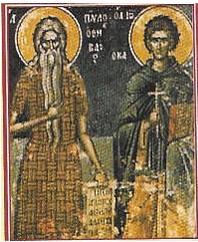


January 15

E. † Our Venerable Father Paul of Thebes and John Calabytes [Hut-dweller]



Ven. Paul was born in the Thebaid, Egypt. Left orphaned, he endured much from his covetous relatives, who desired to take his large hereditary estate away from him. When the severe persecution of Decius opened, St. Paul learned that his brother-in-law wanted to betray him to the persecutors because of his estate, and so he left everything and fled to the wilderness. Having settled in a certain cave, he lived here without leaving for 91 years, praying to God day and night, eating dates and bread brought to him by a raven and with one of the palm leaves protecting his nakedness from the heat and cold. "Having cleansed himself through abstinence", the Venerable One reposed at the age of 113 in 341, while kneeling during the time of prayer. Shortly before his death St. Anthony (see Jan. 17) visited him, whom Ven. Paul told of the immanence of his death. The body of Ven. Paul, by the will of Emperor Manuel Comnenus, was transferred to Constantinople and placed in the Peribleptou Monastery of the All-holy Theotokos. Later it was transferred to Venice and, finally, to Ofen, Hungary. A part of his head is in Rome.

Kontakion, tone 3

**Let us coming together today praise the Venerable One in song,
As the unwaning ray of the ideal Sun,
For you shine on those in the darkness of ignorance,
Leading all to divine heights,
O Paul, adornment of Thebes,
Firm foundation of fathers and fasters.**

Ven. John Calabytes was the son of rich and famous parents who lived in Constantinople. He received a brilliant education, but, despising the vain world, he preferred "the narrow, painful and severest way instead of the broadest way", secretly left his parents home to settle in the Akoimitoi (Unsleeping) Monastery (where the divine services are done continuously day and night) in Bithynia to be tonsured a monk. With youthful ardor and zeal he took to the asceticism of the monastic way of life so that for the most zealous ascetics he soon became an example of unceasing prayer, obedience without murmuring, patient laboriousness and extreme fasting. Six years later, the Lord permitted a heavy attack on John from the devil: thoughts about his parents, of their love and tenderness, about their sorrow began to persistently pursue the ascetic. Then he to turn this temptation to the maximum for his asceticism and to defeat the devil by his own devices, decided to see his parents but in such a way that he would not be recognized by them. Having returned to Constantinople in beggars clothing unrecognized by anybody, he spent three years in a hut (tent) by the gate of his parental home. It is

because of this he was called Hut-dweller. "Afflicted and oppressed" enduring cold and heat, not changing his decrepit sackcloth, continually talking with the Lord and the holy angels, being satisfied by words of the Gospel (given to him in adolescence, at his request, by his parents) and inseparable from him, he soon succeeded "in the measure of growth in the fulfillment of Christ". He was revealed to his parents only before his death, ordering them to bury him where he lived as a beggar and in that same sackcloth which he wore. He reposed in his young years (about 22-25 years old) in the middle of the 5th century. Over the place of his burial his parents built a temple of God and beside it a hostel for the oversight of beggars and strangers. In the twelfth century the Crusaders took his head to Besancon, France, and his other relics are now in Rome.

Kontakion, tone 2

**Loving voluntary poverty,
Abandoning the wealth of your parents,
And holding the Gospel in your hands,
You followed Christ God,
O wisest John,
Praying unceasingly for us all.**

Epistle: Gal. 5:22-26; 6:2; sel. 213. **Gospel:** Mt. 11:27-30; sel. 43.

Note: From this day in Matins we begin again (Refer to the Ustav [Typikon] for Sept. 21) to read the verses after the three Kathismas and the Sessional hymns of the Octoechos. And in Vespers: *In my affliction I cried out to the Lord (i.e. the 18th Kathisma)*. From this day in Matins we say the hymns: *Let us sing to the Lord (see below by Matins)*. The Katabasia from this date up to the Leavetaking of the Feast of the Meeting: *"Upon dry land in the midst of the deep"*.

Ven. Martyr Pansophius

The son of the Proconsul of Alexandria Nilus, he distributed his estate to the poor after the death of his father and left for a certain hermitage in which he practiced asceticism for 27 years. During the Decius persecution he was arrested and brought to trial before the Prefect of Alexandria, and denounced pagan errors before it for which he was beaten with rods and died as a martyr in the third century.

Ven. Gabriel, Founder of the Lesnov Monastery in Bulgaria

Receiving a large inheritance after the death of his parents, he rejected marriage and left for the Lesnov Mountain where he built the Temple of St. Michael, gathered many monks, he installed a Hegumen and left the monastery all

his wealth. Then he hid himself in a cave of a certain mountain and practiced asceticism in it for 30 years spending his time in fasting and prayer. After this he again settled in the Lesnov Monastery and peacefully died in the eleventh century.

Ven. Prochorus

He practiced asceticism in the Bransk Hermitage on the Pshina River and here founded a monastery. He was one of the strictest ascetics of the monastic way of life. He reposed in the Tenth Century. Marvelous wonders were completed from his relics.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 0032-0034.
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