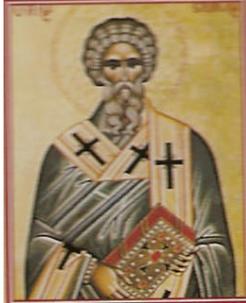


February 11

Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste



From his youth Saint Blaise distinguished himself with meekness and piety and he was elected bishop of Sebaste because of his holy life. As bishop, he “with wise teaching strengthened his flock in the faith.” During the time of the cruel persecution of Christians, during the reign of Diocletian, the Hierarchy admonished his parish to patience, visited and calmed those in prison and instilled in them love for God and faith in Him. When almost all the Christians in the city of Sebaste accepted the martyr’s crown for their faith in Christ, the time had not yet arrived for St. Blaise according to the will of God to receive the martyr’s crown. So he left the city for a deserted mountain, where he lived in a cave, leading the life of strict solitude and silence. St. Blaise shared that solitude only with the wild beasts of the desert that not only did not harm the saint but also obeyed him. When a certain poor woman, who had a wild hog (pig), which a wolf had stolen, turned to St. Blaise for help, the wolf returned the wild hog unharmed after his prayer. In the Life of St. Blaise it is also written that he once healed a child who was choking on a bone. During the reign of Licinius, Blaise was found in the desert by soldiers and was turned over by them to the ruler in Sebaste. By the goodness of St. Blaise many of his companions were converted to the true faith and performed miraculous healings. When the ruler of Sebaste, Agricola, through admonishments could not make the hierarch deny Christ, he ordered that he be subjected to severe torture and, finally beheaded by the sword (about 316). Many others, who were converted to Christ during the suffering of St. Blaise, also received the same martyr’s crowns.

Kontakion, tone 2

Holy plant, God-bearing Blaise:

Unfading blossom and fertile vine in Christ’s vineyard.

**Fill with joy the hearts of those who fervently celebrate your memory, //
Never ceasing to intercede for us all**

(Text: from Holy Myrrh-bearing Women Monastery)

Our Venerable Father Demetrius, Wonderworker of Priluk

The Venerable Demetrius came from Pereyaslavl Zalesk, (NE of Moscow) and was born of wealthy parents. From youth he was known for his piety and, evading “daily rebellions” decided to leave the world. Bestowed with extraordinary beauty, he covered his face with a dark coverlet and rather seldom entered conversation with women.

Having accepted monasticism in the Pereyaslavl Goritsk Monastery (in 1764 converted to a cemetery in city of Pereyaslavl, Vladimir Province), he soon left this monastery and founded a monastery in the name of the Hierarch Nicholas on the shore of Pereyaslavl Lake (see the Vladimir Eparchy). Here he built a hostel and with love instructed the brothers gathered around him.

The Venerable Sergius was the friend of Venerable Demetrius, who frequently visited him. Hearing about the good moral life of Venerable Demetrius that was spread about him in the surrounding communities, many began to come to him thirsty for spiritual edification.

Fleeing human glory, the Venerable Demetrius left Vologda and 10 miles from the city founded the Prilutsk (at the bow, i.e. bend of the Vologda river) Hostel Monastery (see the Vologda Eparchy). Having become the rector of the new monastery, the venerable one led the strictest ascetic life, combining asceticism with works of charity: he fed the poor, received strangers, clothed the naked and calmed the sorrowful. But for himself he loved poverty and wore both in summer and winter a threadbare sheepskin coat. God granted the righteous one gifts of prophecy and miracles.

The Venerable Demetrius died in very old age, in 1392. Since 1409 miracles were performed at his grave, and not later than this time the local veneration of him began in his monastery. By the end of the 15th century his veneration was not only local, but more or less over all Russia. His relics repose in the cathedral temple of the Prilutsk Monastery and “plentifully always pours forth healing for the faithful who come”, “the fragrance of all who fulfill the spiritual and driving further away the demonic darkness”.

The Troparion, tone 1

**Higher from God, O Venerable One,
Is the spiritual grace you have received,**

**And therefore from Him you became known, O Blessed One;
For this the spirit taught you His best,
The future sojourn forever,
And the fasters having been tested in their monasteries;
And now with the angels singing with joy,
Pray to the Savior for us all, Saint Demetrius, for we all hymn you:
Glory to Him, who granted you strength,
Glory to Him, who gave you a crown,
Glory to Him who through you grants healing to all.**

The Kontakion, tone 8

**From youth, venerable one, you have taken up your cross,
You have followed Christ, in prayers and fasting,
In vigils and evil sufferings, exhausting your body.
The same and all-seeing Eye has seen yours works,
He glorifies you with wonders, and teaches you to call all:
Rejoice, Venerable Father Demetrius, fertilized by fasting.**

Epistle: Hebrews 13:17-21; sel. 335. **Gospel:** Luke 6:17-23; sel. 24.

His Synaxis is served in his monastery, and wherever his temple may be.

