

October 8

F Our Venerable Mother Pelagia



Born in Antioch, she was noted for her rare beauty and was promiscuous up to her conversion to Christ. When St. Nonnus (see Nov. 10), the Bishop of Heliopolis, among other bishops who have gathered for considering the affairs of the Church, sat before the doors of the church and having become known for his spiritual experience, taught those who were assembled, Pelagia passed by the church in expensive clothes, accompanied by a crowd of young men and maidens. For a long time St. Nonnus attentively looked upon the known sinners throughout the city, and then addressed the hearers with moral teaching, where, pointing to the special and long time care for their own adornment and of their body, regretted how Christians cared so little about the adornment of their soul, and didn't try to cleanse it with tears of repentance and vest it with the elegance of good deeds. Then Nonnus left for his cell and there fervently prayed to the Lord that He direct the sinners on the path of virtue. The Lord in a dark vision and a stinking dove, which Nonnus immersed in consecrated water, began to become pure and white, allowed the bishop to understand that his hope for the conversion of the sinner would be successful. Really, hearing the teaching of St. Nonnus, Pelagia deeply repented, was baptized and, after distributing her estate to the poor, dressed in a hair shirt and left for Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives. Here burning with "divine zealousness", and running from "the sinful seas, she began her ascetical efforts as a recluse. "Repenting with dewy tears" and "with extreme abstention" she "extinguished the fleshly passions" and completely pleased the Lord. She died in 457 and was buried on the Mount of Olives.

Kontakion, tone 2

**Having exhausted your body with fasts,
And with vigilant prayers to the Creator,
You have supplicated for your deeds,
So that you could receive complete forgiveness:
For you have clearly found the mother
Who has shown you the way of repentance.**

St. Pelagia, Virgin of Antioch, Disciple of the Hieromartyr Lucian (Oct. 15).

When the soldiers came to take her to be tortured for the sake of Christ, St. Pelagia after prayers for her protection from abuse by the infidels then fell from the top of her house and died (about 303).

St. Thais

Born in Egypt, brought up by her mother, a misbehaving woman, Thais from her youth betrayed a dissolute life, and, possessing external beauty tempted many men and youths. Living in Egypt in the Heracliopolis Monastery, the Holy Elder Paphnutius, who converted many sinners to the way of virtue, heard about Thais, removed his poor clothes and put on worldly clothes and with a supply of money entered into the house of ill repute of the beautiful one, asking to meet with her in such secret place that not only people but also God would not see them. Thais in whose soul ideas about God have not yet decayed, with a smile answered that it is impossible because God is everywhere and sees all. Then the venerable one vividly presented her all the weight of her sins and what terrible answer she must give God for those seduced by her and the people who died because of her. The words of the holy monk deeply touched the soul of the sinner, and her heart was lit with the light of heaven. Having collected all her treasures accumulated by an impious life, she ordered them piled up in the city square and she herself solemnly set them afire, having shown that all openly would know the foulness of her former life, and that its treasures as fruit of a dissolute life were not worthy to distribute to the poor. After this the venerable one entered a women's monastery where she was confined to a little cell with a small window and she ordered them to give her only pieces of bread and some water. Thais spent three years completely alone in strict ascetical fasts and prayer and in deep fervent contrition for her sins. After the passing of this time, Paphnutius felt in his heart pity for the confined sinner and went to the Venerable Anthony the Great to find out whether God forgave the sins of Thais. St. Anthony, having gathered his disciples around him, spent the whole night with them in prayer. And here one of his disciples, Paul the Simple (see Mar. 7), had a wonderful vision opening the petition for the sins of Thais to the Lord. After that Paphnutius, appeared in the monastery where Thais was shut in, opened the door of her cell. Thais curtly told him that she wished to remain shut in, but Paphnutius insisted that she leave, having told her that God forgave her sins. She obeyed and said in his presence: "God is witness from that moment I came into the cell, all my sins were before my eyes, and I poured out tears looking at them". "It is mainly for this", Paphnutius said, "that the merciful God pardoned you, and not for the severity of your seclusion". Within 15 days after her exit from the cell the Venerable Thais died. It was in Fourth Century, not later than the year 340. She should be distinguished from the St. Thais commemorated on May 10.

Venerable Dositheus, Hegumen of Verkhneostrov

The disciple of the Venerable Euphrosyne of Pskov (May 15), in 1470 he founded the Saints Peter and Paul Monastery on the great lake in Pskov where he was the hegumen. He died in 1482. His relics are in a hidden place in his monastery that is now abolished.

Venerable Trypho of Viatka

He was born in the village of Nemigozhka, Archangel Province. Since childhood he desired the monastic life, so he secretly left his parental home and at first, living in the city of Ustiug, was tonsured in fasting and prayer under the direction of the parish priest John. Later he accepted monasticism in the Piskor Monastery (located in the Perm Province and now abolished) and worked hard to convert the Ostiak pagans to Christ. On the Chusova River (Perm Province) he founded the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery (subsequently abolished). He founded another monastery on the Viatka River, near the city of Khlynova (now Viatka). He died in 1612. His relics are hidden in his monastery. There is a special service with the Akathist Hymn for the Venerable Trypho.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 369-70
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