

# September 24

## *F. † Holy Protomartyr and Equal to the Apostles Thecla*

The daughter of rich and famous parents, who betrothed her to a certain famous youth, St. Thecla, "having learned the true way" from the Apostle Paul, was converted to Christ by him at 18 years of age and was confirmed in the faith by the Apostle Peter. "Having abandoned terrestrial love" and "having loved purity", she decided to be a virgin woman and refused the famous groom. Having devoted herself to God, she gave her all for the new faith, traveling with Apostle Paul and preaching Christ she converted many pagans to Christianity. For this she was called "equal to the Apostles". Slandered by her mother, she suffered much for her faith by the magistrate of Iconium. In the city of Antioch St. Thecla was turned over to fire and to wild beasts, but she remained unharmed from the fire and the beasts did not touch her. Saving her virginity from dissolute pagans, St. Thecla departed to the environs of Isaurian Seleucia where she died. The Holy Church glorifies her as "the glory of women, guide for sufferers, opening to all the way of martyrdom".

### *Troparion, tone 4*

**Having been taught by the words of Paul,  
O Virgin Devoted to God Thecla,  
And having been confirmed in the faith by Peter,  
You were revealed the first woman martyr called by God,  
And the first woman sufferer among women.  
You drove to the flame as to a place for adornment,  
Wild beasts and youths were frightened of you,  
For you were armed with the cross.  
Pray, All praised One, to Christ God to save our souls.**

### *Kontakion, tone 8*

**You beamed with the goodness of virginity,  
And you were adorned with a crown of martyrdom.  
You were entrusted with the work of an apostle, O Most Glorious Virgin,  
For you changed the flame of fire to dew.  
Through your prayers you tamed the raging youth  
As the first woman sufferer.**

**Epistle:** 2 Tim. 3:10-15; sel. 296. **Gospel:** Mt. 25:1-13; sel. 104.

### *Ven. Coprius (i.e. dungy)*

He was found by the monks of the St. Theodosius the Great Monastery in Palestine in a pile of manure near the monastery, where his mother gave birth and abandoned him, saving him from the invasion of the Agars (Turks). Ven. Coprius

all his life practiced asceticism in the monastery of Theodosius and died about the year 530.

*The Ven. Nicander, the Hermit, Wonderworker of Pskov*

He was born in the village Viderebja, Pskov district. From his youth he was distinguished by fear of God, meekness, avoiding childish games and loving to visit the temple of God. Having left for the Demianka River (between Pskov and Porkhov), he spent a few years in silence in a hermitage there in strict hermetical asceticism. Then, in the Monastery of Sabbas Krypetsky (see the Pskov Diocese) he was tonsured a monk. By strenuous ascetic fasts and prayer he soon attracted the attention of the brethren and many praised him. Fleeing from human glory, he once again left for his hermetic hut on the shore of the Demianka River. Having passed 15 years here, Nicander (after a robbery of his cell and fierce beating by thieves of whom two subsequently repented) returned to the Krypetsky Monastery where the brethren elected him Ustavshchik (Preparer of services), and later a cellarer. The righteous strictness of Nicander in the dispatch of his duties as cellarer and his strictly ascetical life seemed heavy for some of the brothers. Having observed that he weighed heavily upon the others and fleeing from their displeasure, he again went alone to his solitary hermitage in Demianka. For his saintly life he was granted the gift of insight and doing wonders by the Lord. He died in the year 1581. In 1687, the relics of Ven. Nicander were found incorruptible and now repose in his hermitage (see the Pskov Diocese). In 1808, the service for Ven. Nicander was published, and in 1861, the Akathist.

*Repose of Ven. Abraham of Mirozh*

The Ven. Abraham practiced asceticism in Pskov on the Mirozh River where he died in 1158. His relics repose in a hidden place in the Mirozh Monastery (see Pskov Diocese).

*Killing of Ven. Galacteon of Vologda*

In the world Gabriel, the son of an enlightened and pious boyar Ivan Belsky (from the Olgerd family, the Great Prince of Lithuania) who was executed in the early childhood of Ivan the Terrible, when seven years old was hidden by relatives and friends of his father, who sent the child from Moscow to the city of Staritsa to save him from prosecution. There the young prince was hidden in uncertainty, spent all his time in prayer and thoughts of God, daily visited all church services and read the divine books, easing the heart felt grief about losing his parent. Soon he traveled to Vologda, and apprenticed himself there to a shoemaker and by his diligence and effort quickly learned the skills for the trade. When his birth brother, Demetrius Belsky became one of the confidants of the tsar, Gabriel could have occupied a position according to the corresponding rights of his place of birth. But the simple life of handicraftsman appealed to his heart and he hoped to more likely please God this way. This is why he did not display his rank, but continued to remain in Vologda. After reaching his majority, he married a girl of simple class.

Soon his young wife died, leaving him with the care of his baby daughter. Then Gabriel entirely devoted himself to the service of God. For bridling his flesh he wore heavy iron chains and divided all his time between prayer and the labor of bringing up his daughter. When his daughter grew up and could acquire a livelihood for herself, he decided to completely leave the world, built himself a cell on the Sodin River and, having accepted monasticism with the name Galacteon, carried out a hermit's life in it. According to the Ven. Irenarchus, the hermit of Rostov, he attached himself to the wall with a chain. God-fearing people gave him food through a window. When he leaned to sleep, he kneeled and, holding the chain, fell into an easy and faltering sleep. He had only dry bread and water for food. Destroying the flesh with chains, fasting and labor, cleansing and strengthening his soul with all-night vigils, tears and prayers, he more and more became perfected in spiritual life and reached such heights that he received the gift to perceive and foretell the future from the Lord. In the year 1612 Ven. Galacteon was killed by the Poles and Lithuanians who attacked the city. His relics, glorified with wonderworking, repose in a hidden place in the Monastery of the Holy Spirit built at the place of his asceticism (see the Vologda Diocese).

*Repose of St. Stephen First-crowned King of Serbia, (Simon the Monk)  
(1195 - 1224), his nephew David and his son King Vladislav*

St. Simon, oldest son of St. Stephen Nemanja (see Feb. 13), first of the kings of Serbia to be coroneted with the royal crown. He accepted monasticism before his death, and died peacefully in 1224. His relics now repose in the Studenica Monastery (see Jan. 12). St. David was the son of the Vulcan, the youngest brother of the first-crowned king. He constructed a monastery in Bradarev on the Lim River in which he died as a monk. St. Vladislav reigned for 7 years and was distinguished by charity to the needy, the stranger and the sick. His relics are in the Milesheva Monastery.

*Mirozh Icon of the All Holy Theotokos*

This holy icon appeared in 1198 in the Savior-Mirozhsky Monastery, Pskov Province, and was glorified for miracles during the time of the plague, which afflicted Pskov in 1567.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 0347-0348  
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