

Daily Orthodox - December 20th, 2024

Today is Friday of the 26th Week after Pentecost.

Fasting Obligations

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

Today, we commemorate...

1. **The Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, bishop of Antioch** (106)

“ This holy man is called "the God-bearer" because he constantly bore the name of the Living God in his heart and on his lips. According to tradition, he was thus named because he was held in the arms of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ. On a day when the Lord was teaching His disciples humility, He took a child and placed him among them, saying: *Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven* (Matthew 18:4). This child was Ignatius. Later, Ignatius was a disciple of St. John the Theologian, together with Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. As Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius governed the Church of God as a good shepherd and was the first to introduce antiphonal chanting in the Church, in which two choirs alternate the chanting. This manner of chanting was revealed to St. Ignatius by the angels in heaven. When Emperor Trajan was passing through Antioch on his way to do battle with the Persians, he heard of Ignatius, summoned him and counseled him to offer sacrifice to the idols. If Ignatius would do so, Trajan would bestow upon him the rank of senator. As the counsels and threats of the emperor were in vain, St. Ignatius was shackled in irons and sent to Rome in the company of ten merciless soldiers, to be thrown to the wild beasts. Ignatius rejoiced in suffering for his Lord, only praying to God that the wild beasts would become the tomb for his body and

that no one would prevent him from this death. After a long and difficult journey from Asia through Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus, Ignatius arrived in Rome, where he was thrown to the lions in the circus. The lions tore him to pieces and devoured him, leaving only several of the larger bones and his heart. This glorious lover of the Lord Christ suffered in the year 106 in Rome at the time of the Christ-hating Emperor Trajan. Ignatius has appeared many times from the other world and worked miracles, even to this day helping all who call upon him for help.

2. **Saint Daniel, Archbishop of Serbia** (1338)

“ Daniel was the son of wealthy and God-loving parents. In his youth he was given a good upbringing. King Milutin took him to his court, but out of great love for God he fled and was tonsured a monk in the Monastery of Končul near the Ibar. Later, he was the abbot of the Monastery of Hilandar [Mount Athos] and suffered much from the plundering Latin Crusaders. He was the Bishop of Banja, then of Hum, and finally the Archbishop of Serbia. From beginning to end, he was a strict ascetic and had the special gift of tears. He made peace between Kings Dragutin and Milutin, and later between Milutin and Stefan of Dečani. He fought fervently against the Latins as well as the Bogomils. Under his supervision, the Monasteries of Banja and Dečani were built, and he restored and built many other churches. He wrote the genealogy of the Serbian kings and saints. Untiring in his service to God to the end of his life, he entered peacefully into rest on the night between the nineteenth and twentieth of December, 1338, during the reign of Tsar Dušan. Daniel was a great hierarch, a great ascetic, a great laborer and a great patriot.

3. *St. Philogonius*, bishop of Antioch (323)
4. *St. Ignatius*, archimandrite, of the Kiev Caves (1435)
5. *New Martyr John of the island of Thasos*, at Constantinople (1652)
6. *St. Anthony*, archbishop of Voronezh (1846)
7. *St. John of Kronstadt* (1908)

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.

The holy martyrs, seized with the love of Christ, were like unquenchable flames. This love eased their sufferings and made their deaths sweet. St. Chrysostom says of St. Ignatius: "He put off his body with as much ease as one takes off his clothes." Traveling to Rome to his death, Ignatius feared only one thing: that Christians would somehow prevent his martyrdom for Christ, by their prayers to God or in some outward manner. Therefore he continually implored them, in writing and in speech, not to do this. "Forgive me," he said. "I know what is for my benefit. I but begin to be a disciple of Christ when I desire nothing, either visible or invisible, save to attain Christ. May every diabolical torture come upon me: fire, crucifixion, wild beasts, the sword, tearing asunder, the crushing of my bones, and the dismemberment of my whole body--only that I may receive Jesus Christ. It is better for me to die for Christ than to reign to the ends of the earth.... My love is nailed to the cross, and there is no fire of love in me for any earthly thing." When he was brought to the circus, he turned to the people with these words: "Citizens of Rome, know that I am not being punished for any crime, neither have I been condemned to death for any transgression, but rather for the sake of my God, by Whose love I am overcome and Whom I insatiably desire. I am His wheat, and the teeth of the wild beasts will grind me to be His pure bread." When he had been devoured by the wild beasts, by God's providence his heart remained among the bones. When the unbelievers cut open the saint's heart, they saw inside, inscribed in golden letters, the name Jesus Christ.

Daily Scriptures

Slavic

- **Epistle:** 1 Timothy 4:4-8, 16

“ <4> For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; <5> for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. <6> If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. <7> But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. <8> For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. <16> Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

- **Gospel:** Mark 10:23-32

<23> Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" <24> And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! <25> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." <26> And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?" <27> But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible." <28> Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You." <29> So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, <30> who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. <31> But many who are first will be last, and the last first." <32> Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him:

Greek

- **Epistle:** Hebrews 10:32-38

“ <32> But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: <33> partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; <34> for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. <35> Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. <36> For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: <37> "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. <38> Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."

- **Gospel:** 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.

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