

May

Traven [grass] in Old Slavonic and Little Russian¹

May 1

E. *Holy Prophet Jeremiah*

Jeremiah was born in Anathoth near Jerusalem, from the root of Benjamin, son of Priest Hilkiah, Jeremiah prophesied during the reign of Josiah and four of his successors. He was taken to Tahpanhes, Egypt, beaten with stones from persons of the same ethnic family for their accusations of impurity. His relics were transferred from Tahpanhes to Alexandria by Alexander of Macedon 250 years before Christ. Before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nabuchodonosor, according to tradition, Jeremiah hid the Ark of the Covenant with its scrolls in a cave on Mount Nabath [Nebo] and the Jews could not find them. He wrote the books of "Prophecy" (52 chapters) and "Lamentations" (5 chapters).

Kontakion, tone 3

**Having cleansed the spirit, O Great Prophet and Martyr,
By your radiant heart, O Glorious Jeremiah,
You received the gift of prophecy from above,
And you cried out loudly among the nations:
This is our God, there is none like Him:
Who appeared incarnate on earth.**

+ Ven. Paphnutius of Borov

In the world Parthenius, born in the village of Kudinovo near Borov, a descendant of a Tartar, named Martin in baptism, having loved "the virtues diligently from youth", he became a monk of the Borov Protection Monastery, (now the large suburban Visotsky Village, Kaluga Province) when he was 20 years old. Here the venerable one for many years practiced asceticism in strict abstinence of uninterrupted labor, meditating on God and with vigilant attention to himself, "having been meek and merciful and chaste", his "mind enlightened with passionlessness and adorned with divine humility". He cut and carried fire wood by himself, tilled the ground for the kitchen garden and wove fisherman's nets and baskets. In 1431 elected rector of the monastery, he wedded the asceticism of a monk to the asceticism of a shepherd for the souls entrusted to him. He spent his days in monastic labor but his nights in prayer and his way of life was represented with an example of lofty asceticism. "Having been a protection and shelter to the needy", the venerable one "helped the down-trodden, comforting the sorrowful like an affectionate father".

In the 13th year of directing the brethren he became seriously ill and accepted the schema. Having recovered, he departed for the thick Borov forest and practiced asceticism together with another monk in full solitude, "suppressing the body" "by fasting, vigil, and labor, enduring the winter, and abiding in nakedness" and "continually in prayer vigil".

The glories about him caused many adherents of silence to gather around him and he founded the Nativity of the Theotokos Monastery (see Kaluga Diocese), which under his management prospered and the number and piety of the monks increased. Not only the monks, but he and laymen had him for their father confessor. During times of general afflictions the monastery was generous to the peasants.

A poor and grieving father, a great faster, and a strict ascetic, the venerable one during his life time was much tested with troubles from a strong world and especially from local princes. He knew the Church canons very well and gave saving counsel to those coming to him. The Lord bestowed on him the gifts of judiciousness and recovery of sight. During his life are submitted some examples of astonishing recovery of sight of persons coming to his monastery in the past. Besides the gift of clairvoyance the venerable one also had the gift of working wonders.

The venerable one died in 1478. His commemoration was established by the Moscow Council of 1547. His relics repose openly in the St. Paphnutius Monastery.

Troparion, tone 4

**By the holiness of your way of life you enlightened your country,
In prayers and fasts you fulfilled the gifts of the Divine Spirit,
And in that time you practiced asceticism well in life,
You opened the mercy of compassion to all who were grieving
And you were their intercessor:
Therefore we pray to you, O Father Paphnutius,
Pray to Christ God to save our souls.**

Kontakion, tone 8

**Having been enlightened by the bright Litia of God, O Father,
And having gained a Lenten residence, O Venerable One,
As a monk an all-good teacher and as a faster a good adornment;
Therefore the Lord having seen your labors,
Enriched you with the gift of wonders,
For you became a source of healing;
Rejoicing we call out to you: Rejoice, O Father Paphnutius.**

His Synaxis is done in his monastery and wherever is his temple.

Paramoera: for 3, 1 and 2 see Apr. 1. **Matins Gospel and Liturgy Epistle:** see in the same place. **Liturgy Gospel:** Mt. 4:25, 5:1-2; sel. 10.

Martyr Bata, a monk of Persian origin, after torture was beheaded in Nisibis (after 364).

Hieromartyr Macarius, Metropolitan of Kiev

Archimandrite of the Vilna Holy Trinity Monastery (Lithuanian Diocese), was consecrated to the Kiev Metropolia in 1490. St. Macarius in 1497 on the way from Vilna (where he constantly lived) to Kiev was killed by the Crimean tartars. Passing through the Pripet Marshes by the settlement of Skrigolov, Mozursky District St. Macarius wanted to pray in the local church and began to serve the liturgy. The message about the Tartar Division attack was brought during the service. "Save yourselves, children", said the praying Hierarch: "But as for me this is impossible; I give myself to the will of God." The Skrigolovtsi ran away, but when the Tartars appeared they seized the server of God standing at the altar table and beheaded him. His relics now openly repose in the Kiev St. Sophia Cathedral.

