

# Daily Orthodox - December 3rd, 2024

Today is Tuesday of the 24th Week after Pentecost.

## Fasting Obligations

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

Today, we commemorate...

### 1. The Holy Prophet Zephaniah (Sophonias)

“Zephaniah was a native of Mount Sarabatha, from the tribe of Simeon. He lived and prophesied in the seventh century before Christ, at the time of Josiah the pious king of Judah. Zephaniah was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah. Having great humility and a pure mind raised to God, he was found worthy of discerning the future. He prophesied the day of the wrath of God and the punishment of Gaza, Ashkalon, Ashdod, Ekron, Nineveh, Jerusalem, and Egypt. He saw Jerusalem as a *filthy and polluted, ... oppressing city.... Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; ... her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the Law* (Zephaniah 3:1-4).

Foreseeing the advent of the Messiah, he enthusiastically exclaimed: *Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem* (Zephaniah 3:14). This seer of mysteries entered into rest at his birthplace to await the General Resurrection and his reward from God.

### 2. Saint John the Silent, bishop of Colonia and monk of St. Sabbas Monastery (558)

John was a native of Nicopolis in Armenia and was the son of Encratius and Euphemia. He was tonsured a monk at the age of eighteen and lived a strict and resolute life of asceticism, cleansing his heart by his many tears, fasting and prayer. After ten years, he was appointed bishop of Colonia. By his example, he attracted his brother Pergamius and his uncle Theodore-both distinguished men at the imperial courts of Emperors Zeno and Justinian-to a God-pleasing life. Seeing the malice and intrigues of this world and his inability to put matters right, he abandoned his episcopal throne. He disguised himself as a simple monk and went to the Monastery of St. Sava the Sanctified near Jerusalem. There he remained unknown for many years, conscientiously and capably completing every task that the abbot ordered him to do. For this, St. Sava recommended to Patriarch Elias that he ordain him a presbyter. When the patriarch wanted to ordain John, he confessed that he had already possessed the rank of bishop. Then St. John closed himself in a cell and spent years and years in silence and prayer. Afterward he spent nine years in the wilderness feeding himself only on wild vegetables, and then he returned to the monastery. He turned the faithful away from the heresy of Origen and contributed greatly to the condemnation and elimination of this heresy. He clearly discerned the spiritual world and healed people from sickness. Having conquered himself, he easily conquered demons. Great in humility, might and divine wisdom, this servant of God entered peacefully into rest in the year 558 at the age of 104.

### **3. The Hieromartyr Theodore I, Archbishop of Alexandria**

“ After functioning as patriarch for two years, Theodore was ridiculed and tortured by the pagans. They placed a crown of thorns on his head and finally beheaded him for his Faith in the year 609.

### **4. The Venerable Theodulus, eparch of Constantinople (440)**

“ Theodulus was an eminent patrician at the court of Theodosius the Great. After the death of his wife, he renounced the vanity of the world and withdrew from Constantinople to a pillar near Ephesus, where he lived a life of asceticism for thirty years.

### **5. The Venerable Sabbas of Zvenigorod**

Sabbas was a disciple of St. Sergius of Radonezh and a great miracle-worker. Following his death, he appeared to many as though he were alive, at times teaching them, at times reproaching them and at times healing them. He passed from this life to a better life in the year 1406.

6. *St. Birinus*, bishop of Dorchester (ca. 649)
7. *St. Sola*, Anglo-Saxon missionary priest under St. Boniface (Germany) (790-794)
8. *New Hieromartyr Gabriel*, metropolitan of Ganos and Chora, at Prusa (1659)
9. *St. Hilarion*, bishop of Krutitsa (1759)
10. *New Monk-martyr Cosmas of St. Anne's Skete*, Mt. Athos (1760)
11. *St. George of Cernica and Caldarusani* (1806)
12. *New Martyr Angelus of Chios* (1813)

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.*

“ God hears the prayers of the righteous and fulfills them, sometimes immediately and completely, and at other times only later, at the appropriate time and according to the needs of the Church. In other words, in fulfilling the prayers of the righteous man, God has in mind either man's salvation or the good of the whole Church. St. John the Silent prayed to God to reveal to him how the soul separates from the body at death. While still at prayer, he was taken outside himself and had the following vision: A good man died in front of a church in Bethlehem, and angels took his soul from his body and carried it to heaven with sweet singing. Coming to himself out of his ecstasy, John immediately set out on the road from the Monastery of St. Sava the Sanctified to Bethlehem. When he reached Bethlehem, he saw the dead body of the man exactly as he had seen it in his vision.

When the great St. Sava the Sanctified died, John grieved and wept. Sava appeared to him in a vision and said: "Do not grieve, Father John, for even

though I am separated from you in the body, nevertheless I am with you in the spirit." Then John begged him: "Father, pray to the Lord to take me with you." To this Sava replied: "For now, this cannot be. A great trial has yet to befall the Lavra, and God wants you to remain in the body to comfort and strengthen the faithful against the heretics." At first, John did not know what kind of heretics the holy father had spoken of, but he found out later, when the heresy of Origen began to shake the Church of God.

# Daily Scriptures

## Slavic and Greek

- **Epistle:** 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 [Greek includes v. 8]

“ [<8> For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.] <9> For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, <10> night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith? <11> Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. <12> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, <13> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

- **Gospel:** Luke 21:12-19

“ <12> But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. <13> But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. <14> Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; <15> for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. <16> You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. <17> And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. <18> But not a hair of your head shall be lost. <19> By your patience possess your souls.