

# July 11

*D. † Holy Martyr and All-praised Euphemia, namely the limit of the Fathers<sup>1</sup>*



The relics of St. Euphemia (see Sept. 16) repose in a temple named for her in Chalcedon. The fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council have written two confessions of faith: one Orthodox and one heretical, and placed them in the shrine of the great martyr. After three days the shrine was opened and showed that the saint held in her right hand the definition of the Orthodox Faith, and the heretical one lay at her feet. The Holy Church, hymning the martyr as "the victorious woman who showed the Orthodoxy of the fathers in the city of Chalcedon", and appeals to her: "The assembly of the divine Fathers placed the Definition of Faith on your breast. Receiving it, O Most Glorious One, you preserved the Faith unshaken, vanquished all heresy and shamed the defenders of falsehood. Therefore, we honor and call you blessed".

*Troparion, tone 4*

**Having loved Christ your Bridegroom,  
And having prepared your bright lamp,  
You shone with virtues,  
O All-praised Euphemia.  
Therefore you went in with Him to the wedding,  
Having received from Him a crown of suffering.  
Deliver us, who in faith are honoring your memory, from misfortunes.**

*(OCA Rubrics and Liturgical Calendar for 1985 p. 252)*

*Kontakion, tone 6*

**You underwent struggles  
Both in martyrdom and in faith  
For Christ your Bridegroom.  
Now beseech the Master  
To subjugate underfoot  
The shaking of the enemies of the Orthodox,  
As He did for the six hundred and thirty God-bearing Fathers,  
Accepting the Definition of Faith and preserving it,  
O All-praised One.**

*(OCA Rubrics and Liturgical Calendar for 1985 p. 253)*

*The Repose of the Blessed Olga, princess of Russia, in holy baptism called Helen*

The wife of Prince Igor, distinguished for her beauty, brilliant mind and strict chastity, after the death of her husband and due to the young age of their son Sviatoslav, ruled the Russian land. She was mean and terrible to the enemies of her native land, and the people liked and esteemed her as mother for her mercy, wisdom and righteousness. She did not offend anybody, judged justly, imposed punishments with mercy, and loved the downtrodden, aged and poor. She indulgently listened to everyone who petitioned her, and willingly fulfilled all proper requests.

When her son Sviatoslav grew up, she transferred the administration of the government to him in order to more freely be engaged in charity. In her old age, having become acquainted with true Christian teachings, she believed, and went to Constantinople and was baptized there. According to the opinion of one, Olga was baptized in 954; others believe that it was in 955, and a third opinion that it was in 957. The patriarch, who did this baptism, was Polyeuctes (see Feb. 5), but others say it was Theophilact, and the emperor at the time of this event was according to one Tzimisces, but according to others it was Constantine.

Having come back home, St. Olga turned everything over to ascetical efforts of Christian piety and to the affairs of spreading the Christian faith among her subjects. They attribute to her the construction of the wooden church of St. Sophia in Kiev.

According to the tales of the ancient writer, St. Olga "knew the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and accepted Baptism, destroyed the impious pagan temples and began to live in Jesus Christ, loved God with all her heart and all her soul and followed after the Lord God, having enlightened everything with good deeds, clothing the naked, giving drink to the thirsty and comforting the strangers, the needy, the widows and the orphans, giving everything to all in mercy and need, with gentleness and a loving heart".

The Holy Church in its hymns testifies, that, after her Baptism, "Olga worthy of wonders", "received in her heart the zealotness of the Holy Spirit", "began to hate the evil faith of her homeland", "going into the cities and villages, destroying idols, and leading the people to partake in the worship of the One God". If during her reign the general conversion of the people from paganism to true belief was not fulfilled at that time then it was almost accomplished. Indeed Olga was, as expressed by our ancient church disclaimer about her, at her right hand, the pre-eternal spiritual sun who will soon be rising for us. Therefore she worthily shares with her great grandson, Prince Vladimir, who received from her his first impressions and Christian concepts of piety, the highest honor in the Christian church, bearing the name "Equal of the Apostles".

She died in 969. St. Olga was "first Russian who ascended into the kingdom of heaven. The sons of Russians praise her as the founder. And in her death she intercedes for Russia before God ". Her relics have been found incorrupt during the

reign of St. Prince Vladimir who placed them in Temple of the Tithes. It was the first case of opening the relics in Holy Russia.

Subsequently (before the invasion of Mongols) God has glorified these relics with wonderworking gifts and Olga was ranked in the choir of the saints. Her service was written in the middle of the Fifteenth Century, and until that time it was performed according to the General Menaion. At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, due to unfortunate circumstances, the relics of St. Olga were hidden in an unknown place.

*Troparion, tone 1*

**Having fixed your mind with the wings of divine understanding,  
You flew to Him Who surpasses the visible creation.  
Having sought the God and Creator of All, and having found Him,  
You received birth again by Baptism.  
Satisfying yourself of the Tree of Life,  
You abide forever incorrupt, O Ever-glorious Olga.**

*(Text: OCA Rubrics and Liturgical Calendar for 1985)*

*Kontakion, tone 4*

**Today let us sing the praises of God the Benefactor of all,  
Who has been glorified in Russia by Divinely-wise Olga,  
That by her prayers  
He grant to our souls the remission of sins.**

*(Text: OCA Rubrics and Liturgical Calendar for 1985)*

**Paramoeas** and so forth see June, 1.

*Hieromartyr Cindeus*

Born in the village of Talmenia (near Side, Pamphylia), he, a presbyter, suffered for Christ during the reign of Diocletian.

*Celebration of the Image of the Most Holy Theotokos of Rzhev*

This holy icon was revealed in 1539, in the Okovits Volost (Rzhev District, Tver Province). In 1540, it was brought to Moscow, but in that same year was released back on July 11. In memory of this event a cross procession from the Kremlin to the Church of the Rzhev Mother of God that was established at the Prechistensky Gate in Moscow.

*Venerable Nicodemus of Vatopedi Monastery*

He was tonsured a monk on Mount Athos and was the instructor of St. Gregory Palamas. After God-pleasing ascetical efforts, he died in peace in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Venerable Martyr Nicodemus*

A Slav from Albania, circulating among Mohammedans, he renounced his Christian faith, but then soon repented and accepted monasticism on Mount Athos. Wishing to atone for his sin of renunciation by blood, he went to his home country and confessed himself a Christian. For this, after three days of torture, the Turks beheaded Nicodemus in 1722. His relics are on Mount Athos.

*The Shuyi Smolensk icon of the Mother of God* is in the cathedral of the city of Shuyi (Vladimir Province). This holy icon was written in 1654-55 on the occasion of the discontinuance of the plague epidemic at that time. It became glorified for its wonderworking.

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<sup>1</sup> The words: "namely the limit of the Fathers", translates in our Menaion the Greek expression: ὅτε τὸν ὄρον τῆς πίστεως ἐγεξυρωσεν (when she confirmed the definition of Faith).