Troparion, tone 8

**You offered a divine bloodless sacrifice,
Your blood poured out at the hands of the godless Agarians
You offered an undefiled sacrifice to your Master, O Chief Shepherd for Christ:
Pray to Him, we pray you, to pour out anger on the nations desiring terror,
Strengthen our Right-believing Emperor against all enemies
And keep your flock unharmed from any troubles.
For let us honor you as a mighty intercessor,
O New Russian Hieromartyr, Blessed Hierarch Macarius.**

Kontakion, tone 8

**Be glad City of Kiev for you gained a great treasure,
Your body not taking part in corruption, O Blessed Hierarch Macarius:
For you protected your throne for a shelter from invading vicious enemies
And now you stand before the heavenly throne,
Where prayerfully remember us before the Creator, Our Father:
That in all troubles we may flee to you and praise you, crying out:
Rejoice Macarius, honorable adornment as a bishop.**

Prayer

Master, Lord our God, by Your unutterable forethought and with much thanksgiving, standing before Your saints, foreseeing a life pleasing to God from childhood, chosen to be a hierarch, wonderful in martyrdom, strictly as a bishop, a verbal burnt offering of the true Gospel of Christ You glorified the follower of the Same, after foreseeing your good desires, to you, O Hierarch

Macarius: God organized the way of suffering, in such conformity for you to be His Son by death, and to pour out your sacred blood, you followed Him fervently from youth, you carried the light yoke of Christ on your shoulder, and drank the cup of death from Agarian hands.

Teacher of asceticism: Christ God seeing your asceticism of suffering for a whole burnt offering, sacrificially receives you in the highest mansions, where standing with boldness and being installed among the saints, O Holy Hieromartyr Macarius, remember us who venerate your all honorable relics and pray to deliver us from enemies visible and invisible, and to receive grace and mercy from the Lord, for Whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit are due glory, honor and veneration, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Venerable Martyrs Euthymius (see Mar. 22), Ignatius and Acacius

Ven. Ignatius, born in the village of Eski-Zagora, Trnovo Diocese, became a monk in his youth, but under the influence of threats by the Turks he renounced Christ. On Mt. Athos he mourned his apostasy with tears, he appeared in Constantinople, confessed to being a Christian and was strangled for this, and then hanged on a tree (1814). His relics were transferred to Mt. Athos.

Ven. Acacius, born in the Macedonian village of Neochori, being a Christian boy, became a Mohammedan. After rejecting Mohammedanism, having mourned his sin on Mt. Athos, he voluntarily suffered for the faith in Constantinople in 1816. His relics were transferred to Mt. Athos and placed together with the relics of Ven. Euthymius and Ignatius.

Repose of Ven. Gerasimus of Boldin

Born in Pereiaslavl Zalessky, he spent 26 years in obedience to Ven. Daniel of Pereiaslavl where he was a "cutter of leather" (shoemaker) and at the will of the rector fervently served his brethren with his craft. He zealously did his asceticism of fasting and prayer: accepted food once a day or two, constantly carried out the kellia rule, but sometimes stood all night long in prayer. His asceticism was known not only in the monastery but also in Moscow. The mass of pious persons were converted to the great ascetic by his advice.

Being weighed down by these and wishing for solitude and silence, the venerable one then practiced asceticism in a wild forest, in the Dorogobuzh District, Smolensk Diocese, where except for snakes and animals there was nobody to fly into a rage. From time to time robbers hid there as the larger road near there disappeared. Bad people more than once beat up the venerable one, trying to drive him away from themselves, but Gerasimus suffered and prayed.

After a special vision he moved to Mount Boldin. The local residents wanted to drive away the venerable one. Once they beat him with canes and tied his hands and legs with cords, intending to drown him in the lake, but, being afraid of being punished, changed their minds and presented Gerasimus to the Dorogobuzh

deputy. Not knowing who the venerable one was, the deputy ordered to sit in prison. The venerable one became completely silent and prayed. At this time it happened that an imperial deputy was sent, who recognized the ascetic, with deep respect bowed to him and asked for his blessing. The deputy was frightened, asked for pardon from Gerasimus, and began to protect him from affliction and to do good for him. The strict asceticism of the venerable one soon gathered adherents of piety around him and he built a monastery on Mount Boldin. He built the Forerunner Monastery in Viazma (see Smolensk Diocese). The venerable one died in 1554. His relics are in the temple of the Boldin monastery.

Byzantine icon of the Mother of God

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0153-0155.
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¹ The name *May* is taken from the Roman deity Maia Maiesta, under which name the Latins honored the earth goddess of fertility. Or on behalf of spring goddess Maia who, according to the pagan idea, originally was the mother of the creator deity of Brahma.

Traven [grass] is borrowed from the word grass.

In antiquity (among the Romans) May was considered as the month devoted to the memory of the dead, which is why they were afraid to marry in this month. In France even now still exists a saying: "A May wedding is a dead wedding".

That ancient Greeks met summer in May is why they wore wreaths of flowers and decorated their houses with greens.

There is a custom in France, Germany, Sweden and Denmark to dance around a "May tree".

Among the Slavs and Lithuanians the meeting of May was also accompanied by various games.

In general May from time immemorial was considered as time of parties and sauntering.

Sauntering on the first of May in Russia began with the time of Peter the Great in Moscow. The Russians borrowed them from foreigners who lived in Moscow.