

August 4

A. Holy Seven Youths of Ephesus: Maximilian, Jamblicus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodian and Antoninus



They were children of famous citizens of Ephesus, served in the military and were close friends. In the Decian persecution they left for a certain cave with the purpose of preparing themselves through fasting and prayer in the asceticism of martyrdom. The Emperor, having learned the whereabouts of their residence, ordered the entrance to the cave filled up with stones. After the passage of more than 170 years, during the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Younger, the entrance to the cave was accidentally opened and "an awesome wonder" happened before the eyes of all: the blessed young men woke up from the almost two century sleep for the shame of the unbelievers rejecting the truth of the resurrection of the dead, "foretelling the future resurrection of all". Within a few days the youths reposed into eternal rest¹.

Troparion, tone 4

**Great is the wonder of faith,
The seven holy youths lived in the cave as in a royal chamber,
And died without corruption;
And after much time they rose again as from sleep,
In verification of the resurrection for all men:
Therefore by their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy on us.**

Kontakion, tone 4

**Rejecting the corruption of this world,
And receiving the gifts of incorruption,
Though they died they remained without corruption:
Therefore after many years they arose,
Burying all the unbelief of the wicked:
Let us hymn Christ, O faithful,
As we praise them today.**

Martyr Eleutherius

Born in Byzantium, he was a chamberlain in the court of Emperor Maximinian. Having become a Christian, he constructed a church in his house. Accused of Christianity by one of his servants, St. Eleutherius was forced by the

Emperor to offer sacrifice to idols. And when he refused to do it, he was executed by the sword. His relics subsequently were transferred from Constantinople to the West in Teate [Chieti], Italy.

Venerable Woman Martyr Eudoxia, suffered for Christ in Persia during the reign of King Shapur about 362 - 364. For preaching Christ, St. Eudoxia was subjected to terrible tortures: beaten with knotty sticks and with ox-hide whips, tormented in prison and, finally, after breaking her bones, she was beheaded. Her relics subsequently were transferred to Constantinople. This venerable woman is considered to be the same person as Ia, commemorated on September 11.

The Equal to the Apostles Hieromartyr Cosmas

Born to noble parents from the province of Aetolia, he at first practiced asceticism as a monk in the Philotheou Monastery on Athos where was ordained a Hieromonk. Burning with fervent love for the Christian enlightenment of his neighbors, he preached the Gospels of the heavenly kingdom in various places: in the vicinity of Constantinople, on Mt. Athos, in Macedonia, Chimara, Acarnania, Aetolia, and topped off his Apostolic labors with a martyr's death in Albania. In 1779 the Turks strangled him at the instigation of the Jews who reported to them that he was sent by the Russians to foment a revolt in Albania.

¹ "Since, we read in [Novoi Skrizhali] "The New Tablets", seven Ephesian youths during the persecution received the gift of prolonged and sound sleep and consequently are named dead, that the Holy Church, resulting from their memory and calling out for prayerful help (in the personal prayer in the Book of Needs), asks for the repose and healing of sleep for the sick exhausted from prolonged sleeplessness, i.e. relief from the suffering from the loss and deprivation of sleep".