

Fire & Light

St. Symeon Orthodox Church

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✠ August 31, 2014 ✠

The Placing of the Sash
of the Most-Holy Theotokos (408)

St. Cyprian of Carthage (251)

St. Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople (471) St. Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne (651)

St. Gennadius Scholaris, Patriarch of Constantinople (1372)

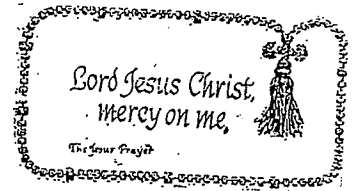
Serbian New Martyrs of the Jasenovac Death Camp (1941-45)

+ Tuesday, Sept. 2 6:30pm Inquirer's Class

On the Fullness of Truth in Orthodoxy

Hieromonk Seraphim Rose (+September 2, 1982)

Orthodoxy is not merely a "tradition" like any other, a "handing down" of spiritual wisdom from the past; it is God's Truth here and now — it gives us immediate contact with God such as no other tradition can do. There are many truths in the other traditions, both those handed down from a past when men were closer to God, and those discovered by gifted men in the reaches of the mind; but the full Truth is only in Christianity, God's revelation of Himself to mankind. I will take only one example: there are teachings on spiritual deception in other traditions, but none so thoroughly refined as those taught by the Orthodox Holy Fathers; and more importantly, these deceptions of the evil one and our fallen nature are so omnipresent and so thorough that no one could escape them unless the loving God revealed by Christianity were close at hand to deliver us from them. Similarly: Hindu tradition teaches many true things about the end of the Kali Yuga; but one who merely knows these truths in the mind will be helpless to resist the temptations of those times, and many who recognize the Antichrist when he comes will nonetheless worship him — only the power of Christ given to the heart will have the strength to resist him. (Christ the Eternal Tao, p. 448)



St. Christopher - The Demoted Saint Still Lives!

Whenever a nation sends an army into war, there is a solemn yet unavoidable debt to be paid. That debt is the tragic loss of life which inevitably occurs on the field of battle. Usually, those who are slain can be identified, and their bodies are returned home, where they will be buried with full honors.

In the chaos of war there are some, however, who remain nameless. Nothing is known of them except that they gave their all

for their country. Among these, one is chosen as a representative and given the title "The Unknown Soldier." Through him all are honored, and the attention and gratitude of a nation is poured out to those whose sacrifice could not be remembered in any other way. He becomes the ultimate personification of patriotism, a model for all young soldiers to imitate.

Christianity has fielded countless troops in centuries past. The Church today has lost track of

many of the names and deeds of those who gave their lives in spiritual battle for the sake of the Kingdom. While Christianity has no Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, there is one saint emerging from the annals of Church history who uniquely fills the role of the Unknown. He is the "Christ-bearer," Saint Christopher.

Some of the legend surrounding this man, like most legends, has its basis in truth. But much of what has been passed down through the

In God and from God
is all our strength.
Through Him we,
while living upon
the earth, have a hint
of future bliss...

He can no longer have
God for his Father,
who has not the Church
for his Mother.

~ St. Cyprian
of Carthage

The Beginning of the Church Year



n the first of September, the Church of Christ celebrates the indiction, which according to the Romans means the "limit," that is, the beginning of the Church year. This term came from the practice of the Roman emperors of levying each year a tax upon their subjects for the maintenance of the army. The rate of this yearly tax was fixed every fifteen years. Hence, the indiction is also the name given to the cycles of fifteen years which began under Caesar Augustus three years before the Nativity of Christ.

The month of September, on the other hand, is the time in which the fruits of the harvest are gathered into the granaries to prepare for a new cycle of vegetation. Thus, it is fitting to feast this the beginning of the agricultural cycle by giving thanks unto God for His benevolence towards creation. This was already practiced by the Jews under the rule of the old Law. On the first day of their seventh month (the beginning of September), they celebrated the Feast of Trumpets by ceasing all work and by consecrating themselves solely to the offering of sacrifices of an "acceptable fragrance" as well as to the praise of God (cf. Lev. 23, 24-25).

