

# September

*Vresen* in Old Slavonic, *Versen* in Little Russian 1)

## *September 1*

### *A. Beginning of the Indiction, that is the New Year*

On this day, when the Jews celebrated the new summer, the Savior, came to Nazareth where He was brought up and entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day as was His custom, and read these words of the Prophet Isaiah: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed Me ... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*" (Luke 4, 18:19). On the first of September 312 the Emperor Constantine the Great won a victory over Maxentius. After this Christians were granted complete freedom to confess their faith. In commemoration of these two events the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council decided to begin the New Year on the first of September (See January 1, March 1 and the Paschalia). In its hymns for this day the Holy Church prays "Creator and Fashioner of all things visible and invisible" "bless the crown of the year", "grant fruitful seasons and rains from heaven for those on earth", "bless our comings and goings, direct the works of our hands and grant us forgiveness of offences", "grant peace to Thy churches", "overthrow heresies", "protect our cities unbesieged, make glad our faithful Sovereigns by Thy power, giving them victories against enemies".

### *Troparion, tone 2*

**Fashioner of all creation,  
Who fixes times and seasons by Thine own authority,  
Bless the crown of the year with your goodness, Lord,  
Preserving rulers and Thy city in peace,  
By the prayers of the Theotokos, and save us.**

### *Kontakion, tone 2*

**Living in the Highest, Christ the King,  
The Creator and Fashioner of all things visible and invisible,  
Who creates the days and nights, times and seasons:  
Bless now the crown of the year  
And protect Thine Orthodox rulers, cities and people in peace,  
O Greatly merciful One.**

**Paramoebas:** 1) Exodus 61:1-9; 2) Leviticus 26:3-12, 14-17, 19-24. **Matins Gospel:** the temple or the Resurrection. **Epistle:** 1 Tim. 2:1-7, sel. 282. **Gospel:** Luke 4:16-22; sel. 13.

*✙ Our Venerable Father Simeon the Stylites and Archimandrite, and His Mother Martha*



He was born in Antioch, Syria of poor settled parents and in his youth shepherded flocks. When he was thirteen years old, he fervently prayed to God that He would show him the way of salvation. And after prayer he had a vision: he dreamed that he was digging in the ground as if for the foundation of a building. And the youth hears a voice: "dig deeper". Simeon works harder and digs deeper and deeper into the ground. Thinking that he dug the hole deep enough he stops digging, but the same voice again orders him to dig deeper. The same was repeated three times. Then Simeon began to dig without stopping, while the same voice stopped him with the words: "it is already enough; but now, if you want to build, build, but work diligently; for without effort you will not be successful in anything". And the youth learned from this vision, that the work for receiving salvation is continuous and unrelenting. "Having abandoned all earthly things", he secretly left his parental home and accepted monasticism in the neighboring monastery. Here he spent some time in severe ascetical efforts of fasting, unceasing prayer and monastic obedience, and then, "despising all temporary things", he retired to the desert, where he abided for three years, enclosed in a narrow cave. The fame of his unusual ascetical efforts drew many visitors to him who desired only to touch the clothes of the holy man. But when St. Meletius of Antioch saw the devotee chained to a stone, he did not praise his material bonds, saying that a man can govern himself without bonds by the power of his will. Simeon immediately removed his bonds and decided to begin a new order of ascetical effort: he built for himself a pillar six cubits high and getting up on it, he continually abided in fasting, sometimes "accepting food once a night throughout the forty-day fast", and raised prayers to the One living in Heaven. Subsequently the Venerable Simeon increased the height of the pillar more and more, and there endured in his ascetical efforts many burdens, soaking in the rain, burning in the

sun, being tormented by the cold, eating the juice of seeds and water. Having destroyed "works of passion through abstinence", the Venerable Simeon by the power of grace residing in him healed diseases and foresaw the future through God. Thousands of people, coming, bowed down before the pillar of the Venerable One, asking for his blessing. Even the pagans, seeing the unusually committed one, became convinced in the truth of Christianity and accepted baptism. The counsels of the Venerable Simeon were listened to with piety and were followed as if inspired by God. The Emperor Theodosius the Younger implicitly obeyed his words; the Emperor Marcian secretly dressed as an ordinary person visited the wonderfully committed one and used his spiritual conversations. Not only the people but also the angels marveled at the ascetical efforts of the Venerable One, according to the Church, and even the demons were frightened by his patience. Glorified by his great efforts of piety, gifts of working wonders and insight, the Venerable Simeon died in deep old age in the year 459. The Holy Church, singing of the patience and ascetical efforts of the Venerable Simeon, calls him "the celestial man, the terrestrial angel and the universal vigilant lamp" (again January 26). His relics were posited in Antioch. Part of them was later transferred to Constantinople 2). The Venerable Martha, the mother of the Venerable Simeon, died in about the year 428 and was buried at the pillar of her son.

*Troparion, tone 1*

**You became a pillar of endurance, Venerable Father,  
Rivaling the forefathers:  
Job in sufferings and Joseph in trials,  
And while still in the body, the life of the Bodiless Powers.  
Our Venerable Father Simeon,  
Intercede with Christ God that our souls may be saved.**

*(Text translation © by Archimandrite Ephrem)*

*Kontakion, tone 2*

**Seeking things above and joined to things below,  
You made your column a chariot of fire,  
Through which you have become a companion of the Angels,  
With them unceasingly imploring Christ God on behalf of us all.**

*(Text translation © by Archimandrite Ephrem)*

**Paramoia:** 3) Wisdom 4:7-15. **Epistle:** Col. 3:12-16; sel. 258. **Gospel:** see May 3.

**When in the Typikon (Ustav) stands the symbol , then, usually, it is the required order (except for the temple); but September 1, as an exception,**

**calls for the service to the Indiction, to the Venerable Simeon and to the Holy Women.**

**Note the chapter in the Typikon (Ustav) and Menaion:** If September 1 falls on a Sunday, the service to the Holy Women is dropped and is sung when the ecclesiarch decides; the service for the order of the Indiction and to the Venerable Simeon is sung on Sunday.

