

Daily Orthodox - December 4th, 2024

Today is Wednesday of the 24th Week after Pentecost.

Fasting Obligations

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

Today, we commemorate...

1. The Holy Great-martyr Barbara and Martyr Juliana, at Heliopolis in Syria

“ This glorious follower of Christ was betrothed to Christ from early childhood. Her father Dioscorus was a pagan and was renowned for his position and wealth in the city of Heliopolis in Egypt. Dioscorus locked up his only daughter Barbara, brilliant in mind and of beautiful countenance, in a high tower. He surrounded her with every comfort, gave her female servants, erected idols for worship, and built her a bathing room with two windows. Looking through the window at the earth below and the starry heavens above, Barbara's mind was opened by the grace of God. She recognized the One True God, the Creator, despite the fact that she did not have a human teacher to bring her to this knowledge. Once, while her father was away from the city, she came down from the tower and, according to God's providence, met some Christian women who revealed the true Faith of Christ to her. Barbara's heart became inflamed with love for Christ the Lord. She ordered that a third window be cut open in the bath so that the three windows would represent the Holy Trinity. On one wall she traced a Cross with her finger, and the Cross etched itself deep into the stone as if cut by a chisel. A pool of water sprang forth from her footsteps on the floor of the bath, which later gave healing of diseases to many. Learning of his daughter's faith, Dioscorus beat her severely and drove her from the tower. He pursued her in

order to kill her, but a cliff opened up and hid Barbara from her brutal father. When she appeared again, her father brought her to Martianus, the magistrate, who handed her over for torture. They stripped the innocent Barbara and flogged her until her entire body was covered with blood and wounds, but the Lord Himself appeared to her in prison with His angels and healed her. A certain woman, Juliana, upon seeing this, desired martyrdom for herself. Both women were severely tortured and with mockery were led through the city. Their breasts were cut off and much blood flowed from them. They were finally led to the place of execution, where Dioscorus himself slaughtered his daughter, and Juliana was slain by the soldiers. That same day, lightning struck the house of Dioscorus, killing him and Martianus. St. Barbara suffered in the year 306. Her miracle-working relics rest in Kiev. Glorified in the Kingdom of Christ, she has appeared many times even in our own day, sometimes alone and sometimes in the company of the Most-holy Theotokos.

2. Saint John Damascene, monk of St. Sabbas Monastery (776)

“ John was first the chief minister to Caliph Abdul-Malik and later a monk in the Monastery of St. Sava the Sanctified. Because of his ardent defense of the veneration of icons during the reign of the iconoclastic Emperor Leo the Isaurian, John was maligned by the emperor to the Caliph, who cut off his right hand. John fell down in prayer before the icon of the Most-holy Theotokos, and his hand was rejoiced and miraculously healed. Seeing this miracle the Caliph repented, but John no longer desired to remain with him as a nobleman. Instead, he withdrew to a monastery, where, from the beginning, he was a model to the monks in humility, obedience and all the prescribed rules of monastic asceticism. John composed the Funeral Hymns and compiled the Octoechos (The Book of Eight Tones), the Irmologion, the Menologion and the Paschal Canon, and he wrote many theological works of inspiration and profundity. A great monk, hymnographer, theologian and soldier for the truth of Christ, Damascene is numbered among the great Fathers of the Church. He entered peacefully into rest in about the year 776 at the age of 104.

3. Saint Gennadius, Archbishop of Novgorod

“ Gennadius was a distinguished writer, a champion of truth, and one who suffered for the truth of Christ. He gathered the various books of Sacred Scripture into one book and compiled the key for determining the date of Pascha (the Paschalion) for the next 532 years. He entered into rest in the Lord in the year 1504. His miracle-working relics rest in the Chudov Monastery in Moscow.

4. *St. John*, bishop of Polybotum (716)

5. *New Hieromartyr Seraphim*, archbishop of Phanarion and Neochorion (1601)

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.

“Obedience, coupled with humility, is the foundation of the spiritual life, the foundation of salvation and the foundation of the overall structure of the Church of God. The great John Damascene—great in every good thing—as a monk left a deep impression on the history of the Church by his exceptional example of obedience and humility. Testing him one day, his elder and spiritual father handed him woven baskets and ordered him to take them to Damascus and sell them there. The elder established a very high price for the baskets, thinking that John would not be able to sell them at that price but would have to return with them. John, therefore, firstly had to go on a long journey; secondly, he had to go as a poor monk to the city where he, at one time, had been the most powerful man after the Caliph; thirdly, he had to seek a ridiculously high price for the baskets; and fourthly, should he not sell the baskets, he would have made this enormous journey, there and back, for nothing. In this way, the elder wished to test the obedience, humility and patience of his famous disciple. John silently prostrated before the elder and, without a word, took the baskets and started on his journey. Arriving in Damascus, he stood in the market place and awaited a buyer. When he told the interested passers-by the price of his goods, they laughed at and mocked him as a lunatic. He stood there the whole day and the whole day he was exposed to derision and ridicule. But God, Who sees all things, did not abandon His patient servant. A certain citizen passed by and looked at John. Even though John was clad in a poor monk's habit and his face was withered and pale from fasting, this citizen recognized in him the one-time lord and first minister of the Caliph, in whose service he had also been. John also recognized him, but they both began to deal as strangers. Even though John named the all-too-high price of the baskets, the citizen purchased and paid for them without a word, recalling the good that John Damascene had once done for him. As a victor, holy John returned to the monastery rejoicing, and brought joy to his elder.

Daily Scriptures

- **Epistle (for St. Alexander Hotovitzky):** Hebrews 13:7-16

“ <7> Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. <8> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. <9> Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. <10> We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. <11> For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. <12> Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. <13> Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. <14> For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. <15> Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. <16> But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

- **Epistle (Day):** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12

“ <1> Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; <2> for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. <3> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; <4> that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, <5> not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; <6> that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. <7> For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. <8> Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. <9> But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; <10> and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; <11> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, <12> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.

- **Gospel (for St. Alexander Hotovitzky):** Luke 12:32-40

<32> "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <33> Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. <34> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. <35> "Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; <36> and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. <37> Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. <38> And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. <39> But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. <40> Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

- **Gospel (Day):** Luke 21:5-7, 10-11, 20-24

“ <5> Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, <6> "These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down." <7> So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?" <10> Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. <11> And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. <20> "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. <21> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. <22> For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. <23> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. <24> And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Greek

- **Epistle:** Galatians 3:23-4:5

<23> But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. <24> Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. <25> But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. <26> For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <27> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. <28> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <29> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. <1> Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, <2> but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. <3> Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. <4> But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, <5> to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

- **Gospel:** Mark 5:24-34

“ <24> So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him. <25> Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, <26> and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. <27> When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. <28> For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." <29> Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. <30> And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" <31> But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " <32> And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. <33> But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. <34> And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

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