Christ the Son and Word of God is the Creator of time and space, the pre-eternal King of all the ages. He was incarnate to gather again all things into a unity and to reconcile all men, Jews and pagans, in a single Church. And He desired to gather again in Himself the things in submission to the natural laws together with that which He had promulgated by the written Law. Thus, on this day in which nature prepares herself to unfold a new cycle of seasons, we commemorate the account in which the Lord Jesus Christ made His way into the synagogue, opened the book of Isaiah, and read the following passage in which the prophet said in His name: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, ...to proclaim a year of grace of the Lord." (Luke 4: 18).

All the Churches thus gathered together in one mind address today a single praise unto our God, One in nature, and Three in Persons, a single praise unto Him Who dwells permanently in beatitude, unto Him Who holds all things in existence, unto Him Who at all times pours forth His blessings upon His creatures. Christ Himself opens unto us the doors of this year and calls us to follow Him to participate in His eternity.

centuries is natural embellishment of a story told a thousand times. The legend concerning this third century saint has several variations, but almost always seems to follow the same basic pattern.

THE LEGEND OF ST. CHRISTOPHER

Christopher was said to have been a Canaanite in the service of his king, and giant of stature. Having the name Reprobus (Latin for "reprobate"), he resolved to find the most powerful prince in all the world, so that he might serve him.

He therefore left his homeland, eventually coming to live with a king who was renowned the world over for his greatness. Christopher dwelt with him for a time, until one day a singing minstrel happened to begin a song in the royal court. The song made repeated mention of the devil, and to his surprise, each time this name was mentioned, Christopher saw the king cower and make the sign of the cross.

Seeing the fear of the king, Christopher inquired of him, "Why at the mention of the devil did you cower, making the sign of the cross?"

The king refused to answer.

"Either tell me," demanded Christopher, "or I will serve you no longer."

Reluctantly the king answered that he greatly feared the devil, and that to ward off harm, he made the sign of the cross.

Since he was determined to serve the greatest lord on earth, Christopher immediately left to serve him whom the king had feared. For it was clear that if he could instill such terror in the greatest king on earth, the devil must be even greater.

Along a desert path Christopher encountered a band of grim riders, among whom one in particular was most terrifying. Approaching Christopher, the dark lord asked,

"For what purpose have you ventured into this desert wasteland?"

Christopher replied, "I seek the devil, that I may serve him."

"I am he," declared the dark lord, "the one whom you seek."

Christopher gave himself to the devil, vowing to serve him as lord and master. Then the whole company proceeded on until they chanced by a cross standing at the side of the path. The shadow of the cross fell directly across the road ahead.

Once more Christopher was caused to marvel. He saw his lord and master, the devil, turn with a scowl from the easy path over which the cross cast its shadow and steer a course that took them far around, traversing rugged country to escape the simple wooden frame.

"CHRISTOPHER, YOU NOT ONLY HAVE BORNE THE WHOLE WORLD, BUT ALSO HIM THAT MADE THE WORLD. I AM JESUS THE CHRIST."

With wonder in his eyes, the giant inquired of the devil, "Why, if you are the greatest lord on earth, did you bypass the easy road to take a treacherous path on account of a shadow? For surely you trembled as you averted your eyes and avoided that cross along the way."

The devil remained silent.

Christopher insisted, "You shall either answer my query, or I will leave you immediately."

Forced to reply, the devil spoke. "There was One called Christ who was hung on a cross such as this. Whenever I see His sign, I fear and turn away from the place where it stands."

Christopher responded, "Now I see that I have served you in vain. For if you fear Him Who was hung on the cross, then He is greater than you. It is my desire

to serve the greatest lord on earth, so I bid you good-bye. I am off to find Christ."

