

May 24

† *Our Ven. Father Simeon Stylite of the Mount of Wonders*



Born in Antioch, having requested John the Baptist through prayer his mother vowed to dedicate her son to God. Simeon was "a respectful ascetic from a youthful age". In 528 at 6 years of age, he left for a deserted mountain for ascetic efforts. Within a year he entered the monastery of John Stylite and finally ascended a pillar. Ven. Simeon needed to sustain a severe war against his adversary, who was prepared under various guises to swallow up the ascetic and excite stormy carnal passions in him. For a long time and courageously the ascetic struggled with the mastering of his passions, fervently asking God to deliver him from them and once somebody in priestly clothes approached him with the holy chalice and gave communion to Simeon and the passions left him for ever. In this way with the help of God, "having overcome the uprisings of the flesh" "and having been clothed in life-bearing mortification", Simeon reached a high degree of perfection. The multitude of wonders worked by the ascetic began to discern the hidden and the future and was worthy of his vision of the Lord and conversations with Him. Abiding in such asceticism to his very death, Ven. Simeon gradually built pillars of increasing and greater height. Toward the end of his life the Lord pointed out to him a mountain and stone near Antioch, where Ven. Simeon continued his asceticism until his death. This mountain was called the mount of wonders, and Ven. Simeon was called of the Mount of Wonders. "Bearing flesh and wrapped in striped linen", through his asceticism Ven. Simeon became like the angels "clearly one who lives alone" and died at the deep old age of 75 years in 596, having carried out 68 years on a pillar. (He should be distinguished from the Ven. Simeon commemorated on September 1).

Kontakion, tone 2

**Wishing for the highest, turning away from the lowest,
And building a pillar as if to heaven;
Therefore you shone with the splendor of wonders,
And continually pray to Christ, the God of all, for us all.**

Epistle: Col. 3:12-16; sel. 258. **Gospel:** Mt. 11:27-30; sel. 43.

Ven. Nicetas Stylites, Wonderworker of Pereiaslavl

Born in Zalesky, Pereiaslavl (Vladimir Province), as a tax collector he was dedicated to usury and cheerfully lived in full prosperity. Once in church he heard the words: "wash yourselves and make yourselves clean (Is. 1:16-21)" and Ven. Nicetas was deeply shocked by them. In order to have a good time, he invited friends to dinner. When his wife began to cook meat for dinner, she saw blood in a

vessel and then various members of human bodies. Informed of this, Nicetas "being seized with great fear" understood that his providence is also that of robbery and murder of people.

Having left his wife, children and unfairly begotten riches, he left for the Pereiaslavl St. Nicetas Monastery (see Vladimir Diocese) and sat naked in a reed bog near it, "wetting himself with tears and remembering his own deeds". He was covered with mosquitoes and midges and blood flowed from his wounded body. After such a deep repentance, he clothed himself in monastic clothes. Living in a narrow kellia, "exhausting his body with fasting and vigils" Ven. Nicetas spent days and nights in prayer, singing psalms and reading the lives of the Saints, carrying heavy chains and a heavy stone hat.

"Having destroyed every carnal subtlety", Ven. Nicetas, with a blessing from the Hegumen, built a pillar for himself and ascended it to practice asceticism hidden from everyone.

For his saintly life Ven. Nicetas received the grace of exorcism and healing of infirmities. He died a martyr, being killed by people wanting to take advantage of his brilliant chains from prayerful asceticism, which they counted as silver. One source claims the death of Ven. Nicetas in 1186, but others considered that the time of his death and asceticism was not precisely known and carried them either to the end or to the beginning of the Mongolian period.

The Holy Church glorifies him as "a strong prayer to God", "zealot for purity, paradigm of chastity, pillar of patience", "trainer of monks for salvation, praise of trainers, catalyst for the silent ones".

The holy relics of Ven. Nicetas were found incorrupt at the beginning of 15th century. They repose in a hidden place in the St. Nicetas Monastery.

Troparion, tone 4

**With Orthodox thoughts having despised youthful desires,
And having received a courageous character,
You defeated the enemy and pleased God with your prudence:
And receiving from Him on high
The gift of wonders, casting out demons and healing infirmities,
O All-glorious Nicetas,
Pray to Christ God to save our souls.**

Kontakion, tone 8

**For the sake of Christ you endured the needful death by your servants,
And you received the crown of incorruption from Him;
You healed those who came to your honorable tomb in faith,
O Venerable Nicetas who prays for our souls.**

*Martyrs Meletius Stratelates, Stephen, John and the 1218 warriors with
wives and children with them*

They suffered during the reign of Antoninus in Galatia. St. Meletius, born in Galatia, and his warriors for destroying temples were subjected to severe torture and he died hanging from a tree, but the others were beheaded by the sword.

Martyrs Serapion the Egyptian, Callinicus the Magi, Theodore and Faustus suffered with St. Meletius. Serapion, who converted to Christ because of the ordeal of St. Meletius, and Callinicus were beheaded by the sword. Sts. Theodore and Faustus were burned to death.

Women who suffered with Meletius were **Marciana, Susanna, Palladia** and two children: **Cyriacus and Christian**.

Twelve tribunes who suffered with Meletius were **Faustus, Festus, Marcellus, Theodore, Meletius, Sergius, Marcellinus, Felix, Photinus, Theodoriscus, Mercurius, Didymus**.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0185-0187.
Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © June 4, 2007. All rights reserved.*