

January 19

A. † Our Ven. Father Macarius the Egyptian

Ven. Macarius was born in Egypt about the year 301 of pious and rather poor parents and in his youth grazed cattle. After he reached maturity, Ven. Macarius wanted to lead a monastic life, but was forced to marry by his parents. In marriage he lived with his wife as with a sister and remained a virgin. Within a few days his wife died and soon after that his parents also died. After this he, following the advice of a certain elder hermit, left to practice asceticism in Nitria, then, after a revelation from above in the Scetis desert for 30 years of his life.

"Having died to carnal subtlety" Ven. Macarius "exemplified all kinds of fasting in his virtuous way of life". Prayer, psalm-singing and meditation on God were his main occupation. His desert asceticism, fasts and vigil seemed to exceed the strength of a man. Silence and sincere humility mainly distinguished and ennobled the spirit of the great "father of the desert". At 40 years of age Macarius was ordained a presbyter and for his asceticism received the gift of prophesy and such grace of wonderworking that even the dead answered his voice, if the advantage of faith or well-being demanded this for innocent sufferers.

By the way, it is told in his life, that finding a skull in the desert, he asked, who are you? The skull replied: "I was the chief demon of the pagan priests, who abided in this place. You, Abba Macarius, are the fulfillment of the Spirit of God. In that hour when you pray having mercy on those in torment, they feel some joy".

Many from distant countries came to the Venerable One seeking his counsel and precepts, distinguished by humility and warm sincerity and full of deep skilled wisdom.

During the reign of Valens, a protector of Arians, Ven. Macarius endured imprisonment on a certain island in Egypt, but soon was recalled for wonders and the conversion of the entire island into the Christian faith.

Informed by God about his death within 9 days, Ven. Macarius peacefully died on the appointed day, being 90 years old, in 390 or 391. His relics repose in the city of Amalfi, Italy. For his holiness and wisdom he is called "great". Besides several uplifting prayers (1 and 4 at bedtime and 1-4 in the morning but according to Greek manuscripts the 9th), Ven. Macarius has left us 50 homilies, 7 treatises and 2 epistles, full of lofty wisdom and simplicity. The main subject of his homilies consists of the teaching about the grace of God.

Kontakion, tone 1

**Having ended a blessed way of life with the choir of martyrs,
You worthily dwelled on the land of the meek, O God-bearer Macarius:
And having populated the desert as if a city,
You received the grace of wonders from God:
Therefore we honor you.**

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

Ven. Macarius of Alexandria

He was born in the city of Alexandria (still called the "city") at the end of the Third Century and until 40 years of age he was a pagan and seller of vegetables. When he became 40 years old, he accepted holy baptism, renounced the world and left for the desert. After many monastic labors and ascetic deeds he became worthy of the priesthood. He was the Rector of one monastery, which he founded in the Egyptian desert between Nitria and Scetis. He was the friend and associate of Ven. Macarius the Egyptian. Having been released from all earthly things and in heart and mind flown up to heaven, St. Macarius was close to the spiritual world and saw more than one wonderful manifestation. Thus, he once saw how Ven. Mark received the Holy Mysteries from angelic hands. Another time he had an angelic revelation about the situation of dead souls. Ven. Macarius ended his ascetic life in 394 or 395 as a one hundred year old elder, being glorified by God with the gift of miracles and insight into hidden human thoughts. In his homilies he frequently taught monks humility, pointing out that obedience is higher than ascetic efforts. He is known for his "Discourse on the Departure of the Soul" and their situation after death.

Ven. Macarius of the Caves

A Kievan Monastery of the Caves ascetic, he reposed peacefully in the Twelfth Century. His relics repose openly in the St. Anthony Caves in Kiev.

Martyr Euphrasia

She was born in Nicomedia of notable parents and was noted for her physical beauty. During the time of the Maximinus persecution she refused to sacrifice to idols and for this after being tortured was given to a certain warrior for defiling. Calling herself a magician St. Euphrasia suggested to the warrior to test her magic by taking his sword and striking a blow on her neck. The warrior agreed and the wise virgin gave her spirit over to God in the year 303, safeguarding her virginal purity.

