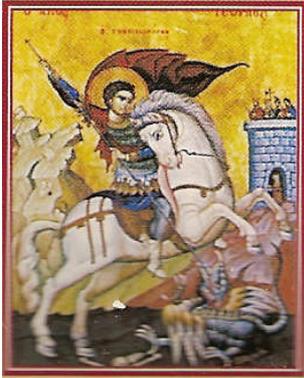


April 23

F. ☩ *Holy Glorious Great Martyr, Victory-bearer and Wonderworker George*



He was the son of wealthy and pious Christian parents. Some consider Cappadocia as the birthplace of the Great Martyr George, others think it was the Phoenician city of Beirut (ancient Berytus at the foot of Mount Lebanon) and the third says it was Lydda [Lod] in Palestine. Having served in the military he soon earned the high rank of comites [chief captain] by his mind, courage, activity, bodily strength, aggressive bearing and handsomeness and became the favorite of Diocletian. Once being in court and having heard the inhuman verdict concerning the destruction of Christians caused St. George to zealously be fired up for the Christian faith. He distributed his estate to the poor, released his slaves and having appeared before the emperor accused him of impiety and confessed himself to being a Christian. The statement St. George made to the emperor and his council inspired deep piety, was filled with powerful and convincing objections against the obvious injustice and expressed unshakable steadfastness and firmness of the holy faith. After long and vain exhortations to renounce Christ, the emperor commanded that the great martyr be sentenced to the severest torments. Imprisoned St. George was laid down with his spine to the ground, his legs were hammered into foot-stocks, and a large rock was placed on his chest. But St. George courageously transferred his suffering and glorified the Lord. Fierce torturers beat the holy sufferer with ox-hide straps, tied him to an iron wheel, threw him into caustic lime, and forced him to run in boots with sharp nails inside and so forth (see below about Martyr Athanasius). The holy martyr endured all this long-sufferingly and the torturer in the weakness of rage sentenced him to be beheaded. This was in Nicomedia in the year 303.

Along with the name of the great martyr, St. George, the Holy Church adopted the name of victory-bearer for courageously enduring his suffering and for the glorious victory gained by him over the torturers, but also for his wonderful help, rendered also after death to the people who find themselves in danger. Together with this the Holy Church glorifies St. George, as "valiant in martyrdom", "steadfast sufferer", "deliverer of captives, and defender of the downtrodden, physician for the sick, companion of kings", "driver away of evil spirits, protector of the vigilant, defender of the unashamed".

The relics of St. George the Great Martyr were placed in a temple bearing his name constructed in Lydda [Lod], Palestine. The head of St. George is found in a church named for him in Rome.¹

Troparion, tone 4

**You practiced asceticism very well, O Passion-bearer of Christ,
By faith you vested the torturers in impiety,
You were offered as a sacrifice pleasing to God:
Therefore you also received the crown of victory,
And through your prayers, O Saint,
Forgiveness of sins is granted to all.**

Kontakion, tone 4

**God has raised you as a most honorable gardener of grace,
Having gathered for you sheaves of virtue:
For having sown in tears, you reap with joy,
Having shed your blood in combat, you received Christ:
And through your prayers, O Saint
Forgiveness of sins is granted to all.**

Paramoeya: 1) Is. 43:9-14. 2) Wis. 3:1-9. 3) Wis. 4:7-15. **Matins Gospel:** Lk. 12:2-12; sel. 63. **Epistle:** Acts 12:1-11; sel. 29. **Gospel:** Jn. 15: 17-27, 16:1-25; sel. 2.

If it be his temple, or at the will of the rector, we do a Vigil.

Note the chapter in the Ustav [Typikon] and Menaion if the commemoration of Great Martyr George falls between Great Friday and Thursday of the 5-th week after Pascha. If the feast of the Great Martyr George falls: 1) on Great Friday or Great Saturday or Pascha, his service is done on Monday of Bright Week; 2) on one of the days of Bright Week; 3) on Thomas Sunday; 4) on Sundays of the Myrrh-bearers or the Paralytic or the Samaritan Woman; 5) on Wednesday of the Midfeast.

