

# Daily Orthodox - December 17th, 2024

Today is Tuesday of the 26th Week after Pentecost.

## Fasting Obligations

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

Today, we commemorate...

1. **The Holy Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Youths: Ananias, Azarias, and Misael**

“ All four were of the royal tribe of Judah. When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed and plundered Jerusalem, Daniel, as a boy, was carried away into slavery together with the Jewish King Jehoiachim and countless other Israelites. An account of his life, sufferings and prophecies can be found in detail in his book. Completely devoted to God, St. Daniel from his early youth received from God the gift of great discernment. His fame among the Jews in Babylon began when he denounced two lecherous and unrighteous elders, Jewish judges, and saved the chaste Susanna from an unjust death. But his fame among the Babylonians began from the day he deciphered and interpreted the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar. For this, the king made him a prince at his court. When the king made a golden idol on the Plain of Dura, the Three Children refused to worship it, and for this they were cast into a fiery furnace. But an angel of God appeared in the furnace and cooled the fire so that the children walked around the furnace unharmed by the fire, singing: *Blessed art Thou, Lord God of our fathers* (Daniel 3:26). The king saw this miracle and was amazed. He then brought the children out of the furnace and bestowed upon them great honors.

In the time of King Belshazzar, when the king was eating and drinking with his guests at a banquet from consecrated vessels taken from the Temple in Jerusalem, an invisible hand wrote three words on the wall: *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* (Daniel 5:25-28). No one was able to interpret these words except Daniel. That night, King Belshazzar was killed. Daniel was twice thrown into the lions' den because of his faith in the One, Living God, and both times the Lord saved him and he remained alive. Daniel beheld God on a throne with the heavenly hosts; saw angels; discerned the future of certain people, of kingdoms, and of the whole human race; and prophesied the time of the coming of the Savior on earth. According to St. Cyril of Alexandria, Daniel and the three children lived to old age in Babylon and were beheaded for the true Faith. When they beheaded Ananias, Azarias stretched out his cloak and caught his head; following this, Misael caught Azarias' head and Daniel caught Misael's head. An angel of God translated their bodies to Judea, to Mount Gebal, and placed them under a rock. According to tradition, these four God-pleasers arose at the time of the death of the Lord Christ, appeared to many and again fell asleep. Daniel is numbered among the four great prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel). He lived and prophesied five hundred years before Christ.

## 2. **The Venerable Daniel (Dunale) the Confessor, of Spain and Egypt** (10th c.)

“ Daniel was a nobleman and governor of the island of Nivertum near Cadiz in Spain. Realizing the vanity of this world, he renounced both honors and riches and went to Rome, where he was tonsured a monk. After this, he went to Constantinople, where he spoke with the Emperors Constantine and Romanus Porphyrogenitus, and then he set off for Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, he received the great schema at the hands of Patriarch Christodoulus, who gave him the name Stephen. Mistreated by the Saracens, who forced him to shave off his beard, he withdrew to Egypt, where he endured much suffering and finally died for the name of Christ. He took up his habitation in the Kingdom of Christ toward the end of the tenth century.

## 3. **The Venerable New Martyrs Paisius** (1814) **and Habakkuk, at Belgrade** (1815)

“ Paisius was abbot of the Travna Monastery near Čačak in Serbia, and Habakkuk was his companion and deacon. As Christians, both were impaled on stakes by the Turks on Kalemegdan in Belgrade on December 17, 1814. Carrying his stake through the streets of Belgrade, the courageous Habakkuk sang. When his mother begged him with tears to embrace Islam in order to save his life, this wonderful soldier of Christ replied to her: *My mother, thank you for your milk, /*

*But for your counsel I thank you not: / A Serb is Christ's; he rejoices in death.*

4. *Monk-martyrs Paternuthius and Coprius and Martyr Alexander the Soldier*, of Egypt (361-363)
5. *The 47 Martyrs of Gaza*, at Heraclion (638)
6. *St. Sturm*, abbot and founder of Fulda Monastery (Germany) (779)
7. *Sts. Athanasius, Nicholas, and Anthony*, founders of Vatopedi Monastery, Mt. Athos (10th c.)
8. *New Martyr Nicetas of Nyssa* (ca. 1300)
9. *St. Dionysius of Zakynthos*, archbishop of Aegina (1622)
10. *St. Misael*, hieromonk of Abalak Monastery (Irkutsk) (1852)
11. *New Hieromartyr Sergius*, priest, of Rakvere, Estonia (1918)

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.*

“Bodily purity is primarily attained by fasting, and, through bodily purity, spiritual purity is also attained. Abstinence from food, according to the words of that son of grace, St. Ephraim the Syrian, means: "Not to desire or ask for various foods, either sweet or costly; not to eat anything outside the designated time; not to succumb to the spirit of gluttony; not to excite hunger in oneself by looking at good food; and not to desire at one moment one kind of food and at another moment another kind of food." Great is the fallacy that fasting and Lenten food harm the health of the body. It is a known fact that the ascetics lived the longest and were the least prone to illness. St. Daniel and the Three Children in Babylon offer us an example of this. When the king ordered his eunuch to feed these young men food from the royal table and to give them good wine to drink, Daniel told the eunuch that they did not want to accept the royal food and wine but wanted only vegetables for food (for Daniel did not want to eat the food sprinkled with the blood of the idolatrous sacrifices). The eunuch, fearing that the youths would be weakened by the fasting foods, related his fear to Daniel. Then the prophet suggested that he make a test and convince himself that the fasting food would not weaken them: to nourish the other youths at the royal court with food from the king's table, and to feed the four of them only on pulse for the course of ten days, and then make a comparison. The eunuch heeded Daniel and did what he suggested. After ten days, the faces of the four ascetic

youths were more radiant and their bodies were stronger than the bodies of the Babylonian youths who ate and drank from the king's table.

# Daily Scriptures

## Slavic

- **Epistle:** 1 Timothy 1:8-14

“ <8> But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, <9> knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, <10> for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, <11> according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. <12> And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, <13> although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. <14> And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

## Greek

- **Epistle:** Hebrews 11:33-12:2

“ <33> who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, <34> quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. <35> Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. <36> Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. <37> They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— <38> of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. <39> And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, <40> God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. <1> Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by

so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <2> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

## Slavic and Greek

- **Gospel:** Mark 10:2-12

“ <2> The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" testing Him. <3> And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" <4> They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her." <5> And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. <6> But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' <7> 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, <8> and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. <9> Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." <10> In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. <11> So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. <12> And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

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