Travelling on, Christopher inquired of all whom he met where he might find Christ. Finally coming to a hermit in the desert, he asked if Christ might be found there. The hermit spoke to him concerning Jesus, and instructed him in the Christian faith. Then he told Christopher that if he truly desired to serve Christ, it would be necessary for him to fast often.

"Require something else of me," responded Christopher, "For fast I will not!"

To this the hermit responded, "You must then wake often in the night and offer prayer."

"I do not know what or how to pray, and I shall not do it. Require something else that I may serve Christ," was his response.

At last the hermit said, "Go to the nearby river where many have perished attempting to cross. Since you are of great stature, you will go live by that river and bear over all who desire to cross. And I pray that in your service to Him, Christ will show Himself to you."

Time passed, and there were many who came to the river's edge seeking to cross. They were greeted by the awesome visage of a man who, without fear, would seize his staff to steady himself and bear them across the river.

One day a child came while Christopher slept, and called his name. Twice this happened, and twice he came out of his hut by the river's edge to see who had called him.

A third time the child called out, and a third time Christopher came. This time he beheld the child and heard him say "Christopher, please carry me across the river."

Christopher girded up, took his staff, and lifted the child onto his shoulders to begin the journey.

The child seemed heavy as he trode into the waters. The current felt stronger than ever, and with every step the child grew heavier upon his back. In mid-stream the raging torrent swelled and foamed about them. The weight of the child pressed down upon him so greatly that he feared for his life.

With all the strength he could muster, Christopher pushed for the other shore. Finally he reached the bank, where he lay the child safely down. After he had caught his breath the exhausted giant said, "Child, you put me in great danger. Your weight on my shoulders was like that of the whole world. I was taxed to the end of my strength."

The child replied, "Christopher, this is no wonder, for you not only have borne the whole world, but also Him that made the world. I am Jesus the Christ, the King Whom you serve in this work. That you may believe, set your staff in the earth by your dwelling and it will bear flowers and fruit."

The child disappeared immediately, and Christopher obeyed, propelling the staff into the ground. The very next day Christopher arose and came out to find his staff looking like a palm tree, full of greenery, flowers, and dates.

The legend continues to tell of Christopher's journey to the city of Lycia, where his attempts to spread the gospel met with stiff resistance from the king. He was eventually martyred for his faith, but not before thousands had been converted by his message. Even the king converted to Christianity as a result of St. Christopher's courage.

The story of St. Christopher is known throughout the Eastern and Western churches, although the legend did not take its final shape until medieval times. He became the patron saint of all travellers, and was called upon in

times of danger from water and storms. Today his medal can often be seen on the dashboards of cars, as he has become popular as the caretaker of motorists.

The Roman Catholic Church recently de-emphasized Saint Christopher, removing him from their calendar. Their main reason for this de-emphasis was the lack of historical information about him. We do know that he suffered martyrdom in Lycia under Decius (ca. A.D. 250), having been shot through with arrows and beheaded. All else has come down to us through the telling of his legend.

THE FACTS BEHIND THE LEGEND

Quite obviously, there are many questions raised by this story. Who was the real St. Christopher?

EMBODIED IN HIS LEGEND ARE THE HOPES OF ALL WHO HAVE SOUGHT FOR THE GREATEST PRINCE ON EARTH, LOOKING TO SERVE HIM.

Was he only a myth or mere legend? Is there an identity to be found beneath the veneer of folklore and fable?

These questions haunted me for some time after reading his legend. My desire to find out more about this godly man was heightened by the fact that my own spiritual name, confirmed upon me at my ordination, is "Christopher." Although I have not been able to answer these questions completely, I have drawn strength from some facts about him, which legends consistently do teach.

All that he had, he gave to Christ. As a martyr, he became a banner, a model for all Christians to emulate. Indeed this saint, like so many before and after, lost all gladly for the pearl of great price. St. Christopher has

become a descriptive image, an icon if you will, for all who love the Lord. Embodied in his legend are the hopes of all who have sought for the greatest Prince on earth, looking to serve Him.