Warrior Martyrs Anatolius and Protoleo

Seeing the suffering and wonders of Great Martyr George, they believed in Christ and were beheaded by the sword.

Martyr Empress Alexandra

Although the wife of Emperor Diocletian was a Christian woman, she kept it secret. Seeing the steadfastness of the Holy Great Martyr George undergoing torture (see Apr. 23), she decided that it was now the time to openly witness to her faith in Christ. Immediately the holy empress went to the place of the martyrdom of St. George. Dropping to the feet of the great martyr, she publicly confessed her faith in the true God and exposed the vanity and perniciousness of idol worship.

The embittered Diocletian sentenced the holy empress and the great martyr to death. The holy empress went to the execution with her eyes lifted to heaven and with prayer on her lips. The good one having stopped from weariness asked the warriors to allow her to have a little rest. Having leaned on a wall of a building, she gave up her soul to God (in 303). Her peaceful death happened on April 23, but in the most ancient and latest Menologies this death is placed on April 21. According to the opinion of some this was done to separate commemorating Martyr Alexandra from the commemoration of the Great Martyr George.

Martyr Glyceria, the farmer, Athanasius, the magus, Valery, Donatus and Ferinus

They all believed in Christ after seeing the wonders and torture of the Holy Great Martyr George. They died by the sword. Athanasius was the magus, who was commanded, that he through witchcraft either subordinate St. George to the authority of Diocletian or be destroyed. At first Athanasius brought St. George such a drink that should cause him to be in obedience to the emperor; but then later this drink had no effect on him. Athanasius brought poison to the saint, but St. George drank it as before and continued to confess the holy faith, not at all feeling the poison. The amazed magus, wishing to shame St. George, suggested to him to revive one recently dead person. And the martyr, for the sake of an explanation to the people who were there, accepted the offer. He loudly prayed to Christ, and, before the eyes of all, the dead man came to life, left the coffin and fell down before the feet of George. People became unglued; many have openly glorified the Lord. Athanasius confessed Christ as God and asked the martyr to forgive him. The angry emperor declared the magus to be an accomplice of George and without any trial ordered to chop off his head together with revived one, as the living witness of the power of Christ.

Martyr George the Consulate Employee [Ptolemais], for refusing to accept Islam was tortured by the Turks and cut to pieces by the sword in 1752.

Martyr Lazarus the Bulgarian suffered at the hands of the Turks in Pergamum, Asia Minor in 1802.

Repose of the Blessed George of Shenkursk

They posit that George, fool for the sake of Christ, practiced asceticism in Shenkursk in the 15th century.

¹ On icons St. George is frequently represented sitting on a white horse striking a terrible snake with a spear. This is based on tradition.

They say that near the place where St. George was buried near Beirut, a terrible snake lived and daily came out of the lake abducting and devouring people. But there appeared a military young man on a white horse and he struck the snake, which was already prepared to swallow up his victim, with a spear. That was the Holy Great Martyr George, who through such a deed converted to Christ all the former pagan inhabitants of that country. At the

present time the place at the named city limits where St. George struck the snake is designated. A chapel was built there, where is found the specially revered icon of St. George.

Some think that the appearance of St. George on a horse for the defeat of a monster, together as described in his life with the wonderful revival of the only ox of a farmer-pagan (who converted to Christ after this wonder) accomplished by him and served as the main image of the occasion to the belief developed by Christian peoples recognizing St. George as the protector of cattle breeding and the defender of flocks from wild animals. Therefore on St. George Day the inhabitants of our villages and cities ordinarily, for the first time after winter, send the cattle out to pasture, and thus serve a thanksgiving service to the holy great martyr with the sprinkling of holy water on shepherds and flocks. The day of the Great Martyr George, or, in popular speech, "Yegor's Day", is especially known by the people and will be celebrated by them.

The image of St. George on a horse as a sign on victory is added to the arms of our victorious Russia and to the Russian badge assigned on the chest of warriors for their service and efforts.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0146-0147.
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