

May 4

B. *Holy Ven. Martyr Pelagia*

Born in Tarsus (Asia Minor), the daughter of notable pagans, she was of unusual beauty and had a brilliant education. Emperor Diocletian decided to marry her to his chosen heir, but Martyr Pelagia, having learned the Christian faith and having grown fond of it, wished to become a bride of Christ and refused the hand of the imperial heir.

Becoming a Christian woman, Pelagia decided to enlighten her pagan mother through faith in Christ, but she persisted in paganism and in a rage led the daughter to her rejected groom in order to give him her hand. But he, feeling sorry to turn Pelagia over to torture, decided it was better to destroy himself.

This act even more embittered the mother of Pelagia and she led her to Diocletian. But the emperor was himself captivated with the beauty of Pelagia and decided to marry her. "My bridegroom is Christ, for Whom I am ready to die", Pelagia replied to the emperor. Then the emperor sentenced the holy virgin to torture. After the terrible torture of the martyr, they threw Pelagia into a red hot copper bull, where she gave up her soul to God.

Kontakion, tone 3

**Having disdained the temporal,
You became a partaker of heavenly blessings,
Having received the crown of suffering,
O All-honorable Pelagia,
For you offered streams of blood to the Master Christ:
Pray to deliver us who honor your memory from troubles.**

Hieromartyr Silvanus, Bishop of Gaza

For spreading the Gospel, Silvanus was sentenced to work in the mines in Phaeno, Palestine, but due to his inability to be released from it he and 40 other martyrs were beheaded in the year 311.

Hieromartyr Alvian, Bishop of Anais, Asia Minor

He and his disciples were burned to death for refusal to sacrifice to Juno at the beginning of the 4th century.

Hieromartyr Erasmus, Bishop of Formiae

Born in Antioch, Syria became glorified in Antioch by healing those possessed with impure spirits and converted many to Christ. He was cruelly

tortured by Diocletian, but after torture was sent to the city of Sadugrido, Macedonia where his wonders again led many to Christ. For this Emperor Maximian ordered to dress him in a heated copper shirt and to throw him into boiling pitch, but Archistrategus Michael wonderfully delivered St. Erasmus and he withdrew to Campania where he died in Formiae on June 10, 303. In the 9th century his relics were transferred to Cayst.

Ven. Nicephorus, Hegumen of Medikion

He practiced asceticism near Prusa [Bursa] in the 9th century.

Ven. Monk Nicephorus

He practiced asceticism on Mount Athos in the 14th century, having left behind the writing: "The Wise Way of Intelligent Prayer".

Ven. Albanov Brothers: Nicetas, Cyril, Nicephorus, Clement and Isaac

Relatives known in the annals of Novgorodian Voivode Jacob Albanov, they were founders of the Sokolniki Monastery (now closed) in 1389. Their relics were transferred from the Sokolniki Monastery to the Novgorod St. Anthony Monastery in 1775 where they now repose.

Staraiia Russa (Novgorod Diocese) Icon of the Mother of God,

According to tradition, this holy icon abides in Staraiia Russa since the 10th century. In 1570, on the occasion of a pestilential epidemic, it was brought to the city of Tikhvin and was in the Tikhvin Theotokos Monastery until 1888, when by the decision of the Holy Synod; it was solemnly transferred to Staraiia Russa.

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), p 0159-0160.
Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © May 23, 2008, all rights reserved.*