

May 11

B. Hieromartyr Mocius

A presbyter in the city of Amphipolis, Macedonia, he suffered during the reign of Diocletian. During one of pagan festivals St. Mocius with his burning zeal for the faith in Christ went out to the square and began to point out the errors of the pagans. The angry idolaters subjected him to severe torture: fed him to wild beasts, threw him into a fire, but the Lord kept the confessor unharmed. "Broken on the wheel, burned in fire, cleansed by beasts, disgraced with exile", he, however, did not turn from Christ. Finally, he was sent to Byzantium where he was executed by the sword. Constantine the Great constructed a temple on the place of the death of St. Mocius in which the relics of the holy martyr were placed.

Kontakion, tone 2

**Armed with the shield of faith,
You have overthrown the impious hosts, O Hieromartyr.
You have received the crown from Christ, O Mocius
And are rejoicing with angels:
Save those who sing to you from troubles,
Praying continually for us all.**

Epistle: 2 Tim. 2:1-10; sel. 292. **Gospel:** Jn. 15:9-16; sel. 51.

Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Methodius and Cyril, teachers of the Slavs

As brothers they were children of a wealthy Bulgarian Slav Voivode, who lived in Salonika, Macedonia.

When the eldest brother, Methodius, reached maturity he entered military service and soon became the governor of a Slavonic province. After 10 years of military service Methodius, "loving the solitary life", left for Mount Olympus and accepted monasticism there, completely devoting himself to meditation and reading divinely inspired books and "adorning his soul through prayer, vigils and fasting".

The youngest brother, Constantine, from his youth showed brilliant success both in secular and religious-moral formation. He studied together with Emperor Michael and thus received a brilliant education. But having acquired "wisdom with the care of higher philosophy", upon the completion of his education he refused all the benefits of position and left for one of the monasteries on the Black Sea. Soon his residence was revealed. He was almost violently returned to Constantinople and being ordained a priest there, he was appointed librarian at the St. Sophia Temple and teacher of philosophy in a major Constantinopolitan School. His extensive erudition was to enable him to defeat the iconoclast Patriarch John [Grammaticus] (*text has Annius probably in error*) in scholarly discourse. When

the Emir of the militants, a Moslem, addressed a petition to Byzantium (851) asking to send scholars to acquaint him with Christianity, the Emperor and the Patriarch selected the "golden-lettered" Constantine and the *asecretes* George for this mission. After returning Cyril lived for a short time in Constantinople, but then he left to go to his brother Methodius and shared monastic asceticism in the monastery on Olympus with him.

In 858, the Khazars, living on coast of the Don, Volga and Sea of Azov, sent ambassadors to Emperor Michael requesting him to give them a scholar capable of advising them about faith. The Emperor sent Constantine as his brilliant debates with other scholars on faith became known. St. Methodius joyfully agreed to accompany his brother. The holy brothers landed in Chersonese and here found the relics of St. Clement in the sea and carried them into the Temple of the Holy Apostles.

Having come to the Khazars, they soon taught the Christian faith to every last one of them and having confirmed them in Orthodoxy, they returned to Constantinople. Constantine renewed his scholarly occupations, but Methodius received the position of Hegumen in the Polychroniou [Many Years] monastery.

Soon after this at the request of Slavonic princes, the holy brothers went to Moravia and there, first of all translated the Greek divine service books into the Slavonic language (for which purpose they invented the Slavonic alphabet), they began to spread the Orthodox faith. Their preaching had enormous success: over several years Moravia, Bulgaria, Pannonia and other countries were enlightened with the light of Gospel teaching.

In 867, based on the slander of the German bishops, Sts. Methodius and Constantine were summoned by Pope Nicholas 1 to court in Rome. When they arrived in Rome, Nicholas 1 was no longer alive. His successor Hadrian II found out that they were bringing the relics of St. Clement with them and solemnly met them outside the city. Constantine brought him the Gospel and other books in the Slavonic language and the Pope, having known of their approval, placed them on the altar in the Temple of St. Maria, and later the divine services were performed in several churches of Rome from them.

Here on February 14, 869 St. Cyril died and was buried in the Church of St. Clement. Before his death he said to his brother: "You and I, like two oxen, plowed one furrow. I am exhausted, but don't you think of leaving the labor of teaching or to again leave your mountain".