Christopher not only died for the sake of his God, he also lived a life dedicated to his Lord and Master. This is also why he has held the universal attention of generations of Christians. He did what we desire to do: to totally offer up our lives as a "living sacrifice" to the Living God.

Christopher was indeed the "Christ-bearer," bearing the yoke of Christ on his shoulders, and bearing the wounds of Christ physically in his body for the sake of others. "Through his death" says the legend, "many came to salvation." His suffering became sacramentally attached to the cross of Jesus and was filled with the grace to bring light to those in darkness.

I will proudly wear the name "Christopher" to honor my heavenly Father, as St. Christopher honored God through his life and death. And I will seek to win over others, that they might become Saint Christophers, bearing the sufferings of Christ for the whole world. Our twentieth century world is in desperate need of more Christ-bearers, more men and women willing to give their all to bear the message of Christ the King.

May the memory and legend of this blessed saint and martyr be an eternal salute to all the Unknown Christian Soldiers who have given everything for the glorious Kingdom of God.



R. Christopher Murray
Terre Haute, IN

St. Aidan the Confessor, Bishop of Lindisfarne – August 31

WHEN the holy king Oswald (1) desired the bishops of Scotland to send him a person honoured with the episcopal character to preach the faith to his Anglo-Saxon pagan subjects, and plant the Church among them, the first person who came was of a rough austere temper, and therefore could do little good, and being soon forced to return home again, he laid the fault on the rude indocile dispositions of the English. Hereupon the Scottish clergy called a synod to deliberate what was best to be done. Aidan, who was present, told the prelate, on his blaming the obstinacy of the English, that the fault lay rather in him, who had been too harsh and severe to an ignorant people, who ought first to be fed with the milk of milder doctrine, till they should be able to digest more solid food. At this discourse the whole assembly turned their eyes upon him, as one endued with prudence, the mother of other virtues; and he was appointed to the great and arduous mission. 1

Aidan was a native of Ireland, (then called Scotland,) and a monk of Hij, the great monastery which his countryman, St. Columba, had founded, and to which the six neighbouring islands were given, as Buchanan mentions. He was most graciously received by King Oswald, who bestowed on him for his episcopal seat the Isle of Lindisfarne. 2

Of his humility and piety Bede gives an edifying account, and proposes him as an excellent pattern for succeeding bishops and clergymen to follow. He obliged all those who travelled with him, to bestow their time either in reading the Scriptures, or in learning the Psalms by heart. By his actions he showed that he neither sought nor loved the good things of this world; the presents which were made him by the King, or by other rich men, he distributed among the poor, or expended in redeeming captives. He rarely would go to the King's table, and never without taking with him one or two of his clergy, and always after a short repast made haste away to read or pray in the church, or in his cell.

From his example even the laity took the custom of fasting till none, that is, till three in the afternoon, on all Wednesdays and Fridays, except during the fifty days of the Easter time. Our venerable historian admires his apostolic liberty in reproving the proud and the great, his love of peace, charity, continence, humility, and all other virtues, which he not only practised himself, but, by his spirit and example, communicated to a rough and barbarous nation, which he imbued with the meekness of the Cross. 3

Aidan fixed his see at Lindisfarne, and founded a monastery there in the year of our Lord 635, the hundred and eighty-eighth after the coming of the English Saxons into Britain, the thirty-ninth after the arrival of St. Augustine, and the second of the reign of King Oswald. From this monastery all the churches of Bernicia, or the northern part of the kingdom of the Northumbers from the Tine to the Firth of Edinburgh, had their beginning; as had some also of those of the Deïri, who inhabited the southern part of the same kingdom from the Tine to the Humber. The See of York had been vacant thirty years, ever since St. Paulinus had left it; so that St. Aidan governed all the churches of the Northumbers for seventeen years, till his happy death, which happened on the 31st of August in 651, in the royal villa Bebbord. He was first buried in the cemetery in Lindisfarne; but when the new church of St. Peter was built there, his body was translated into it, and deposited on the right hand of the altar. Colman when he returned into Scotland, carried with him part of his bones to St. Columba's at Hij. 4

{Notes – next page}

St. Aidan - NOTES: Note 1. King Oswald is remembered on August 5.