St. Arsenius, Archbishop of Kerkyra [Corfu]

He was born of pious parents in Palestine. Since youth he dedicated himself to God and chose the monastic life. He received his formation in Seleucia and in that same place was ordained a priest. From there having traversed to Constantinople, Arsenius was consecrated Archbishop of Kerkyra [Corfu]

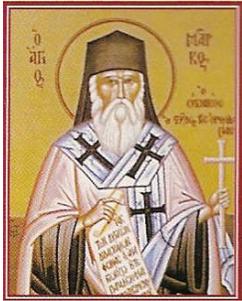
(Kerkyra = Corcyra, an island off the coast of Greece, now Corfu). He reposed at the end of the Eighth Century.

Translation of the Relics of St. Gregory the Theologian to the Temple of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople in 950 during the reign of Constantine Porphyrogenitus.

Opening of the church doors in Nicaea by the prayer of St. Basil the Great

Ven. Meletius Ballisiotis died peacefully in 1203.

St. Mark Eugenicus



St. Mark, Archbishop of Ephesus, was the well-known defender of Orthodoxy at the Council of Florence (see below about councils). Nothing could make him agree at this council to the submission of the Eastern Church to the Roman Pope. Quietly leaving Florence for Constantinople, he zealously convinced its inhabitants of faithfulness to Orthodoxy and the Florentine Unia was rejected by the people. He died in peace in 1457.

Repose of the Blessed Theodore, Novgorodian Fool for Christ

Son of pious parents, eminent and wealthy Novgorod citizens who lived in the Torgov quarter, he was nurtured in strict piety, in the spirit of lofty Christian love for neighbor and from his early years grew fond of piety. After reaching mature age when he had an opportunity at his own discretion to distribute the remainder of his parents' wealth, he used all his estate for the use of the neighbor, setting this example of the highest self-denying love for neighbor for his fellow-citizens. To have the opportunity and comfort to denote and catechize each and all, he voluntarily took up the special, exclusive asceticism of folly and steadily followed this thorny way until his very death. He voluntarily suffered every need, distributing everything he had and had received to the poor, did not want to have any kind of refuge, slept in the open air in heat and cold, even in the greater freezes, and went about barefooted and half-naked. Accused by the rebellious Novgorodians, he did not murmur against their ridicule, but asked God that this sin be not charged to them. St. Nicholas Kochanov (see Jul. 27) practiced the same asceticism of folly in Novgorod simultaneously with him. Exposing the mutual enmity of the Novgorod citizens of the Torgov quarter with the inhabitants of the Sophia quarter, Blessed Theodore, who practiced asceticism in the Torgov quarter, continually led a similar enmity against St. Nicholas, who practiced asceticism in the Sophia quarter, not under any circumstances permitting the latter in the Torgov quarter, in turn and every time when he came over to the Sophia quarter met the

same barrier from the quarter of St. Nicholas. Frequent and fervent prayer was for Blessed Theodore consolation among the difficult asceticism of folly. He lovingly passed by nearby monasteries, also constantly visited the city temples, praying in them, especially at night, for the prosperity of his fellow-citizens. He especially liked to visit the Church of Saint George on the Torgov and spent many nights on its porch in continuous prayer. For his lofty blessed life he was awarded by God with the gift of clairvoyance. Thus, he once predicted a Novgorodian famine and another time, a fire. For some days having clearly foreseen his death, he peacefully reposed in 1392 and was buried, according to his will, near the temple of St. George the Victory-bearer where his relics repose in a hidden place in a special chapel even up to now, being the source of many wonderful healings.

Ven. Anthony

Ven. Anthony was the disciple of Ven. John of Zedazeni (see May 7) and labored together with his trainer, distributing and affirming the faith in Christ in Georgia. On Mount Martkobi near Tiflis, he founded a monastery and constructed a temple in the name brought to him of the Image of the Savior Not Made by Hands. Anthony spent the last 15 years of his life on a pillar and is why he received the name of stylite of the Iberian church. He peacefully reposed in the Sixth Century and was buried in the temple built by him. The tomb of the Venerable One attracted many pilgrims and the sick who received healing here.

*S.V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 0037-0039.
Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © December 23, 2006. All rights reserved.*