

February 5

E. Holy Martyr Agatha



Born in Palermo, Sicily (according to others, in Catania), St. Agatha confessed the Christian faith from her young years. She was distinguished by beauty, virtuous life and wealth bequeathed her after the death of her parents. During the Decius persecution, by an order of the governor of the country Quintian, who heard much about the beauty and wealth of Agatha, she was arrested and led to the governor in the city of Catania. This governor at first tried with caresses and admonitions to convert St. Agatha from the Christian faith. When she remained immovable, she was subjected to various cruel tortures. They hanged her from a tree, beat her with iron rods, planed her chest with iron claws and, finally, cut off her breasts. Later while in prison the prisoner was wonderfully healed by the Apostle Peter who was shown to her and, adorned "in the glory of faith and piety, venerability and virginity and diligence in suffering", in peace gave her soul to the Lord God in 251. Soon a church was constructed over her relics. In this church during an eruption of the Etna volcano residents of Catania, not only Christians but also unbelievers, "taking the clothes of St. Agatha, stood in front of the fire that was flowing to the city and extinguished it even if the fire returned".

Kontakion, tone 4

**Let the Church be adorned this day with glorious purple,
Dyed with the pure blood of Martyr Agatha, crying out:
Rejoice, praise of Catania.**

Martyr Theodulia

St. Theodulia suffered for Christ during the persecution of Diocletian in Anazarbus, Asia Minor by the Commander of Cilicia Pelagius. During the terrible torture she underwent and which was accompanied by wonderful signs, the Commentarisius (see Jan. 4) Helladius converted to Christ, and for this he was beheaded by the sword. St. Theodulia died after her torture in

fire, being thrown into a heated furnace. Two prominent citizens, Macarius and Evagrius converted by her, gave up their souls to God together with her.

St. Polyeuctus, Patriarch of Constantinople

He ascended the throne from among the monks in 956. For his holy life, high erudition and eloquence he was called a second Chrysostom. In the opinion of some historians, the Grand Princess Olga (see July 11) came to Constantinople with numerous attendants during the patriarchate of St. Polyeuctus to more truly familiarize herself with Christianity, and that St. Polyeuctus was her trainer and baptized her. He died in peace in 970.

Martyr Anthony of Athens

He was resold as a slave five times by the Turks, desiring to convert him to Mohammedism. Finally, for his confession of faith and nonacceptance of Islam, after torture he was beheaded in Constantinople in 1774.

Repose of Ven. Theodosius of Uglich, Archbishop of Chernigov (see Sept. 9 and page 653).

Little Russian (Malorus) by origin, son of a priest, gentle by nature, obedient and impressionable, nurtured by his parents in the awe of God and in Christian piety, Ven. Theodosius, under the influence of parental instruction and their god-fearing life, burned with love for God and for the temple of God from his young years.

He developed these high and loving qualities of his soul even more during his training at the Kievan-Brotherhood Holy Theophany School. Here, under the influence of pious trainers, practicing in the reading of the word of God and the writings of the holy fathers and arranging his life according to them, the future hierarch Theodosius matured and was perfected in the spirit, became stronger in the knowledge of the truths of the Orthodox faith and in the asceticism of piety and diligence, humility and morality and attracted the attention of the school authorities. Here the young Theodosius was thoroughly familiarized with partesnyi (part singing) liturgical singing, meditation on God, reading the word of God and prayers, mainly church ones, and these activities became his favorite pastimes.

Upon termination of his studies Ven. Theodosius, having decided to devote all his life to God, accepted monasticism and first was installed as the archdeacon in the Kievan St. Sophia Cathedral, then as rector of the Korsun

Monastery (see Kiev Diocese) and then was appointed as Hegumen of the Kievan Vydubechi Monastery in 1664 .

Zealously fulfilling the role of Hegumen, he exemplified the strict ascetic life for the monks. For those who searched for complete solitude, he built sketes and in every possible way caring for the spiritual perfection of his subordinates. The ascetic life of Hegumen Theodosius and his trusteeship for the welfare of the Vydubechi Monastery brought him universal respect of the Kievans.

