

Daily Orthodox - December 24th, 2024

Today is Tuesday of the 27th Week after Pentecost (Eve of the Nativity).

Fasting Obligations

- **OCA, GOARCH, Antioch:** Strict fast.

Today, we commemorate...

1. The Venerable Nun Martyr Eugenia and others with her

“Eugenia was the daughter of Philip the Eparch of all Egypt and was born in Rome. At that time the Christians had been driven out of Alexandria and lived outside the city. The virgin Eugenia visited the Christians and accepted their Faith with her whole heart. Fleeing from her parents with two of her faithful eunuchs, she was baptized by Bishop Elias. Disguised in men's clothing, she entered a men's monastery where she received the monastic habit. So much did she cleanse her heart by voluntary asceticism that she received from God the grace of healing the sick. Thus, she healed a wealthy woman, Melanthia. After this, however, Melanthia wanted to lure Eugenia into bodily sin, not suspecting that Eugenia was a woman. Since she was adamantly rejected by Eugenia, out of revenge this evil woman went to the eparch and slandered Eugenia in the same manner as Potiphar's wife had once slandered the chaste Joseph. The eparch ordered that all the monks be bound and cast into prison together with Eugenia. But when St. Eugenia was brought before the tribunal, she revealed herself to her father as his daughter. The overjoyed Philip was then baptized with his entire household, and he was chosen as Bishop of Alexandria. Hearing of this, the Roman emperor sent a wicked commander, Terentius, who came to Alexandria and secretly had Philip killed. St. Eugenia moved to Rome with her mother and brothers. In Rome she fearlessly and zealously converted pagans,

especially maidens, to the true Faith, and thus she converted a beautiful maiden Basilla to the Faith. Shortly afterward, Basilla was beheaded for Christ as Eugenia had foretold to her. Then both eunuchs, Protus and Hyacinth, were beheaded. Finally, a martyr's end came to St. Eugenia, whose presence had caused the collapse and destruction of the Temple of Diana. The torturers threw her first into water and then into fire, but God saved her. The Lord Jesus Himself appeared to her in prison and told her that she would suffer on the day of His Nativity. And so it was. She was beheaded by the sword on December 25, 262, in Rome. After her death, St. Eugenia appeared in great glory to her mother and comforted her.

2. The Venerable Nicholas the Commander

“ Some think this great saint was a Slav of Balkan ancestry. At the time of Emperor Nicephorus, Nicholas was a commander and had authority over a division of the army that went to war against the Bulgarians. Along the way, Nicholas spent the night in an inn, where he experienced a great temptation and had a strange dream. This dream fully came to pass in the war, where the Greeks were utterly defeated by the Bulgarians in the year 811. Nicholas was spared, and out of gratitude for God's providence he left his military rank and became a monk. He lived a long life of asceticism and became so perfect that he became a great clairvoyant and God-pleaser. He died peacefully in the ninth century and took up his habitation in the Blessed Kingdom of Christ the Lord.

3. The Holy New Martyr Ahmed the Calligrapher

“ A Turk by birth and a stonecutter by profession, is also commemorated. He embraced the Christian Faith and laid down his life for it. He suffered at the hands of the Turks in Constantinople in the year 1682.

4. *St. Vitimionus of Scetis* (5th c.)

5. *St. Aphrodisius* (6th c.) and *St. Antioch* (635), monks, of Palestine

[footnote: In the Greek Synaxarion, the Venerable Antiochus, a monk of Palestine, is also commemorated. He was an eyewitness of the suffering of the Holy Fathers of St. Sava's (May 16) and, as an eyewitness, described their suffering under the Saracens. He also compiled another book entitled Pandect. He wrote many prayers, of which the best-known is the one recited daily at Compline: "And grant us, O Master, as we go to sleep, rest of body and soul."]

6. *New Hieromartyrs Innocent*, archimandrite, of Voronezh (1927), and *Sergius*, archpriest, of Moscow (1941)

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.

“ Victory over temptation is victory over death. This is shown by a wondrous experience of St. Nicholas the Commander. When this commander went off with King Nicephorus's army against the Bulgarians, it happened that he spent the night in a wayside inn. The innkeeper had a daughter, a young girl, who, attracted by the imperial commander's outward beauty, began to entice him into sin. Nicholas refused her once, saying to her that this was enticing him into a satanic act. Nevertheless, the shameless girl came a second and a third time to the commander's room and again tempted him to an impure act. The commander refused both the second and third propositions even more decisively, counseling her to preserve her virginity and not to give her body and soul over to the devil. Finally, he said to her that he was a soldier and was going to war, and that it was unworthy and dangerous for a soldier to soil himself with such a misdeed, which would anger God and lead him to certain death. Thus, this God-loving man conquered temptation. The following day, he moved farther on with the army. The next night, he saw the following vision: He was standing in a spacious field and saw near him a powerful man sitting with his right leg crossed over his left. Before them stood two armies in the field, one facing the other, the Greeks and the Bulgarians. This powerful man told him to watch carefully what was about to happen. Nicholas looked and saw the following: As long as the powerful man kept his right leg crossed over the left, the Greek army overcame the Bulgarian army, and when he changed his position and placed his left leg over the right leg, the Bulgarians charged and ferociously cut down the Greeks. Then this powerful man brought the commander closer to the slaughtered Greek army. The entire field was covered with corpses, body beside body. Only in the middle of these corpses was there an empty space, large enough for the body of a man. Then the man said to Nicholas: "This place was appointed for your body, but since you defeated the devil's temptations three times last night, you saved your body and soul from death." That which Nicholas saw in his dream, he saw precisely in reality at the time of the battle. The entire Greek army perished on the battlefield, but Nicholas returned home alive, not to the barracks anymore, but to a monastery.

Daily Scriptures

Slavic and Greek

- **Epistle (Slavic: for the Eve of the Nativity):** Hebrews 1:1-12

“ <1> God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, <2> has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; <3> who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <4> having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. <5> For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"? <6> But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." <7> And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire." <8> But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. <9> You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions." <10> And: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. <11> They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; <12> Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail."

- **Gospel (Slavic: for the Eve of the Nativity):** Luke 2:1-20

“ <1> And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <2> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <3> So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. <4> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <5> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. <6> So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. <7> And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. <8> Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <9> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <10> Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <11> For there is born to you this day in

the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <12> And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." <13> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: <14> "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" <15> So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." <16> And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. <17> Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <18> And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. <19> But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. <20> Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Slavic

- **Epistle (Day):** 1 Timothy 5:11-21

“ <11> But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, <12> having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. <13> And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. <14> Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. <15> For some have already turned aside after Satan. <16> If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows. <17> Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. <18> For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." <19> Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. <20> Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. <21> I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

- **Gospel (Day):** Mark 11:11-23

<11> And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve. <12> Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. <13> And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. <14> In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again." And His disciples heard it. <15> So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. <16> And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. <17> Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.' " <18> And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. <19> When evening had come, He went out of the city. <20> Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. <21> And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away." <22> So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. <23> For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

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