, there can be no other designation of the legitimate king than directly from God - through a prophet).

Jewish tradition also holds that Eliyahu visits the home of every family that celebrates Pesach (the remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt). Therefore, during the ritual Passover meal, a cup is placed on the table for the prophet.

The Holy Prophet Elijah in Islam

In Islamic tradition, the prophet Elijah is called Ilyas. His biography briefly repeats the biblical biography of the prophet: he teaches the people to worship the One God; he punishes them for worshipping the idol Baal.

Some interpreters of the Qur'an and Islamic theologians believe that Idris (Enoch) and al-Hidr (the prophet, teacher of Moses, who is also immortal; he has no counterpart in the Bible) - are actually other names of the prophet Elijah. Islam lacks the eschatological sense that is given to the person of Elijah in Christianity and Judaism. But the belief that he was taken alive to heaven is also present in Islam.





The Orthodox Church commemorates the Assumption of Saint Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is the second day of the year dedicated to Saint Anne. On December 9, the conception of St. Anne is commemorated.

God's providence prepared the graceful appearance of St. Mary. The righteous Joachim and Anna, whom the holy Church calls „God-fearers,“ lived in Nazareth. St. Joachim came from the line of David, and St. Anna from the line of Aaron.

They were very generous and charitable, but daily sorrow darkened the lives of these good people - they had no children.

On one of the great feasts Jehoiakim went to Jerusalem; he wanted to offer a sacrifice to God. But in the temple the high priest told him that he was not worthy to offer his sacrifice and that because of his sins God had not granted him children. Jehoiakim was so deeply grieved that instead of going home to his wife, he went into the wilderness and spent 40 days fasting and

praying. Word of Jehoiakim's anxiety reached Hannah in Nazareth; she grieved even more than her husband because she considered herself the cause of their childlessness. And Hannah began to pray with all her soul and even more fervently to God:

„Jesus, Jesus! Thou hast bestowed upon Sarah in her old age a son. Hear me also. And I will offer You the child born of me as a gift, that Your mercy may be blessed in him!“... The angel of the Lord stood before her and said to her. Your cries have passed through the clouds. Your tears have dropped before the Lord. You will give birth to a blessed daughter, for whom all the families of the earth will be blessed. Through her salvation will be given to the whole world. You shall call her Mary.“

Anna immediately made a promise that if she bore a child, she would give it in the service of God. Before sharing her joy with her husband, she went to the Jerusalem temple to give thanks to God and there to repeat her promise. Joachim died at the age of 80.

After his death, St. Anne moved from Nazareth to Jerusalem to be near her daughter. There she prayed constantly in the temple until her death.





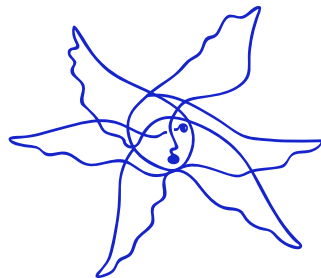
SAINT PANTELEIMON - JULY 27

This Saint, who had Nicomedia as his homeland, was the son of Eustorgius and Eubula. His father was an idolater, but his mother was a Christian from her ancestors. It was through her that he was instructed in piety, and still later, he was catechized in the Faith of Christ by Saint Hermolaus (see July 26) and baptized by him. Being proficient in the physician's vocation, he practiced it in a philanthropic manner, healing every illness more by the grace of Christ than by medicines. Thus, although his parents had named him Pantoleon („in all things a lion“), because of the compassion he showed for the souls and bodies of all, he was worthily re-

named Panteleimon, meaning „all-merciful.“

On one occasion, when he restored the sight of a certain blind man by calling on the Divine Name, he enlightened also the eyes of this man's soul to the knowledge of the truth. This also became the cause for the martyrdom of him who had been blind, since when he was asked by whom and in what manner his eyes had been opened, in imitation of that blind man of the Gospel he confessed with boldness both who the physician was and the manner of his healing. For this he was put to death immediately. Panteleimon was arrested also, and having endured many wounds, he was finally beheaded in the year 305, during the reign of Maximian.

Saint Panteleimon is one of the Holy Unmercenaries, and is held in special honor among them, even as Saint George is among the Martyrs.





After the death of St. Methodius, Archbishop of Moravia († 885), the German clergy expelled the Apostles of the Slavonic language from Moravia. Then St. Kliment, with some of his brethren, found a good reception in his native Bulgaria, which had already officially converted to Christianity and was in need of teachers of the Slavonic language. The blessed king Boris-Michael sent Kliment (886) to the south-western half of his vast country, to the Macedonian region of Kutmichevica, with the main towns of Devol and Ohrid. At the Council of Preslav (893) Clement was elected „first bishop of the Bulgarian language“. As a priest and bishop he worked tirelessly for 30 years (886-916) to establish the Christian faith

among his people. By day he taught children and young men, and by night he prayed and wrote: he translated books from Greek into Bulgarian; he composed sermons for feasts, which he himself pronounced or his disciples read to the newly converted Bulgarian people. He built churches and monasteries. He simplified the Glagolitic alphabet and composed the letters of the so-called Slavonic alphabet „Cyrillic“.

Only in the western half of the then Bulgaria St. Kliment had about 3500 disciples, who took holy orders and gradually displaced the Greek clergy with its Greek language, incomprehensible to the common people. Having prepared his grave in advance in the monastery he founded, „St. Panteleimon“, St. After his death the Lord glorified him with gracious miracles. Service and hagiographies of St. Clement were composed by his immediate disciples or by distant successors to his episcopal see, such as the famous Archbishops of Ohrid, Theophylact (1094-1107) and the famous canonist Demetrius Homatianus (1216-1234).

OHRIDIAN LEGEND (Short Life of St. Clement of Ohrid, Demetrius Homatianus)