In 1687 Ven. Theodosius was appointed Hiero-Archimandrite and the rector of the Chernigov Yeletsky Monastery.

In 1692 "the All-honorable Archimandrite Theodosius" as "a good man, adorned with the virtues of monastic life from his young years, skilled in the management of monasteries, filled with the awe of God, enlightened and quite fervent for church majesty", was consecrated an archbishop. Hierarch Theodosius really radiated his good deeds not only for the candlesticks of his Chernigov flock, but also far from it. In Moscow itself his name was used with reverent respect for a virtuous life. Deep faith in Providence, active striving for holiness, sincere love for monastic asceticism, always caring for the salvation of his flock, father-like attention and condescension for subordinates, righteous and merciful judge were all distinctive features of the archpastoral activity of Hierarch Theodosius. He zealously cared about the foundation of temples to God and about the construction of monasteries. His spirit inexpressibly rejoiced at the majesty of these places of the glory of God and the salvation of neighbors.

During the lifetime of Ven. Theodosius the Chernigov flock felt that Archpastor Theodosius was a true servant of God, a true builder in the house of God, a "guard of the vigilant church, an indefatigable laborer, a living prayer book and an intercessor for all the hopeful in the sight of the Lord".

After the blessed demise of Ven. Theodosius which followed on February 5, 1696, the Lord glorified him by the incorruptibility of his body and wonder working.

A line of wonderful displays of the grace of God from the relics of St. Theodosius of Uglich was opened by the healing of his heir to the Chernigov See, Archbishop John Maximovich, from grave illness (fever), who later became the Metropolitan of Tobolsk, to whom is attributed the composing of the Troparion and Kontakion to Ven. Theodosius. By order of this archbishop a stone grotto was built at the entrance to the Sts. Boris and Gleb Cathedral Temple over the tomb of the prelate in which the healing relics from the burial of the hierarch openly repose, and where fervent admirers of

the venerable one have started to go for blessings and spiritual gifts. Since then reverent veneration of the Hierarch Theodosius of Uglich became all the more widespread. At the present time the name of Venerable Theodosius, as the great one pleasing to God, the protector from troubles and misfortunes, the deliverer from every evil circumstance, is honored and called upon far outside the confines of the Chernigov archdiocese. On the eve of the day of the demise of St. Theodosius and on the day of his memory a distinguished solemn divine service is done in the Chernigov Sts. Boris and Gleb Cathedral.

Troparion

**The most cultivated among bishops,
O Hierarch Theodosius,
You were a beacon to your flock.
Then you were translated to the heavenly mansions.
Pray at the throne of the King of Glory
That He deliver us from the evil that besets us
And that our souls be saved, O Holy One, by your prayers.**

Kontakion

**You labored for the Chief Shepherd Christ,
O Hierarch Theodosius, in the spiritual pasture,
Nurturing your rational sheep,
And you received from Christ the Savior the gift of healing
To heal the spiritual and physical infirmities
Of all who approach your healing relics.
Pray, O Holy One, that all of us who call on your name
And that our souls be saved from the attacks of the enemies.**

(Chernigov Diocesan News 1892, 13).

Yeletsky Icon of the Mother of God see January 11.

Sicilian Icons of the Mother of God

These icons appeared in 1092. The Wonderworking Sicilian Icon of the Mother of God is found in the Divnogorsky Monastery (see Voronezh Diocese) where, according to tradition, it was brought by the founders of the monastery. It was especially honored since 1831 when, with the thankful help of the Most Holy Theotokos, the cholera epidemic that appeared in Korotoiaka soon stopped. This holy icon from this time annually abides here from Aug. 1 to 14. Besides this, this holy icon is annually taken to the city of

Ostrogozhsk (from Aug. 29 to Oct. 29), to the village of Alexeevka (from Nov. 20 to Feb. 20) and to the city of Bobrov.

"Search of the Lost" Icon of the Mother of God

In 1835 a church was built in honor of this icon in Moscow at the Alexandrovsky Orphanage. Besides this one in the Temple of the Nativity of Christ in Moscow, the "Search of the Lost" Wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God is found in Palasha, near Tver.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 0069-71
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