

November 28

D. † Ven. Martyr Stephen the New



Born in Constantinople, he as an adolescent was entrusted by his parents to John, an ascetic of Mount St. Auxentius (near Constantinople). Practicing asceticism in the St. Auxentius Monastery, he was glorified for his virtuous life and good works. During the reign of Emperor Constantine Copronymus, Ven. Stephen, who suffered for the holy icons, was imprisoned, severely beaten and, finally, dragged through the streets of Constantinople and in 767 died from a blow to the head with a wooden club.

Kontakion, tone 8

**O Sincere Lovers of Feasts let us faithfully praise in hymns
The divine Stephen, Servant of the Holy Trinity
For he has honored the beautiful icons of the Master and His Mother.
And together now let us who rejoice lovingly sing to him:
Rejoice, O Ever Glorious Father.**

Epistle: 2 Tim. 1:8 - 18; sel. 291. **Gospel:** Mt. 10:23-37; sel. 37.

Holy Martyr Irenarchus and Seven Women with him who suffered for Christ in Armenian Sebastea (Sivas) during the reign of Emperor Diocletian.

St. Irenarchus himself was a torturer earlier, but, seeing the firmness of the holy martyrs, converted to Christ and after tortures was beheaded by the sword for this. In the church service together with Martyr Irenarchus is glorified "the divine assembly of youths and the holy choir of seven women", who "with St. Acacius (Refer to Oct. 24) strongly exercised asceticism and suppressed (idolatrous) temptations", underwent because of their faith in Christ "planing, fire and heavy wounds". All these holy martyrs were beheaded together with Martyr Irenarchus.

His service is sung at Compline.

Martyrs Basil, Stephen, two Gregorys, John, and many others, who suffered with Stephen the New during the reign of Constantine Copronymus for the holy icons.

Martyrs Andrew and Peter. Both of them died with St. Stephen the New, having been tortured for honoring the holy icons during the reign of Copronymus. St. Peter died during his beating.

Martyr Anna. She was tonsured a nun by St. Stephen the New and practiced asceticism in one of the female monasteries. Slandered by a certain maid servant that she cohabited in impurity with St. Stephen, St. Anna was imprisoned and then subjected to torture from which she died.

Martyrs Timothy and Theodore from the episcopate, Peter, John, Sergius, Theodore and Nicephorus from the presbytery, Basil and Thomas from the diaconate, Hierotheus, Daniel, Chariton, Socrates, Comasius, Eusebius from the monastics and Etymasius. All these holy martyrs were beheaded by the sword for Christ in Tiberiopolis or Strumitsa, during the reign of Julian the Apostate in 361 or 362.

Repose of the Blessed Theodore, Archbishop of Rostov

The nephew of Ven. Sergius of Radonezh, the son of his brother Stephen, in the world John, he in his youth was given by his father to the Holy Trinity Monastery in the care of Ven. Sergius, who already was then glorified for his pious life. The pious youth from the first day became a worthy brother in the monastery, carrying out a life in continual meditation on God, labors, prayers and other pious ascetic efforts of the monastic way of life.

Soon he was tonsured by Ven. Sergius in the monastic rank and was named Theodore, being only 12 years old at this time, and after reaching his majority, he was ordained a priest. Under the direction of Ven. Sergius, Theodore reached a high degree of spiritual purity so that while serving the liturgy with Ven. Sergius some of the brothers saw them concelebrating with an angel.

Finally, Ven. Theodore had an idea to build a special monastery. Ven. Sergius released him in peace to create the new monastery, saying to him: "Now if you want this act to begin about God, may God and the All Holy Theotokos help you". After a long search, Theodore found on the shore of the Moscow River, not far from the very capital city, a place of unusual beauty and called Simonov. Having asked the consent the Great Prince and the blessing of the Master, in 1370 he constructed there the Church in the name of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos and Hierarch Alexei, Metropolitan of Moscow, installed him as the Hegumen of the newly built monastery, and Great Prince Demetrius Ivanovich honored the Venerable One for his ascetic life and selected him as his father confessor.

As Hegumen of the Simonov Monastery, Ven. Theodore with even greater diligence and vigilant care accepted its construction and its foundation according to the example of the Holy Trinity Monastery and laid down strict rules of hospitality.

As a major road passed near the monastery that broke the silence which Theodore loved, in 1379 he transferred the monastery to a new, more convenient

place closer to the shore of the Moscow River where the monastery still exists to this day. The first church built here was in the name of the Dormition of the All Holy Theotokos. The new place selected by Ven. Theodore became even more populated with monastic brothers, and Ven. Sergius more than once came to visit his relative to be glad in the success of his deeds. He constructed the Simonov Monastery with separate cells.

In 1383 Ven. Theodore, by order of the Great Prince, accompanied Archbishop Dionysius of Suzdal to Constantinople and there was elevated by the Patriarch to the rank of Archimandrite.

Occupied with monastery affairs and not evading general church and state affairs, Ven. Theodore found time and dedicated himself to the art of painting holy icons, examples of which remained up to our times written by him, such as the Choir of Saints (in the Trinity Laura the image of Ven. Sergius, in Moscow, in the Church of Hierarch Nicholas on Bolvansky Pereulok, is the icon of the "Deesis").

Many of those tonsured in the Simonov Monastery became hegumens and archimandrites of other monasteries and some have been elevated to the hierarchical rank, and among them Ven. Cyril and Ven. Therapontes (see Jun. 9 and May 27) especially shone in the holiness of their lives.

Within five years after his first trip to Constantinople, Theodore was sent to the patriarch a second time and there, like in Russia, endeared himself to the head of the Greek Church. Elected by the Grand Prince and blessed by Metropolitan Cyprian, Ven. Theodore was consecrated Archbishop of Rostov in 1390 in Constantinople. Exhausted by many labors and ascetic efforts, St. Theodore governed the Rostov flock for only six years and died on November 28, 1395. The Holy Church canonized him to the community of saints. His holy relics, glorified with many miracles, repose in a hidden place in the Rostov Dormition Cathedral, on the Southern side near the entrance doors.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed. 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 0435-0436
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