

January 16.

d. † Veneration of the Precious Chains of the Holy and All-glorious Apostle Peter.



In the year A.D. 42 the Apostle Peter, on the order of Herod Agrippa, was seized and imprisoned for preaching Christ and was fettered with two iron chains. At night on the eve of that day on which the Apostle Peter would be tried before the people, an angel of God miraculously removed his fetters and led him out of the prison (Acts 12, 1-11). Some believers, having heard about the miracle, took the chains and secretly stored them as jewelry. The chains healed those who possessed various illnesses who resorted to them with faith. Therefore even the Holy Church in its services for this day, hymning the Holy Apostle Peter, invites her children to kiss "in faith" "the honorable chains", which it offered the believer, "as costly food in healing illnesses, comforting the grieving and a haven for the bestormed". The Chains of the Holy Apostle Peter were kept in Jerusalem up to the time of Patriarch Juvenal, who presented them to Eudocia, the wife of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, and in 437 or 439 they were translated from Jerusalem to Constantinople in the year 437 or 439. Once they were sent to Rome to his daughter Eudoxia, the wife of Emperor Valentinian III, who on this occasion constructed a temple in the name of the Apostle Peter. Meanwhile in Rome were other chains which were imposed upon the Apostle Peter by an order of the Emperor Nero. These and the other chains were placed together in the same Temple of the Apostle Peter. ¹1).

Troparion, tone 4

**You came to us without leaving Rome,
By the precious chains which you wore,
O First-enthroned of the Apostles.
Therefore bowing down to them in faith we pray: //
By your prayers to God grant us great mercy.**

Kontakion, tone 2

**We praise the great Peter,
The highest and first among the Apostles,
Truly the student of the divine;
Therefore with faith we kiss his chains, //
That he may grant us forgiveness of our sins.**

Epistle: Acts 12:1-11; sel. 29. **Gospel:** John 21: 15-25; sel. 67.

Martyrs Speusippus, Eleusippus, Melesippus and their grandmother Leonilla and those with them Neo, Turbo and Jovilla his wife

All of these martyrs suffered in Gallia (or, according to another account, in Cappadocia) in the Second Century during the persecution under Marcus Aurelius. Leonilla, who received holy baptism at an advanced age, converted to the Christian faith with her three grandsons. The brothers, aflame with fervent love for Christ, destroyed idols and continually reproached the pagans for worshipping idols. Because of this, they endured severe tortures, being stretched on planks, and then died as they were thrown into the fire, which, however, did not damage their honorable bodies. After their torture St. Leonilla was beheaded. St. Jovilla confessed Christ, when seeing the unshakable faith of the Holy Martyrs. The torturers seized her, and hung her by her hair and inflicted wounds on her; then, she was beheaded. St. Neo seeing the ascetical feats and travails of the Holy Martyrs wrote an account of them and handed over the account to Turbo, and confessed Christ, for which he was beaten until he gave up his spirit. Soon St. Turbo also died as a martyr, imitating the holy passion bearers. All these Gallic martyrs are especially revered in Spain and many churches there are dedicated to them. The Greek Emperor Zeno gave their relics to a certain French nobleman from the city of Langres where they repose even now.

The Martyr Danax

St. Danax served God as the reader in the church in a small place Avlona, Macedonia near the Adriatic Sea. During an invasion of the barbarians on this district, he took church vessels in order to hide them from impious hands. Seized by the unbelievers who tried to force him to bow to idols, St. Danax did not obey their will and they beheaded him. He suffered in the Second Century.

Hieromartyr Damascene the New

Hieromartyr Damascene was born in the village of Gabrovo, Trnovo diocese. At a mature age having left his country, he went to Mount Athos and was tonsured a monk in the Chilandari Monastery in which he later became the Hegumen. Because of the needs of the monastery, Damascene went to Bulgaria, to the village of Svishtov. Fulfilling his monastery assignments, he began to demand rent from the Turks living in this village. The Turks not only refused to pay their rent, but also took from Damascene all that he had. Not satisfied with this, the fanatics accused him of kidnapping an Agarian woman who was secretly taken to him on a farmstead, and they charged the innocent one in court. Not respecting the

protection of the governor of the village, the Turks led the Saint to the gallows and here again offered him either to accept Islam or be hanged. The Saint chose the latter and was hanged on January 16, 1771. The anger of God did not slow down the apprehending evildoers. After the Martyr died, they drowned while sailing up the Danube.

The Repose of the Blessed Maxim of Totma

He was the priest in Totma, Vologda Province. He completed 45 years in the asceticism of a Fool for Christ and died in 1650. His relics are in a hidden place in the bottommost part (in the name of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker) in the two-story Church of the Resurrection. The local veneration of his relics began in 1715.

¹ According to the reasoning of villagers, from this time on in the winter it is necessary to keep domestic cattle still foraging for the other half of winter. That is why this day is also known among the people as 'half fed'. The Little Russians say on this day: "on Peter's chains, the rocks crackle" (na Petra virigi, trutsia krigi), that is, the ice begins to break.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0034-0035.
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