

Daily Orthodox - December 31st, 2024

Today is Tuesday of the 28th Week after Pentecost — Leavetaking of Nativity.

Fasting Obligations

- **OCA, GOARCH, Antioch:** No fasting obligations.

Today, we commemorate...

1. **The Venerable Melania the Younger, nun, of Rome** (439)

“Melania was born in Rome of devout and very wealthy parents. She was forced by them to enter into marriage with a young nobleman, Apinianus. She became gravely ill in giving birth to her second child, and she told her husband that she would be healed only if he vowed before God to live with her in the future as a brother with a sister. Her husband vowed, and Melania, out of spiritual joy, was physically restored to health. When it was pleasing to God to take both of their children to Himself, they decided to sell all their possessions and distribute the proceeds to the poor, the churches and the monasteries. They traveled through many lands and cities, doing good works everywhere with their wealth. They visited famous spiritual fathers in Upper and Lower Egypt, learned much and were inspired by them. During that entire time, Melania lived an ascetic life of strict fasting, fervent prayer, and the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Melania had the custom of reading the entire book of the Holy Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, three times every year. She lived with her husband as with a brother and fellow-ascetic. Coming to Alexandria, they received the blessing of the Patriarch, St. Cyril. After that, they traveled to Jerusalem and settled on the Mount of Olives. There Melania closed herself off and devoted herself to divine

contemplation, fasting and prayer. Thus, she lived for fourteen years, after which she came out to help others to salvation. She founded a monastery for men and a convent for women. At the invitation of her kinsman, Senator Volusian, a pagan, she went to Constantinople and converted him to the Christian Faith (which even Blessed Augustine himself was unable to do). She then returned to the Mount of Olives, where she presented herself to God in the year 439 at the age of fifty-seven.

2. **The Holy and Righteous Joseph, King David, and James the Brother of the Lord**

[ed. note: As mentioned below, this is commemorated the Sunday after Nativity, meaning this is not actually commemorated today]

“ They are all commemorated on the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ. One can learn all about King David, the son of Jesse, in the Book of Kings, and for St. James see October 23. Joseph the Righteous is called in the Gospel *a righteous man* (Matthew 1:19), and because of this God designated him to protect the Most-holy Virgin and imparted to him great honor in the plan of the salvation of mankind. Although Joseph was of the royal lineage of David, he was a humble carpenter in Nazareth. At the age of eighty, he took to himself the Most-holy Virgin from the Temple in Jerusalem into his home. He entered into rest at the age of 110.

3. **The Venerable Martyr Zoticus, the Feeder of Orphans (Benefactor of the Poor)**

“ Zoticus was eminent both in birth and in rank. He moved to Constantinople, rejected all worldly things, and received ordination to the priesthood. He founded a home for the poor, in which he housed those who had contagious diseases and ministered to them. He was a personal acquaintance of Emperor Constantine the Great. Because of the gold Zoticus had received from the emperor and had spent on the victims of disease, Constantine's son Constantius had him tied to a wild ass, which was driven until St. Zoticus died of his wounds. He suffered in the fourth century.

4. **The Blessed Theophylactus, Archbishop of Ohrid** (ca. 1126)

“ Theophylactus was born on the island of Euripos and educated in Constantinople by the most eminent teachers of that time. As a priest of the Great Church, he was chosen bishop and sent, against his will, to Ohrid, where he remained about

twenty-five years (from about 1082 to 1108). Chomatianus of Ohrid calls him "the wisest archbishop." A man of enormous learning, both secular and theological, of refined Byzantine tastes, melancholy and sensitive, Theophylact felt among the Slavs in Ohrid like an exile among barbarians. He wrote commentaries on the Four Gospels and other books of the New Testament. These are the best works of their kind after that of St. Chrysostom, and are read even today with great benefit. His other known works include his Letters and the Life of St. Clement of Ohrid. In old age, St. Theophylact withdrew from Ohrid to Thessalonica, where it is thought he finished his earthly life and took up his habitation in blessed eternity.

5. *St. Anysius*, bishop of Thessalonica (ca. 406)
6. *St. Gelasius*, monk, of Palestine
7. *St. Sabiana*, abbess of Samtskhe Convent (11th c.)
8. *St. Cyriacus of Bisericani Monastery* (Romania) (ca. 1650)
9. *St. Cyriacus of Tazlau Monastery* (Romania) (ca. 1660)
10. *New Hiero-confessor Dositheus*, metropolitan of Zagreb (1944)
11. (Greek cal.: *Ten Virgin-martyrs of Nicomedia*)

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.

“How wisely holy men and women knew how to handle their wealth! How skillfully they purchased the eternal goods of heaven with their earthly goods. Oh, how little they valued earthly goods in themselves—as dust and smoke! When St. Melania visited the holy desert fathers in Egypt with the intention of giving them some financial help, she was astonished at seeing their extreme abhorrence of goods and riches. Thus, she visited one hermit, Ephestion, and saw nothing in his cell but mats, a bowl for water, a little dry bread, and a salt pot. Knowing beforehand that the elder would not take any gold from her, she seized the opportunity and placed several gold pieces in the salt pot. However, when she was on her way back, she heard the elder running after her, and at the top of his voice he was calling to her to stop. She stopped. The elder held the gold pieces in the palm of his hand and, handing them to Melania, said: "I do not need this, take what is yours!" Melania said to him: "If you do not need it, give it to someone else." He replied: "No one in this place has any use for it." When

Melania refused to accept the gold, the elder swung his arm and threw the gold pieces into the river and then returned to his cell.

During an outbreak of plague in Constantinople, Emperor Constantius ordered that everyone infected be immediately thrown into the sea. St. Zoticus ransomed those who were infected and brought them to his home, and there he cared for them. When his money ran out, he went to the emperor and asked for money to purchase precious pearls for him. The emperor gave him money, and with this money Zoticus continued his work of ransoming the contagious ones and caring for them. One day, the emperor asked Zoticus for the promised pearls, and Zoticus brought him and showed him the infected men in his home, saying; "These, O Emperor, are the living pearls that I acquired with labor and money for your salvation." The enraged emperor condemned Zoticus to death, but Zoticus entered into eternal life, and the emperor remained to atone and repent for his sins.

Daily Scriptures

Slavic and Greek

- **Epistle:** 2 Timothy 3:16-4:4

“ <16> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <17> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. <1> I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: <2> Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. <3> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <4> and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

Slavic

- **Gospel:** Mark 12:18-27

“ <18> Then some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying: <19> "Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves his wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother

should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. <20> Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring. <21> And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise. <22> So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. <23> Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife." <24> Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? <25> For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <26> But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? <27> He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken."

Greek

- **Gospel:** 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.