

January 31

C † Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cyrus and John and Martyrs Athanasia and her Three Daughters, Theoctiste, Theodota and Eudoxia

St. Cyrus was born in Alexandria and studied the medicinal arts in his youth. Usually granting help to the sick gratis, so mainly by the power of faith and prayer, he converted many pagans to Christ. During the persecution of Diocletian, St. Cyrus left for Arabia, accepted monasticism there and continued to heal the sick through prayer.

Having heard about his wonders, John, a warrior from Edessa [Urfa] who practiced asceticism in Jerusalem, came to St. Cyrus in Arabia and began to study under him and imitate his holy life. Together they helped the sick and spread Christian teaching among the pagans.

Having learned that St. Athanasia and her three daughters were arrested by persecutors for torture, the holy healers, scorning dangers, decided to go into the city of Canopus in Lower Egypt, so that by their faith they would confirm the faith and patience of the holy martyresses. Having arrived in the city, they fulfilled their intention. They informed the governor of this, who sentenced Cyrus and John to heavy torture in front of the confessors. The saints remained unshakable in their faith. Having left them, the torturer began to torture the holy confessors and when he could not overcome their firmness, he ordered to decapitate them. After this they accepted the same crown of martyrdom as the Holy Unmercenaries Cyrus and John. It was in the year 311. (See June 28).

Kontakion, tone 3

**Having received the gift of wonders from divine grace,
O Holy Ones, work wonders unceasingly,
Cut out all our passions through your unseen skill,
O divinely-wise Cyrus and glorious John:
For you are divine physicians.**

Epistle: 1 Cor. 12:27-31, 13:1-7; sel. 153. **Gospel:** Mt. 10:1, 5-8; sel. 34.

+ Commemoration of our Father among the Saints Nicetas, Bishop of Novgorod, Wonderworker

In his youth he entered the Kievan Caves Monastery and soon decided to become a hermit, disregarding the suggestion of the Hegumen about the unseemliness of such asceticism for a young monk. In the hermitage Nicetas underwent various temptations: he ceased to pray to God, turned all to reading the

books of the Old Testament, committing them to memory and no one could compare with him in the knowledge of these books. This became known so that princes and boyars began to come to him for guidance. He did not want to read the books of the New Testament at all or to talk about them. He was freed of this temptation by the prayers of the monks of the caves.

After that Nicetas left the hermitage, began to spend time in strictest fasting and prayer, surpassing other monks in obedience and humility and was installed as the Bishop of Novgorod. He "well shepherded his flock, poured out the words of the Gospel from his heart to the people and seeds of piety grew in them".

For his saintly life God awarded him with the gift of wonderworking, and he worked many wonders. So, once through prayer he caused rain to stop falling from the sky. Another time through prayer he quenched a fire in the city.

After serving 13 years as a bishop St. Nicetas peacefully died in 1108. Within 445 years after his demise, during the reign of Tsar Ivan Vasilievich, the relics of the Hierarch were found incorrupt and became the source of many healings, and, mainly for those with eye illnesses and the blind received healing.

Troparion, tone 4

**Having taken pleasure in abstinence, O Divinely-wise One,
And bridled the desires of the flesh,
You sat on the throne of the episcopate,
And like many shining stars enlightened the hearts of the faithful
With the rays of your wonders, our Father Hierarch Nicetas:
Even now pray to Christ God to save our souls.**

Kontakion, tone 6

**Having honored the dignity of the High Priesthood,
O pure one standing before the Purest One,
You offered diligent prayers for your people:
For you even stopped the rain through prayer,
And sometimes extinguished the fire that befell the city:
And now, O Hierarch Nicetas,
Pray to Christ God to save the Orthodox Emperor and your praying people
That we may all call out to you:
Rejoice, O Marvelous Father Hierarch.**

Paramoegas: see Jan. 9. **Matins Gospel:** Mt. 5:14-19; sel. 11. **Epistle and Gospel:** general for a hierarch.

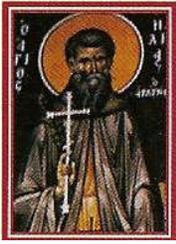
Martyrs Victorinus, Victor, Nicephorus, Claudius, Diodorus, Serapion and Papias suffered during the persecution of Emperor Decius in Corinth in 251. The first 3 martyrs were enclosed in a stone mortar and died under the impact of a huge stone pestle. St. Claudius died after they cut off his hands and legs. St. Diodorus

was burned. The torturers cut off the head of St. Serapion and drowned St. Papias in the sea.

Martyr Tryphaena

Born in Cyzicus, she voluntarily suffered for Christ. She was cast into a heated furnace, hung up on a high tree and cast down from the height upon sharp stones and fed to wild beasts. But the Lord protected her unharmed. Finally she was gored on the horns of an enraged bull.

Ven. Martyr Elias Ardounes



Born in the village of Kalamata in Morea, he occupied himself as a barber and was known for his common sense and good heart. The inhabitants of the village also loved and respected the usefulness of his advice. Being a Christian but tempted by the devil, he renounced his faith, but soon repented and wishing to smooth down his sin he left for Mt. Athos. Here he again became Christian and for 8 years practiced asceticism in monasticism. Constantly tormented with the consciousness of his sin, Elias made a firm intention to wash off the crime with his own blood. With the blessing of his father confessor he went home and openly declared himself a Christian before crowds of Turks. They severely beat him and presented him before the judge, who sentenced him to death by fire. The Lord glorified His martyr: the fire to which he was led burned down, but the body of the martyr remained unharmed, the fire did not even touch his long robe or his hair when his soul departed to the Lord in 1686. Christians buried his body in the Voualkanou Monastery.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp 0057-0059.
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