

May 8

E. 🏰 Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian

"The chief of theology", "Beholder of unspeakable revelations, and interpreter of the mysteries on high", the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John (see Sept. 26), knew beforehand the approach of his death, commanded that a grave be prepared for himself, he entered it himself and fell asleep in peace. Soon after the death of the Holy Apostle, his honorable relics were not yet recovered from the grave when they were visited, but only a few thin ashes blew out of the grave, which gave off beneficial healing _). Today the Holy Church also celebrates the memory of the healing ash (manna), wonderfully proceeding from the grave of St. John the Theologian.

Troparion, tone 2

**O beloved Apostle of Christ our God,
Hasten to deliver a helpless people.
He on whose breast you did lean,
Will accept you as intercessor.
Entreat Him, O Theologian, to disperse also the darkness of pagans around us,
And to grant us peace and great mercy.**

Kontakion, tone 2

**Who shall declare your greatness, O virgin Disciple?
For you pour out wonders, and streams of healing,
And praying for our souls
As Theologian and friend of Christ.**

Refer to the Chapter in the Typicon and Menaion if the feast of St. John the Theologian falls between the Saturday of Second Sunday after Pascha and the Seventh Sunday of the Holy Fathers. If it falls: 1) on the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women, the Paralytic, the Samaritan Woman, or the Blind Man; 2) on the Wednesday of the Mid-feast; 3) on the Wednesday before the Ascension, the Leave-taking of Pascha; 4) on the Thursday of Ascension; 5) on the Seventh Sunday after Pascha, of the Holy 318 Fathers.

Paramoeas: 1) 1 Jn. 3:21-24; 4:1-6. 2) 1 Jn. 4:11-16. 3) 1 Jn. 4:20-25; 5:1-5.
Matins Gospel: Jn. 21:15-25; sel. 67. **Epistle:** 1 Jn. 1:1-7; sel. 68. **Gospel:** Jn. 19:25-27, 21:24-25; sel. 61.

Venerable Arsenius the Great

The son of wealthy Romans, beautifully educated, he, yet a future deacon, was called by the Emperor Theodosius, to educate his sons: Arcadius and Honorius. "Make them virtuous and wise; keep them from the temptations of youth. Although they are imperial sons, demand from them full humility", Theodosius told him, giving him charge of his children. Arsenius was diligently engaged in the education of the imperial sons. Honor and glory, which surrounded him, weighed heavy on his soul, who thirsted for the silence and humility of the monastic life, and "having been imputed with riches and glory in everything", and "leaving the imperial court", he went to Alexandria and was tonsured in Scetis. Here the brothers placed him under the supervision of one of the most experienced elders, the Ven. John (see Nov. 9). Wonderfully it was the first test of Arsenius by John. During the dinner of the brotherhood, Arsenius had not been invited to the meal, and John threw him a cracker and said: "eat it, if you wish". Arsenius humbly lifted the cracker, went to a corner and there ate it. "He will be a great ascetic!" said John about Arsenius. And so he really was. St. Arsenius zealously practiced asceticism, continually shedding tears of repentance, with prayer on his lips and in his heart, while plating baskets from palm branches. Having learned about this, Arcadius sent rich gifts to the great starets. Ven. Arsenius sent his blessing to the emperor, not accepting the gifts on his vow of poverty. After 50-years of charitable ascetic efforts, in the 95th year of his life, he died (in Troe (Tura), near Memphis, in the year 449 or 450), having been awarded the gift of wonderworking.

Kontakion, tone 3

**From Rome, you have shone like a great sun,
And have reached the royal city, O most blessed One,
Illumining it with your words and deeds,
Driving out the darkness of unreason.
Therefore, we honor you, O Venerable Arsenius, Glory of the Fathers.**

For **Ven. Arsenius of Novgorod**, see July 12.

__). The brief biography of St. John the Theologian, placed in the divine service Gospel, says this about the death of the Holy Apostle: "He lived for 120 years and after this life he buried himself there (in Ephesus) by the will of God". The Chetji-Menaion (Reader's Menaion) has the following detailed narration about the death of the Holy Apostle:

"Having completed 100 years and more, he went out of the house with seven of his disciples and went up to a certain place, and there he commanded them to sit down. He got up, and then went out a stone's throw, he prayed. Then the disciples having dug out a grave crosswise to the length of his height, as he commanded them, having

chastised his disciples and kissed them, he said: mother draws me to the earth, cover me. And having kissed his disciples, and they even covered him up to his knees. And again having kissed them, they covered him even up to his neck, and put a linen cloth on his face, and thus having kissed him, weeping very much, covered him completely. Having heard this, the brothers in the city came and dug up the grave, not finding anything, cried much, and praying returned to the city. Every year from his grave thin ashes appear on the eighth day of the month of May, granting healing to the sick through the prayers of the Holy Apostle John".

The Blessed Augustine heard about these ashes, and Gregory of Tours (VI century) also wrote about them. Some sources call this feast "rodismos" (rodismo.s) i.e. Day of Roses. Some opine that the same manna is called *rodis* (a pink ointment, or pink powder). But others quite more faithfully understand that by this name they are celebrating using spring roses, just as we now use flowers on Trinity Day.

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp 0163-0164
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