

May 23

D. Our Ven. Father and Confessor Michael, Bishop of Synada.

From his youth a monk in one of the monasteries on the Black Sea, he for his virtuous life was installed as the bishop in Synada. In the reign of Leo the Armenian, Venerable Michael, a zealous denouncer of iconoclasm and "an advocate of piety", was exiled to imprisonment in Eudokiada where after much distress he died in 818. His feet are found in the Athonite Iviron Monastery, but his holy head is in the St. Athanasius Laura.

Kontakion, tone 8

**As an all-honorable hierarch and champion of piety,
Not fearing the threats of the notorious one,
You conquered his heretical opposition,
Freely proclaiming in a loud voice:
I venerate the icons of Christ and His Immaculate Mother:
Therefore we honor you, O Michael.**

+ Opening of the Honorable Relics of our Father among the Saints Bishop Leontius, Wonderworker of Rostov



From his young years (not earlier than 1032) an ascetic of the Kievan Monastery of the Caves who became the bishop of Rostov before 1051, he zealously converted many of the pagans who inhabited the Rostov Province to Christ. Rough and wild pagans did not want to hear the hierarch, beat him many times and, finally, expelled him from the city. The hierarch endured everything and zealously continued to preach the faith, confirming the truth of its wonders. Then in Rostov "the idolatrous darkness began to leave and the light of the rightly believing began to shine". The apostolic asceticism of St. Leontius ended with his martyr's death at the hands of the pagans in 1077. St. Leontius was one of the greatest hierarchs of the Russian land. He is great by his activity in earthly life, as Equal-of-the-Apostles as the enlightener of the Rostov country. He is great also in heaven as the powerful prayer for the Russian land. He is glorified by the Holy Church as "the brightest star of the Rostov country, radiating wonders to all the faithful", "the physician of the infirm", "the healer of the sick", "the helper of the faint of heart, the joyful comfort for the sorrowful and the warm intercessor for those suffering in danger".

His relics were found incorrupt in 1164 (while digging the foundation for the construction of a new cathedral, after the former cathedral burned down) and became glorified for wonders. First they were in the Church of St. John the Theologian, but in 1231 they were transferred to the newly constructed Rostov cathedral Temple of the Dormition of the All-holy Theotokos. Until 1609 they

rested openly in a precious golden tomb in this cathedral. The Lithuanians in that year devastated Rostov and stole the golden reliquary of the hierarch. Since that time the relics of St. Leontius repose in a hidden place, and a reliquary with his funeral icon is over the place of their repose. Some of the holy relics of the Hierarch Leontius are kept separately in a special tabernacle in the Rostov cathedral at the northern cathedral column where parts of the holy relics of the Rostov hierarchs and other saints are collected.

The local commemoration of St. Leontius was established in 1190. And then his service was written by the Rostov Bishop John¹

Troparion, tone 4

**Co-participant with the Apostles,
And prayer to God for the faithful,
You went up with heavenly virtues,
And bestowed love for those who love you,
And you converted unbelieving people to the faith:
Therefore you are now exulting with angels,
Standing before the throne of glory of Christ God, the King of all:
O Hierarch Leontius, pray to save our souls.**

Kontakion, tone 4

**O Venerable Leontius
You lived a way of life of purity for the All-seer Lord,
Who planted His light in your soul,
To explain your teaching to many people.**

Paramoia and Matins Gospel: see May 9. **Epistle:** Heb. 8:3-6; sel. 318.
Gospel: Mt. 5:14-19; sel. 11.

His Synaxis is done where his relics lie and where his temple exists.

Ven. Martyr Michael, the Monk [Black-robed], Ninth Century

Born in Edessa [Urfa], he was a relative and disciple of St. Theodore (see July 9). After the death of his parents, St. Michael distributed his inheritance to the poor, and was tonsured a monk in the Palestinian Monastery of St. Sabbas. Once selling monastic needlework vessels in Jerusalem, St. Michael had the misfortune to be liked by the Agarian Queen Seide, who for a long time tried to seduce him and, not succeeding in this, ordered to torture the saint. Then St. Michael, was brought before the King as an enemy of Mohammedanism, was given poison to drink, but remained unharmed and was executed by the sword in Jerusalem.

Ven. Euphrosyne Maiden, Princess of Polotsk

The daughter of the Prince of Polotsk George Vsevolodovich, nurtured in piety from childhood she developed a strong love for reading books. While yet young, she rejected all the good things of this world and, secretly left for a certain women's monastery, practiced asceticism as a nun and was engaged in the copying of the holy books. Then she founded a women's monastery near Polotsk (see Polotsk Diocese) and after it was built, she went to Jerusalem to venerate the tomb of the Lord where she died in the year 1173. Her relics (according to the opinion some, in 1187) were transferred to Kiev and now repose incorrupt in the St. Theodosius cave.

Repose of Ven. Paisius of Galich

He practiced asceticism as a monk for more than 70 years and was the Archimandrite of the Galich St. Nicholas Monastery (see Kostroma Diocese), who began to call him St. Paisius. He died in extreme old age (in second half of the XV century). His relics are in a hidden place in the Dormition Cathedral of the St. Paisius Monastery.

¹ A trace of the honoring of the Hierarch Leontius in ancient Rus is found in our Priest's Service Book [Sluzhebnik] where in the Proskomede his name is commemorated with the order of the great ecumenical hierarchs, after the names of the Moscow and the Novgorod hierarch Nicetas. Up to now in the Rostov cathedral a wooden chalice and discus and a baptismal robe with many crosses (from whitish yellow damask of an ancient figure, with shoulder pieces from cherry damask), according to tradition that belonged to Hierarch Leontius, were kept, but also a small image of the Savior not-made-by-hands, a fine ancient icon-painting, was on the Analogion, which they called the kellia of Hierarch Leontius.

In 1884, during the excavation around the Rostov cathedral, the remainder of an ancient under ground temple with ancient frescos on the walls, and the stone tomb containing, according to the assumption of some, the holy relics of Hierarch Leontius were found under the floor.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0184-0185.
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