Note 2. Lindisfarne, so called from the river Lindis, is eight miles in circumference; it is only an island at high water, and remains a peninsula when the tide leaves the strand dry. From the great number of saints who lived and lie buried there, it was called by our ancestors holy island.

Note 3. Bede relates many miracles and prophecies of St. Aidan, (l. 3, c. 15,) and gives the following portrait of the clergy and people of this nation soon after their conversion to the faith: "Wherever a clergyman or monk came, he was received by all with joy as a servant of God; and when any one was travelling on his way, they would run up to him, and, bowing down, would be glad to be signed by his hand, or blessed by his prayer. They gave diligent attention to the words of exhortation which they heard from him, and on Sundays flocked with great eagerness to the churches or monasteries to hear the word of God. If any priest happened to come into a village, the inhabitants presently gathering together were solicitous to hear from him the words of life; nor did the priests or other ecclesiastics frequent the villages on any other account but to preach, visit the sick, and take care of souls; and so free were they from any degree of the bane of avarice, that no one would receive lands or possessions for building monasteries, unless compelled to it by the secular power." (Hist. l. 3, c. 26.)

Note 4. The discipline of the Scottish monks, and of Lindisfarne, was derived from the oriental monastic rules, and very austere. Roger Hoveden, Simeon of Durham, and Leland in his Collectanea, tell us that the monks of Lindisfarne used no other drink than milk and water till wine and beer were allowed them, from the rules of the western monks in 762, when Ceolwulph, king of the Northumbers, in the ninth year of his reign, resigned his kingdom to his nephew, and became a monk at Lindisfarne. He was buried at Ubba, and his body afterwards translated to the church of Northam, where it is said to have been honoured with miracles. He is mentioned in the English Martyrologies on the 28th of October. Finan, the second bishop of Lindisfarne, built a new church there of hewn oak, which he covered with reeds; it was consecrated by St. Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury; Eadbert, bishop of Lindisfarne, afterwards covered it all over with lead. Finan died and was buried at Lindisfarne, having held that see ten years. Colman succeeded him, and in the synod at Strenesbault refusing to receive the Roman custom of celebrating Easter, which St. Wilfrid maintained, having been bishop three years, returned into Scotland. Colman retired with many English and Scottish monks that followed, from the western islands of Scotland into the west of Ireland, where he built a monastery for them in an island called, in the Scottish or Irish language, Inisbofin, i. e., the island of the white calf. Tuda, a southern Scottish monk, succeeded him, but died of the plague in a year. Eata, one of the twelve English youths whom St. Aidan educated, was chosen to succeed him first as abbot, afterwards also in the bishopric. Having governed this see fourteen years, he was removed to Hexham, and St. Cuthbert chosen bishop of Lindisfarne. Eadbert succeeded him in 687, and died in 698. Eadfrid, then Ethelworth, and eight other bishops held this see, till the monastery and church being burned down by the Danes, bishop Eardulf translated this see to Cunecester or Chester upon the Street; and, in 995, Aldhun, the eighth from him, removed this see from Chester to Durham. This prelate, with the assistance of the Earl of Northumberland, and the people of the country, cut down a great wood which surrounded the spot which he chose for the church, and built a large city and stately church, into which he, three years after, translated the uncorrupted body of St. Cuthbert, in the three hundred and thirty-ninth year after his death, and the three hundred and sixty-first from the foundation of the see of Lindisfarne by St. Aidan, as Leland relates. (In Collectan. t. 1, p. 528, ex Hist. aur. Joan Eborac.) The see of York having been restored in St. Cedde, St. Wilfrid, and their successors; a bishopric being also erected at Hexham under Eata, Bosa, and St. John of Beverley, and their successors, till this church and city being laid waste by the Danes about the year 800, the see of Hexham became extinct in Panbricht, the last bishop who governed this see, though some give him a successor named Tidfrid, (Lel. Collect. t. 2, p. 159, alias 174,) and the see of Carlisle in 1133, in the person of Athelwold, and lastly that of Chester in 1542, the thirty-third of Henry VIII. the bishopric of Lindisfarne is long since parcelled out into many.