*The Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Miasini Monastery*

During the persecution of the Emperor Leo the Isaurian against the Holy Icons, the wonderworking image depicting the Synaxis of the Theotokos and found in the Miasini Monastery in Armenia was thrown into Lake Azurov. Within 100 years after the restoration of icon veneration, this holy icon appeared in the year 864 completely unharmed on the surface of the water. The feast is established in memory of this appearance that happened on September 1.

*Troparion, tone 1*

**Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Joy,  
Refuge and Intercessor of the human race,  
For from you the Redeemer of the world was incarnate.  
For as you alone, Mother and Virgin,  
Are ever-blessed and most-glorified,  
Pray to Christ God to grant peace to the whole universe.**

**The Holy Martyr Deacon Aithalas** suffered in Persia during the reign of King Shapur in the year 380. See November 3 for more about him.

**The 40 Holy Women Martyrs and the Holy Martyr Deacon Ammon, their teacher** suffered for Christ in the beginning of the Fourth century in Heraclius during the reign of Licinius. Ten of them were burnt, eight of them with St. Ammon were whipped to death, six of them were cut up by knives, ten were pierced in the heart by a sword and six died from having the heated iron enclosed in their mouth.

**Holy Martyr Callista and her brothers Evodus and Hermogenes** (in the Greek Menaion αυταδελφοι i. e. natural brothers by blood), were beheaded in Nicomedia at the beginning of the Fourth Century.

### *Righteous Joshua, Son of Nun*

He was born from the root of Ephraim and after the death of Moses became the leader of the Israelite people. In six years Joshua Son of Nun destroyed 31 kings of land of Canaan and made the Israelites possessors of the land between the Arabian Desert and the city of Lebanon. After his 25-year rule of the Israelites, Joshua Son of Nun died, being 110 years old, and was buried on Mount Ephraim in Timnath-serah. He left the holy Book of the Bible named after him.

**We commemorate the great fire in Constantinople** that occurred during the reign of Leo the Great about the year 470. It was a terrible fire that continued for six months. The Emperor frightened by the disaster left for the sea and built a Temple of St. Mamas in Sigma.

**The Venerable Meletius the New** was tonsured in Greece on Mount *Miupolis* at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century.

### *Martyr Angeles*

Born in Constantinople, he was a master goldsmith. As a good husband and villager, he led an honorable life and ate from the fruits of his labor. Slandered by Moslems in regard to the acceptance of Islam, he fearlessly confessed his faith in Christ before the Moslem judges and because of this after severe torture he was beheaded in Constantinople in 1680.

### *The Alexander Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos*

Today we celebrate the appearance of this icon.

Notes:

1) September (Lat. *septem* means seven) was the seventh month of the year for the Romans (see March 1), from which it receives its name. *Vresen*, in the opinion of some, means 'instead of frost', which means the early frosts that harm grain is the same *vresen*: or it may be *versen*, which has the same root as *vershit* (to end) and *versheniie* (compressed grain collected in a pile, or sheaves), than to point out the final end of the harvest of grain during this month. Besides this in ancient times it was referred to as *Riuen*, from *rieva* (squalls, storms) like the winds and beasts in autumn.

2) Simple people call Venerable Simeon the Summer guide and the name is given to the day of his memory; and is also called the old hag of the Summer because from that day on begins the comparatively easy Summer with the preoccupation of women, as for example: wetting flax, beating of hemp and so

forth. From "Simeon's day" on the blow flies begin in the settlement, that is, they begin to sit over the work by the fire.

In Kiev, Chernigov and some cities in Volhynia on the evening of the First of September takes place the traditional ceremony of the Simeon marriage or marriage of little candles. Usually in the morning on this day in the city bazaars, between the little tables and stalls, the tradeswoman sets up a green sapling, which is called Simeon. The sapling is usually a free will donation for ornamentation. Some give money, and some give in kind: apples, pears, nuts, candy; the girl brings trimmed ribbons from the house an ornament for it. After the sun sets, when the trading stops in the bazaars, all the tradeswomen come down to Simeon, observing the ancient tradition. On the sapling small wax candles are molded on all sides and are then lit. All participants in the celebration (exclusively women and girls) take their seats on the benches around the sapling, and are entertained and after the entertainment strike up songs, often of rather unambiguous content. A similar celebration is made on this evening in some of the Kiev craft workshops. The owner at his own expense decorates the green branches placed in the middle of the workshop with all kinds of tidbits. The candles are lit and the entertainment with songs and dancing begins. Beginning after September 2 the work in craft institutions already goes on even in the presence of candles. The idea of the custom here is rather clear: it is seeing off the green summer which is symbolized by the wood branch, and with the beginning of the first autumn month the workers glorify the little candles which they do not part with during work until spring. The ridiculous name of this holiday, "the marriage of Simeon", obviously, denotes its bond with the church feast celebrated on this date in memory of St. Simeon Stylites. The Pastors of the Church should explain to their flock the sinfulness of the custom for a Christian to spend the evening of this day in improper sauntering. In Great Russia this custom is completely unknown.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0307-0310  
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