

# October 22

*G. Holy Equal to the Apostles Abercius, Bishop of Hierapolis, Wonderworker*



He was bishop in Phrygian Hierapolis where through the power of words and many miracles the entire city converted to Christ. Besides this, he preached the Gospel in Syria, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. Everywhere he ruined the "idolatrous pagan temple", enlightened "those in darkness", healing "all infirmities" and "worked awesome wonders". Meek and humble, conquering the "demons of illusion" by the power of faith and prayer and "having destroyed passions" he lived "in the flesh as if bodiless". He died in about the year 167.

*Kontakion, tone 8*

**As the greatest priest and co-dweller with the Apostles  
The church of all the faithful honors you, O Abercius,  
That through your prayers you maintained, O Blessed One,  
Unconquered, unperturbed from all heresy and undefiled,  
For you are ever-memorable.**

**Epistle and Gospel:** see Jan. 12.

*Holy Seven Youths, who were in Ephesus (Maximilian, Jamblicus,  
Martinian, Dionysius, Antoninus, Constantine (Exacustodian) and John)*

These holy youths are glorified but not mentioned by name in the service for this day. See August 4.

*Kazan Icon of the All-holy Theotokos*

This feast was established in memory of the salvation of Moscow from an invasion of Poles in 1612 by the intercession of the Sovereign Lady. At that time our country was in extreme danger. Generations of kings of the House of Rurik on the Russian throne ended. There came an interregnum, but at the same time there was anarchy, disorder and disarray throughout the realm. Everywhere there were unpunished robberies and murder. The Poles, having taken many Russian cities, occupied Moscow, and the Swedes seized Novgorod. These and others wanted to give Russia their own king, and already half of Russia recognized the Polish king's son Vladislav as their own king.

But the true and faithful sons of the country could not admit a stranger of another faith on the imperial throne of Russia. "We stand for Holy Russia, for the home of the All-holy Theotokos, for the wonderworkers Alexis, Photius and Philip; we may sell wives and children, but we shall free the fatherland!" - one of

true of the sons of the fatherland, the Novgorod citizen Minin cried out to his compatriots.

After the Minin appeal and also the appeals of the Monk Palitsyn and the Boyar Pozharsky, the Russian people unanimously rose up for the defense and liberation of their native land. The Russian national guard began to form to go to Moscow. A national guard also came from Kazan and brought with them the Holy Icon of Kazan which became glorified for wonderworking (see Jul. 8). In faith the soldiers brought the holy icon, which began to reveal many wonders. With the help of the Mother of God, the Russians beat the Poles at the Novodevichy monastery and took many captives.

But the time for the conclusive deliverance of the Russian land still did not arrive. Enmity and contention arose between the heads of groups; violence and selfishness of the Cossacks and other soldiers had no borders. In the Winter of 1611 the holy icon was released back to Kazan.

When the holy icon on the way back to Kazan arrived in Yaroslavl, the national guard gathered by Minin under the command of Prince Pozharsky arrived from Nizhny-Novgorod. Having learned about the wonders which came from the holy icon under Moscow, the soldiers took the holy icon with them and constantly resorted to it with warm prayers for help.

The national guard under Prince Pozharsky met an impregnable obstacle for human forces at Moscow. It was necessary to take the fortified and persistently protected city, to beat back the fresh numerous replacements for the earlier Polish army already coming to Moscow to pacify the will and resistance of the Russian groups under Moscow which instead of help and friendship to the arriving national guard showed enmity and change of heart.

Besides this, there were no means for provisioning the army, who did not even get arms. With such difficulties the spirit of courage began to flag in the army. And meanwhile autumn arrived and with her bad weather and that increased the tribulations of the besieged even more. However, having decided to make the attempt to vanquish the enemy and thus having made the assignments, all hope was not their own but uniquely in the help of God and the intercession of the Mother of God.

Our devout ancestors before beginning the struggle before them spent three days in fasting and in earnest prayer before the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God. The Lord heard the prayerful wail lamenting for their country and Church.

One of the venerable First Hierarchs, Archbishop Arsenius who arrived in Moscow from Greece, languished among the besieged in the capitol, among enemies, in severe captivity and still more severe illness. Close to heaven in his rank, he was even closer to it in his virtues. Therefore he also was accepted as the intermediary between heaven and earth. In the midnight quiet, his cell is suddenly filled with an unusual light and he sees St. Sergius of Radonezh before him. "Arsenius", the Saint said to the ill one, "your and our prayers are heard. The judgment of God about our country is changed to mercy by the intercession of the Mother of God. Early in the morning Moscow will be in hands of the besieging,

and Russia will be saved". As though confirming the prophecy, the health and the strength of powers suddenly returned to the ailing starets.

This joyful message passing by word of mouth immediately penetrated the walls of the city to the Orthodox troops and ignited their boundless courage. Holding the name of the elected Voivode, the religious troops did not see any insuperable barrier before them. The enemies, not seeing their own predicament, could no longer hold on to the stronghold, and the Russians seized the Kremlin.

Revering the heavenly help, the thankful troops did a solemn Molieben on the following Sunday entrance into the returned capital. In order that the memory of such a wonderful appearance of the veil of the All Holy Virgin over the country does not weaken over time, it became necessary to create the solemn commemoration of the deliverance of Moscow from its enemies annually on this day. The Church service for this day is the same as on July 8.<sup>1</sup>

*Martyrs Bishop Alexander, warrior Heraclius and 4 women: Anna, Elizabeth, Theodota and Glyceria* suffered for Christ in Adrianople. Because St. Alexander did not want to offer sacrifice to idols he was subjected to intense torture. The remaining martyrs commemorated with him who saw all this converted to Christ. After all of them were tortured they were beheaded by the sword in 2nd or 3rd century.

*Ven. Lot*, teacher of Ven. Peter (January 27), practiced asceticism in Egypt in the 4th century.

*Ven. Theodore and Ven. Paul of Rostov* founded the SS. Boris and Gleb Monastery on the Ust River about 15 versts [10 miles] from Rostov, Yaroslavl Province. Ven. Theodore, the first rector of the monastery, toward the end of his life transferred the rank of Hegumen to Ven. Paul, but he himself left for the shore of the Kozhva River where he founded the Monastery of St. Nicholas. He died in the former monastery in 1409. Ven. Paul died soon after him.

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<sup>1</sup> In 1636, after the construction of the Kazan Cathedral in Red Square in Moscow at the expense of Prince Pozharsky, the holy icon, being in the armies of Prince Pozharsky, was placed in this cathedral. In 1721, by the command of Emperor Peter 1, a copy of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God sent by Tsar Ivan the Terrible from Kazan to Moscow in 1579 (Refer to July 8) (according to other legends, the original holy icon) was transferred from Moscow to St. Petersburg and was placed for a while in a special chapel, then, since 1721, in the St. Alexander Nevsky Laura, and since 1737, into the Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos on the Nevsky Prospekt. In 1811, on the day of the sanctification of the St. Petersburg Kazan Cathedral, the holy icon was transferred there and became the common shrine of the capitol. The Kazan Icon of the Theotokos participates now in all the cross processions in St. Petersburg. The value of the covering on this holy icon, together with the jewels, comes to 35,450 rubles.