*Representation of the Holy True-believing Grand Prince Vsevolod,
named in Holy Baptism Gabriel, the Pskov wonder-worker*

Son of the Grand Prince Mstislav (see Apr. 15) and the grandson of Vladimir Monomakh, he was born and brought up in Novgorod. And he prayerfully read the Divine Scriptures since his youth and adhered to the Lord and was faithful to Him all his life. "He always was edified by the commandments of the Lord", had "a compassionate soul, pure thoughts, cheerful heart, unblemished faith and love without measure". Having begun to rule the Novgorod Province in 1117, he victoriously went into Yam in 1123. In 1132 he campaigned against Chud and took Yuriev. Bestowed by courage and great bodily strength, he lifted his sword not for military glory, not for the sake of greed and power, but for the establishment of peace and order and for the defense of his subjects. With the courage of a warrior he joined unrestrained love for the internal structure of his fatherland and calmness for its sake, and denying his own glory, he put his sword into its sheath. During his principedom

in Novgorod, he fervently cared for Christian education and the Christian image of life for his subjects. With devotion he was concerned for the church services, constructed many temples, protected the weak from the oppression of the strong, was the friend, "of the beggar and the nourisher of the orphan", "a consolation and defender for the poor" and in general truly a father for his subordinates. When in Novgorod (in 1127) a severe famine occurred, the solicitous prince shared all his property with the people and very much eased their suffering. The morally good life of the holy prince accused the impure, and his firm authority restrained lawlessness, but the self-willed were heartless and Novgorodians were still infected with the remnants of paganism, and they put him and all his family under arrest, and within two months "he was exiled from the city".

The holy prince left for Pskov. The Pskovians elected him their prince. In Pskov the holy prince constructed the stone cathedral of the Holy Trinity and soon after died in 1138, being 46 years old. The holy Church honors him as a confessor, "who had suffered exile from his own", and the Lord has glorified him as a faithful servant by performing miraculous healings at his grave (see April 22 and November 27). Though he reigned in Pskov for only a year, he left a long memory for himself. In all the difficult instances of life the Pskovians came to the aid of their own holy prince. During the siege of Pskov by Stephen Bathory, an icon representing the Right-believing Prince Vsevolod-Gabriel was brought from the cathedral of the Holy Trinity for the encouragement of the defenders of the city in their ranks, and the inspired defenders of Pskov courageously beat off the attacks of the Polish army. In all the Pskov cross processions established for various historical events, even up to this day they always carry an icon of the right-believing prince at the head of the other icons.

The Troparion, tone 4

**O Godly-wise Prince Gabriel,
You were revealed from your youth as a divine vessel
You were selected by God, and brought up in piety,
You maintained an undefiled faith,
And having built many holy churches,
You have endured exile by your own people,
For your chastity protected you from fratricide;
Standing with them before the Holy Trinity
Pray to protect the leaders of Russia with might,
And pray to save us all.**

Kontakion, tone 8

**O Blessed Prince Gabriel,
You with much wisdom immigrated to the city of Pskov.
You were the good fruit of God in this life
With the ever flowering of good deeds, like David without malice.
You received eternal life in the heavens for this,
Always seeing the Holy Trinity,
Pray to deliver us from any kind of trouble, that we may call out to you:
Rejoice, O foundation of our city.**

Paramoia: 1) Prov. 10:7,6; 3:13-16; 8:6, 34, 35, 4,12, 14, 17, 5-9; 1:23; 15:4,2. 2) Prov. 10:31, 32; 11: 1, 2, 4, 3, 5-12. 3) Wisdom. 4:7-15. **Matins Gospel:** Mt. 11:27-30; sel. 43. **Epistle:** Heb. 13:17-21; sel. 335. **Gospel:** Luke 12:32-40; sel. 67.

St. Theodora, Empress

She was the wife of the Greek iconoclast emperor Theophilus. After the death of her husband, and because her son Michael was a minor, she accepted the management of the empire and immediately began the restoration of iconography. She established the celebration of the Triumph of Orthodoxy annually on the first Sunday of Great Lent that is observed even to this day. When her son grew up and accepted the management of the empire, St. Theodora secluded herself in the monastery of St. Euphrosyne, called the Meadow. Here prayer, fasting, and reading soul-saving books were her constant preoccupations. Having spent eight 8 years in such ascetic efforts, St. Theodora peacefully died in about 867. In 1460 the Turks transferred her relics to the inhabitants of Corcyra (Corfu).

Martyr George of the Serbs

He came from the Serbian town of Kratov, where he was a master goldsmith. From his youth he distinguished himself by special meekness and humility. An idle word never left his mouth. He never praised himself and never envied anybody. The Moslems wanted to convert him to their faith and with this purpose in mind offered him various awards and high positions. George remained firm, and for this reason he was subjected to various harsh tortures and finally burned at the stake in the city of Sofia in 1515 at the age of 18.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed. 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 77-80
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