After the death of Cyril, St. Methodius was absolved by the Pope, installed as the Bishop of Moravia and Pannonia where he also labored, enlightening his flock and preaching Christ to many other Slavonic people (to the Czechians, Hungarians, Dalmatians, etc.). During this time Methodius had to bear much unpleasantness from heterodox missionaries and he "endured many troubles and exiles".

So, the Latin priests armed the German emperor against him. By the order of the Salzburgian [Juvavum] Archbishop and council, Methodius was banished to Swabia [Schwaben] where he was imprisoned for about three years, enduring the

cruellest torture: he was beaten, thrown out into the cold without clothes and violently dragged along the streets. Pope John VIII in 874 insisted on his release and elevated him to the dignity of Archbishop of Moravia with the rank of Papal Legate.

But soon Ven. Methodius was again summoned to court because he did not believe in the descent of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son [filioque]" and it was as if he did not recognize his hierarchical dependence on the Pope. The Pope forbade him to serve Slavonic divine services, and in 879 once again summoned him to Rome where Methodius was completely absolved of the charges made against him and again received the bulla which resolved the issue of Slavonic divine services.

At the invitation of Emperor Basil not long before his death St. Methodius visited Constantinople. He died on April 6, 885 (see Apr. 6 and Feb. 14)¹.

Troparion, tone 4

**As one in the manner of the Apostles,
And teachers of the Slavic countries,
O Godly-wise Cyril and Methodius,
Pray to the Master of all,
To confirm all the Slavic people in Orthodoxy and oneness of mind,
To grant peace to the world,
And to save our souls.**

Kontakion, tone 3

**Let us honor the two dedicated ones,
Who enlightened us by translating the divine scriptures.
They poured out on us the source of the knowledge of God,
Out of which knowledge has abundantly been drawn even to this day.
Let us bless you, Cyril and Methodius,
Standing before the throne of the Most High
And warmly praying for our souls.**

Magnification

**We magnify you,
Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Methodius and Cyril,
Who enlightened all the Slavic countries with your teaching
And brought them to Christ.**

See the 1885 Decree [Ukase] of the Holy Synod on commemorating the memory of the Slavonic teachers which relates to the middle ranked church feasts. The service for this day is directed by a special published booklet². That same decree prescribes to remember: Our Holy Fathers among the Saints, Methodius and Cyril, Teachers of the Slavs after the name of Hierarch Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, the Wonderworker in the prayers in the Litia, after the Gospel in Matins before the canon, in the dismissals, and in

all equivalent Prayers, in which the Ecumenical Hierarchs of the Russian Church are remembered,

Epistle and Gospel: see Feb. 14.

Renewal of Constantinople

In 330 Constantine the Great, in a special revelation, rebuilt and glorified ancient Byzantium and moved his residence together with all government agencies there, and named the new capital Constantinople. Since that time the Greek Church established the custom to celebrate this festival.

St. Nicodemus, Archbishop of the Serbs (1316-1325)

Consecrated a hierarch from being Hegumen of the Chilandari Monastery, he translated the Typikon (Ustav) of St. Sabbas of Jerusalem into the Slavonic language in 1319 and ordered its use in Serbia.

¹In olden times all the Slavonic people celebrated the memory of the holy brothers, but later it was forgotten due to the influence of various adverse historical and political circumstances. At the beginning of the 19th century, the memory of the first-teachers of the Slavs was renewed together with revival of the Slavonic nationalities. In 1863 the Holy Synod decided to celebrate Sts. Cyril and Methodius on May 11, for which the ancient services were reprinted.

The celebration of the Holy First-teachers has special meaning for Orthodox Russia: "by their beginning to do the Divine Liturgy and all the church services in our innate Slavonic language the un-drawn well of water flowing to eternal life was given to us". Really, our country was established, became stronger and grew under the influence and guardianship of the Orthodox faith brought to us and in the shortening of the Slavonic letters and in the Slavonic translation of Holy Scripture and liturgical books, completed more than a thousand years ago by the holy brothers. The Slavonic letters handed to them protected us from the Western Papal yoke, delivered us from the excessive custody of the Greeks, kept our national character in inviolable purity, sown in us the seeds of erudition and spiritual blessings for us. The wonderful, stately, harmonious Slavonic language into which the holy brothers have made their translation at once lifted our ancestors above the level of barbarity, roughness and stagnancy and began religious, intellectual and esthetical developments in them.

²So that when Trinity Saturday fell on May 11, 1885 when the commemoration of the departed was done, the decree of the Holy Synod transferred the commemoration of Sts. Methodius and Cyril to May 13.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0167-0169.
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