2,000 Years of Church History as Seen through the Lives of Some of the Most Significant Saints of Each Century

by David C. Ford, Ph.D.

First Century

The era of the Incarnation of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ; His earthly ministry - preaching, teaching, healing, and selecting and training disciples, the future leaders of His Church; His saving Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into Heaven; the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and Christ's other disciples, empowering them to preach the Gospel and establish His Church throughout the known world; the first Bishops of the Church, and Her first martyrs

St. John the Baptist - Forerunner of our Lord; greatest of all the Prophets (Matt. 11:11, Luke 7:28); the connecting link between the Old and New Testaments

The Four Evangelists - Writers of the Four Gospels:

St. Matthew - missionary to Ethiopia, martyred there

St. Mark - first Bishop of Alexandria, martyred there

St. Luke - a physician; the Church's first iconographer; also wrote the Book of Acts; martyred in Greece

St. John the Theologian - also wrote three New Testament letters and the Book of Revelation; cared for the Theotokos until her Dormition; exiled on the Island of Patmos; died peacefully in Ephesus

St. Peter - Apostle to Antioch and to Rome, where he was martyred under Emperor Nero

St. Andrew - the "First-Called" of the Twelve Disciples (John 1:35-42); missionary in Scythia (southern Russia) and Greece, where he was martyred

St. Thomas - Apostle to India, martyred there

St. Paul - Apostle to the Gentiles; author of 14 New Testament letters; established Churches throughout Asia Minor and Greece; martyred in Rome

St. James - Brother of the Lord; first Bishop of Jerusalem, he presided over the Church's first council, the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15); martyred in Jerusalem

St. Stephen - one of the Church's first deacons, and Her first martyr (Acts 6-7); martyred by Jews in Jerusalem

St. Thekla - Protomartyr and Equal to the Apostles; traveling companion of St. Paul; helped to evangelize Asia Minor, and lived a long ascetic life in Syria, where she was martyred

Second Century

The era of the Apostolic Fathers strengthening the

Church, the Apologists defending and explaining the Faith to the Roman world, and the Church fighting against various heresies, especially Gnosticism

The Apostolic Fathers wrote letters of encouragement and other works to fellow Christians; three of the most famous are:

St. Clement of Rome - third Bishop of Rome; gave written encouragement and counsel to the Church in Corinth forty years after St. Paul did so

St. Ignatios - third Bishop of Antioch; wrote six letters to various Churches in western Asia Minor and to Rome, as he was being taken to Rome for martyrdom

St. Polycarp - an early Bishop of Smyrna (western Asia Minor); received a letter from St. Ignatios of Antioch; his martyrdom at the age of 86 in Smyrna is dramatically recounted by the Church in Smyrna writing to the Church in Philomelium

The most famous *Apologist*:

St. Justin Martyr - a Christian philosopher in Rome, where he was martyred; wrote two important Apologies in defense of Christianity to the Roman emperor and the Senate

Also, **St. Irenaios of Lyons** - Bishop in Lyons, France; wrote a monumental refutation of scores of heresies (mostly variations of Gnosticism) called *Against Heresies*; emphasized the apostolic succession of bishops in each major city, and the doctrinal uniformity in all the true Churches of Christ around the world

Third Century

An era of Christian expansion in spite of periodic persecution by the Roman authorities

