

Daily Orthodox - December 13th, 2024

Today is Friday of the 25th Week after Pentecost.

Fasting Obligations

- **OCA:** Fish, wine, and oil permitted.
- **GOARCH, Antioch:** Strict fast.

Today, we commemorate...

1. **The Holy Martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius and Orestes**

“ These five courageous men shone like five shining stars in the dark days of the Christ-persecuting Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. St. Eustratius was a Roman commander in the city of Satalonius; Eugene was his companion in the army; Orestes was likewise a distinguished soldier; Auxentius was a priest; and Mardarius was an ordinary citizen who came, like Eustratius, from the town of Arabrak. The imperial deputies Lysias and Agriculus tortured Auxentius first since he was a priest. Seeing the innocent suffering of Christians, Eustratius appeared in front of Lysias and declared that he was also a Christian. While Eustratius was being tortured, Eugene appeared before the judge and cried out: "Lysias, I too am a Christian." When Eustratius was led through the town of Arabrak with the other martyrs, Mardarius saw them from the roof of his house. He took leave of his wife and two young children and rushed after the martyrs, shouting into the faces of the tormentors: "I too am a Christian, like my lord Eustratius." When St. Orestes was target-practicing in the presence of Lysias, the cross he was wearing fell from his chest and Lysias realized that he was a Christian, after which Orestes openly confessed his faith. Orestes was a young and handsome soldier and towered above all the other soldiers in stature. Auxentius was beheaded, Eugene and Mardarius died while being tortured,

Orestes expired on a red-hot iron grid, and Eustratius died in a fiery furnace. St. Blaise (February 11) administered Holy Communion to St. Eustratius in prison before his death. Their relics were later taken to Constantinople and buried in the church dedicated to them: The Holy Five Companions. They were seen alive in that church, and St. Orestes appeared to St. Dimitri of Rostov (October 28). A beautiful prayer by St. Eustratius is extant, which is read at the Midnight Service on Saturday: "Most highly do I magnify Thee, O Lord."

2. **The Virgin Martyr Lucy (Lucia) of Syracuse**

“ With her mother, Lucy visited the grave of St. Agatha in Catania, where St. Agatha appeared to her. Her mother, who had dropsy, was then miraculously healed in the church. Lucy distributed all her goods to the poor, and this embittered her betrothed, who accused her of being a Christian before Paschasius the judge. The wicked judge ordered that she be taken to a brothel in order to defile her. However, by the power of God she remained immovable, as if rooted to the earth, and not even a multitude of people was able to move her from that spot. Then an enraged pagan pierced her throat with a sword and she gave up her soul to God and took up her habitation in the Kingdom of Eternity. Lucy suffered in the year 304.

3. **The Hieromartyr Gavril, Patriarch of Serbia (1659)**

“ During the terrible period of Turkish rule over Serbia, this great hierarch traveled to Russia, where he participated in the Moscow Synod of 1655. Upon returning, he was accused of high treason. Certain evil Jews also accused him of having converted several Jews to the Christian Faith. In their accusation, the Jews cited that he was attempting to convert the Turks. The Jews did this to enrage the Turkish authorities even more. Brought before the tribunal, he was condemned and sentenced to embrace Islam. Since Gavril would not even hear of this, he was, after a period of imprisonment, sentenced to death and hanged in Brusa in the year 1659. Thus, he departed for his beloved Christ to receive from Him a double crown, that of a hierarch and that of a martyr.

4. *St. Columba of Terryglass and Holy Island on Lough Derg (Ireland) (549)*
5. *St. Aubertus, bishop (Neth.) (668)*
6. *St. Odilia, virgin and abbess, of Alsace (Gaul) (720)*
7. *St. Arsenius of Mt. Latros (11th c.)*
8. *St. Arcadius, monk, of Novotorzhok (1077)*
9. *St. Mardarius, recluse of the Kiev Caves (13th c.)*

10. *St. Dositheus*, metropolitan of Moldavia (1693)
11. *St. Herman*, Wonderworker of Alaska (1836) (his service may be sung on *December 12*)

For more information on today's saints or commemorations not provided, see <https://www.oca.org/saints/lives> (Slavic) and/or <https://www.goarch.org/chapel> (Greek).

Reflection

Reflections are added when it includes additional stories from the life of a saint commemorated today.

“ To give alms out of that which one needs: this is true almsgiving. Not to sin when one is most exposed to sinning: this has value before God. When St. Lucy saw her sick mother miraculously healed, she suggested to her that she use her possessions as alms for the needy. To this her mother replied that she did not want to part from her possessions until her death, but she agreed that after her death her possessions could be used for the good that Lucy wished. "First, cover my eyes with earth," her mother said, "and then do what you wish with my possessions." Lucy said: "It is not very pleasing to God for a person to give to Him that which he cannot take with him to the grave or which he himself does not need. But if you want to do a God-pleasing deed, give to Him that which you yourself need. Otherwise, after death, when you need nothing, you will be offering Him that which you could not take with you. But while you are still alive and healthy, give to Christ what you possess, and all of that which you intended for me begin even now to give to Him." The good mother of the wise daughter agreed to this. When the torturer Paschasius was attempting to force this holy virgin to carnal sin, Lucy did not, even in thought, assent to this. And when the torturer threatened that his men would defile her by force, saying with a smirk, "When you become defiled, the Holy Spirit will flee from you," Lucy, full of grace, replied: "The body cannot be defiled without the consent of the mind." Thus St. Lucy went to her death, having distributed all her goods beforehand and guarded her young and pure body from defilement.

Daily Scriptures

Slavic and Greek

- **Epistle (Slavic: Day):** 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

<6> But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. <7> For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; <8> nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, <9> not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. <10> For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. <11> For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. <12> Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. <13> But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. <14> And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. <15> Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. <16> Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all. <17> The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. <18> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

- **Gospel (Slavic: Day):** Mark 9:33-41

“ <33> Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" <34> But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. <35> And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." <36> Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, <37> "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me." <38> Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us." <39> But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. <40> For he who is not against us is on our side. <41> For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

Slavic

- **Epistle (for St. Herman):** Galatians 5:22-6:2

<22> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <23> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. <24> And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <25> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. <26> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. <1> Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. <2> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

- **Gospel (for St. Herman):** Luke 6:17-23

“ <17> And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, <18> as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. <19> And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all. <20> Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God. <21> Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh. <22> Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. <23> Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

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