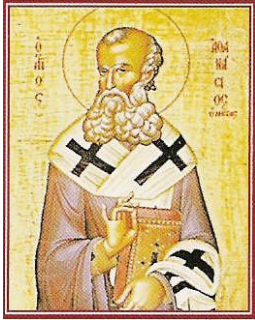


May 2

D † *Our Father among the Saints Athanasius the Great, Patriarch of Alexandria*



St. Athanasius the Great was born at the end of the 3rd century in Alexandria where he also received his formation. Most of all he studied the Holy Scriptures, read it day and night and so he studied all the books of the Holy Scriptures as if it were one book. Zealously he also studied the works of the fathers before him, especially their commentaries. Together with all this he led a strictly ascetic life. Knowing all this, the Bishop of Alexandria Alexander ordained him a deacon. As a deacon, together with Bishop Alexander, St. Athanasius was present at the Ecumenical Council in Nicaea and actively participated in the dispute with Arius. After returning from Nicaea when Bishop Alexander died, the general choice of the heir fell upon Athanasius. "This Christian, reverent man, ascetic, true bishop", were some of the epithets mentioned at election of St. Athanasius by a clique of people.

St. Athanasius had long refused the bishopric, considering that he was unable to govern church during such difficult times; however he was forced to concede to the general desire and became the bishop of Alexandria in 328, being only 28 years old. The Arians had no other such awesome and implacable opponent as St. Athanasius, who conducted a merciless struggle with them up to the end of his life and came out of this struggle with the victory banner of Orthodoxy unharmed. Everyone who liked Orthodoxy were converted to him after the council, conformed their teaching to his doctrine. Even those without right thinking solicited his approval. He exposed and refuted the false opinions of the heretics, encouraged and supported the defenders of Orthodoxy, showed condescension to those who were inclined to the side of false thinking, deceit and threats.

Against contemporary errors he was armed with words and writings and in general by all measures he cared for the pacification of the Church. During this struggle he was exposed to countless dangers and persecutions by the Arians, he was repeatedly expelled from Alexandria and hid in Gallia, Italy and in the Egyptian desert by local ascetics. Distinguished by an unbowed steadfastness, heroic courage and flaming zeal, he endured all the trials, underwent all the sufferings and with the greatest patience, without the slightest change to his position for which he devoted all his life and for which he was ready at all times even to pour out his blood.

Due to his unusual insight, he always and everywhere rendered decisive defeat to the heretics, being content, in this way, to use the most spiritual armor,

without any violent means. "Neither by sword nor arrows," he said, "not with the help of warriors he returns to the true, but with conviction and advice".

Struggling through his entire life with the prejudgments and passions of people of every estate, St. Athanasius developed a rare knowledge of people; an amazing art to penetrate into the most secret turns of their ideas and intentions and at the same time developed a remarkable step in responding to them. He precisely defined when it was possible to demand and when it is necessary to ask submissively, when it was possible to struggle against force and when it was necessary to flee dangers. Using strong measures against heretics and church rebels, he gave to his given flock skilful support of the gentle and indulgent character of a wise leader.

"Pleasant in conversation, angel like in appearance", he was a receptacle and carrier of lofty traits. In him apparently is the person, clearly the discerning finger of God and given the Church, as a great pillar and firm support of Orthodoxy in the difficult hour of trial.

According to the witness of St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Athanasius had "all the virtues; his life and morals are a rule for bishops; his teachings are the laws for Orthodoxy".

He is glorified by the Holy Church as "a golden trumpet of theology", "an advocate of the faith", "a pillar of light and the foundation of the church".

St. Athanasius left many writings, representing in itself an eternal monument of the indestructibility of Orthodoxy by any enemy. Some of his creations are treatises against heretics, in others he explains the Holy Scriptures, in the third group he wrote canons of moral teaching. He also wrote a biography of St. Anthony the Great.

St. Athanasius the Great reposed in 373 at the age of 80.

Troparion, tone 8

**You became a pillar of Orthodoxy,
Strengthening the Church through divine teachings,
O High Priest Athanasius:
For having preached that the Son is equal in nature to the Father,
You shamed Arius, O Venerable Father.
Pray to Christ God to grant us great mercy.**

Kontakion, tone 2

**You planted the teaching of Orthodoxy,
Cutting down the weeds of slander,
Having increased the seeds of faith
Watered by the Spirit, O Venerable One:
Therefore we sing you a hymn of praise, O Athanasius.**

Epistle: Heb. 7:26-28, 8:1-2; sel. 318. **Gospel:** Mt. 5:14-19; sel. 11.

Translation of the Relics of the Right-believing Russian Princes Boris and Gleb, in Holy Baptism Roman and David

Their holy relics were transferred in 1072 into a new temple of St. Michael, constructed by Prince Iziaslav in Vyshgorod. See July 24 and Sept. 5.

Martyrs Hesperus, Zoë and their children: Cyriacus and Theodulus

Slaves of the wealthy pagan Catulus, from Attalia [Antalya], on the occasion of the birth of the lord's son for refusal to sacrifice to Fortune, they were tortured during the reign of Emperor Hadrian. At first the children were tortured and then everyone was thrown into the fiery furnace where they died.

Putivil Icon of the Mother of God

The Putivil icon, different from the Smolensk, appeared in Putivil at the former St. Nicholas Gate on May 2, 1238. The Putivil icon is now found in the Putivil monastery, Kursk Diocese.

Butiban Icon of the Mother of God

St. Boris (Michael), Prince of Bulgaria

In paganism the unfortunate governor of the people, having known chastisement from God for this, he received the Christian faith and began to enlighten his people with it. In old age, having transferred the rule to his son Vladimir, he left for a monastery, but within four years he again put on his armor, arrested his impious and prejudiced against Christians son-governor and enthroned his younger son Simeon. After this he again left for the monastery where he reposed on May 2, 906.

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0155-0157.
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