

# October 19

## *C. Holy Prophet Joel*

Second of the 12 Minor Prophets, according to tradition, he descended from the root of Reuben and prophesied 800 years before Christ. He predicted the desolation of Jerusalem, the descent of the Holy Spirit on all flesh and the Dread Judgment.

### *Holy Martyr Varus [Ouarus], with him seven teachers of Christians, Blessed Cleopatra and her son John*



St. Varus was a warrior and lived in Egypt during the reign of Emperor Maximinus. "Having seen the honorable passion and having lovingly kissed the chains of the martyrs", he was filled "with divine boldness"; voluntarily confessed himself a Christian, "not fearing death nor the prospect of being tortured". Hanged on a tree, he was sentenced to heavy torture, but "patiently endured "the flame of unbearable illnesses", when he turned his spirit over to God in about the year 307. Seven Christian teachers were beheaded by the sword soon after his demise. Blessed Cleopatra, a pious widow from Palestine, transferred the relics of St. Varus to Palestine and placed them in a newly constructed church in his honor. Her son died on the day of the consecration of the newly constructed church, but the grieving mother was comforted in a vision in which St. Varus and John were adorned with a crown of eternal blessedness. St. Cleopatra died peacefully, not later than 327 A.D. In the church services St. Cleopatra is also glorified with Martyr Varus; although her son John is commemorated in the service, he is not mentioned by name.

### *Kontakion, tone 4*

**Following Christ, O Martyr Varus,  
Having drank from His cup,  
You were united to the martyr's crown,  
And exulted with angels:  
Continually pray for our souls.**

### *Our Ven. Father John of Rila*

Born in the Bulgarian village of Skrino, near Sredets [Sofia, Serdica], "from young nails" "having left all things earthly", he spent 60 years in strict asceticism of fasting and prayer, among every possible deprivation in the Rila Hermitage. Subsequently at the Rila Hermitage he founded a monastery, in which Ven. John became the rector. In the words of the Holy Church, Ven. John, "having destroyed

carnal snares" "with the struggle of fasting", having emulated "the angelic way of life", having been purified "through abstinence with fire like gold in a furnace", having adorned the body "with chastity and purity", - has demonstrated "wisdom in youth, reason in old age, longsuffering in everything in his way of life and love for everything". He died in 946. His relics are in his monastery to where they have been translated from Tirnovo [Trnovo]. The translation of the relics of St. John from Sredets [Sofia, Serdica], where they were originally placed, to Tirnovo [Trnovo] in 1238 is commemorated on this day.

*Troparion, tone 1*

**O Venerable One, your way of life was equal to the angels,  
The foundation of repentance, the plan of compunction,  
The image of consolation, spiritual fulfillment,  
For, O Father John, you abode in prayer, fasting and tears:  
Pray to Christ God for our souls.**

*Kontakion, tone 8*

**Having imitated the angelic way of life, O Venerable One,  
And having left all earthly things, you hastened to Christ.  
Surrounding yourself with His commandments,  
You revealed yourself an unshakeable pillar against the attacks of the enemies,  
Therefore we call out to you:  
Rejoice, O Brightest Star, Father John.**

**Paramoera:** see Oct. 1 for Ven. Sabbas. **Epistle and Gospel:** general for a Venerable One.

*Hieromartyr Zadok, Bishop of the Persians, and 128 martyrs with him* see February 20.

*Leontius the Philosopher*

Born in Constantinople he practiced asceticism in the Laura of Ven. Sabbas in Palestine, and was a zealous, strong and skilled expositor of contemporary heresies (Nestorian, Eutychian, Monophysite, etc.). He died in peace not later than 624.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 0381-0382.  
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