

# MARCH

Sukhi [dry] in Old Slavonic; Berezozol [birch ash] in Little Russian<sup>1</sup>.

## March 1

### C. Holy Ven. Martyr Eudokia



She came from Phoenician Heliopolis (now Baalbek). Distinguished with rare beauty and proportionate stature, she led a sinful life and acquired a huge fortune. Converted to Christ by a certain pious monk, she distributed her wealth to the poor "and vested her soul with the beautiful clothes of passionlessness". The strict woman ascetic did all this in the monastery, for which she was elected rector of this monastery. For 56 years she practiced asceticism in monasticism and died as a woman martyr. She was beheaded by the sword in the year 152 for spreading the Christian faith during the reign of Antoninus.

### *Troparion, tone 8*

**Having bound your soul to the love of Christ with an upright mind,  
You turned from corruption, beauty and temporal existence,  
As a disciple of the Word.  
First you mortified the passions through fasting,  
Second you shamed the enemy by your suffering.  
Therefore Christ granted you an augmented crown,  
O Glorious, Venerable Passion-bearer Eudokia:  
Pray to Christ God to save our souls.**

### *Kontakion, tone 4*

**Having struggled well in asceticism during your suffering,  
For even after death you sanctify us with the pouring out of wonders,  
O All-praised One,  
Those who in faith run to you in the divine church,  
And celebrating we pray to you,  
O Venerable Martyr Eudokia:  
That we may be delivered from spiritual infirmities,  
And receive the grace of wonders.**

### *Martyrs Nestor and Tribiminus*

Born in Pamphilian Perga, they suffered for spreading the Christian faith during the persecution of Decius: they were beaten with ox-hide straps; they were

hanged on a tree and were scraped with iron rakes up to the bones and, finally, beheaded by the sword.

*Martyrs Marcellus and Anthony* were burned to death for their faith in Christ.

*Martyr Antonina* was born in Bithynian Nicaea and after cruel torture she was drowned in Nicaea Lake during the persecution of Diocletian.

### *Ven. Virgin Domnina of Syria*

Ven. Domnina belonged to an assembly of Syrian votive virgins<sup>2</sup>. She came from pious parents and was brought up in the awe of God. Her love for God was early awakened in her soul. Having reached maturity, Domnina decided to carry out a life of virginity similar to the votive virgins, to be well pleasing to the Lord through fasting, vigils, prayer and other ascetic struggles. Having settled in a small kellia in her mother's garden, she began to practice asceticism for the Lord. She wore a hair shirt. For food she used only lentils soaked in water and that in small quantity. Prayer, the continual aspiration of mind and heart to God, and reading of the Word of God was her main occupation. The estate of her mother and brothers was open for her expenses and she used it for acts of charity to her neighbors. Ven. Domnina died between the years 450-460.

### *Our Ven. Father Agapius of Vatopedi*

A novice of a certain elder in the Vatopedi Kolitsa Skete on Mount Athos captured by the Saracens, he was wonderfully released from slavery. Upon the insistence of his elder, Agapius returned to the Saracen. The Saracen was so touched by this and soon together with his sons was baptized and received into monasticism on Mount Athos. After a life pleasing to God all died in peace.

### *Repose of Ven. Martyrius of Zelenets*

Born in the city of Velikie Luki [Great Meadows], Pskov Province, he practiced asceticism from his youth in the Velikie Luki St. Sergius Monastery. Wishing to pursue the asceticism of silence, he left this monastery. Having settled on Zelenets Island, through a life pleasing to God he attracted many adherents of piety, built a monastery for them (the Zelenets Trinity Monastery, 180 versts [118.8 miles] from St. Petersburg, in the Novoladozhsky District) and in the last years of his life he was glorified for his gift of healing. He died at a very old age in the year 1603. His relics are in a hidden place in the monastery founded by him.

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<sup>1</sup> March is the first month of the Julian year and is named in honor of the god of war Mars who was considered the father of Romulus.

This month is called *Sukhi* [dry] from the warmth of spring appearing at this time, drying out any moisture.

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It is called *Berezozol* [*birch ash*] because at this time the spring sun causes the sap to run in the birch tree and it begins to bud.

In earlier times March was first month in the year and was preferred before other months both in the Old (Ex. 12:2) and New Testaments.

"This first month", it says in the Augmented Psalter [Psaltir Sledovannaia] (March 1), "is a month of months because in it the light existing from the beginning becomes visible and in it Adam was created... In this month God... in his love for man came down to earth... In this month through His voluntary passion in the flesh the curse was annulled, by His death he trampled down death and... By His resurrection from the dead Adam and the entire human race is raised up from Hades... For this reason from the first date of its beginning all the solar and lunar cycles and dominical letters and leap year are received, and the equinox occurs in it and the rest" (Refer to Jan. 1).

<sup>2</sup> The virgins are called thus, according to the vow either of parents or their own, dedicating themselves to God and leading their entire life in virginity, prayer, abstinence and other ascetic struggles. In addition to these characteristic attributes of the virgins they wore a long veil.

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0098b-0099.  
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