Sts. Perpetua and Felicitas and Companions - martyrs in Carthage (western North Africa) under Emperor Septimius Severus in 202; their martyrdoms and St. Perpetua's vision were recorded in an extant contemporary account

St. Cyprian - Bishop of Carthage; champion of Church unity and ardent defender of the jurisdictional autonomy of the Church in western North Africa, over against the attempts of Pope Stephen of Rome to impose his will there; martyred under Emperor Valerian in 257

St. Gregory the Wonderworker - Bishop of Neocaesarea in Cappadocia (central Asia Minor); great evangelist and miracle-worker

Fourth Century

The era of the last great persecution of Christians un-

der Emperor Diocletian, the evangelization of Armenia and Georgia, the rise and spread of the virulent rigorist schism of the Donatists in western North Africa, the first Christian emperor, the first two ecumenical councils, the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, and the dramatic rise of monasticism

St. Constantine the Great - first Christian Emperor; gave Christianity legal protection and favored status; called the First Ecumenical Council; moved the capital of the Empire to Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople

St. Helen - St. Constantine's mother; found the True Cross in Jerusalem and various holy sites there; Jerusalem becomes the greatest Christian pilgrimage center

St. Nina of Georgia - a former slave girl; evangelizer of the nation of Georgia, whose king accepts Christianity through her ministry around 330

St. Nicholas the Wonderworker - Bishop of Myra in Lycia (western Asia Minor); exceptionally beloved saint, renowned for his miracles and his care for the poor and needy; since his death, he has appeared countless times to comfort and assist the needy

St. Athanasios the Great - Bishop of Alexandria and major Church Father; exiled five times for his heroic defense of Nicene Orthodoxy against semi-Arianism

St. Basil the Great - Bishop of Neocaesarea in Cappadocia and one of the greatest Church Fathers; heroic champion of the full divinity of the Holy Spirit in the face of imperial opposition; wrote a monastic *Rule* which would become the basis for much of later cenobitic monasticism, both in the East and West

St. Gregory the Theologian - closest friend of St. Basil the Great, another of the greatest Church Fathers; Bishop of Constantinople during the Second Ecumenical Council

St. John Chrysostom - the Church's greatest preacher and Biblical commentator; priest in Antioch and Patriarch of Constantinople; died in exile in 407; honored by the Church, along with St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian, as one of the *Three Holy Hierarchs*

St. Martin of Tours - Bishop of Tours, France; a patron saint of France; a wonderworker; and a great establisher of monasticism in France

St. Ambrose - Bishop of Milan, one of the greatest Western Church Fathers

St. Theodosios the Great - pious Roman Emperor; called the Second Ecumenical Council; made Christianity the official religion of the Empire, outlawing pagan worship

St. Anthony the Great - lived as a hermit in the Egyptian desert for 80 years; considered the founder of monasticism

St. Ephrem the Syrian - the greatest Church Father writing in Syriac; a deacon in Nisibis, then Edessa; a voluminous writer, especially famous for his hymnography

Fifth Century

The era of the Third and Fourth Ecumenical Councils; the strengthening and spreading of monasticism; the evangelism of Ireland; and the beginning of the loss of political unity of East and West with the fall of Rome to barbarian tribesmen in 476

Blessed Augustine - Bishop of Hippo, near Carthage; powerfully influential theologian in the Western Church, but his thought shows marked divergences from the theology of the Eastern Church; his general approach will tend to prevail in the Western Church, pulling that Church further and further away from the Eastern Churches, and hence helping to lead to the Great Schism; he labored hard to end the Donatist schism and the Pelagian heresy

St. John Cassian - visited the Desert Fathers in Egypt and brought their monastic approach to southern France; opposed certain trends in Augustine's thought

St. Cyril of Alexandria - Patriarch of Alexandria and major Church Father; greatest theological opponent of Nestorianism

St. Pulcheria - older sister and adviser of Emperor Theodosios II; dedicated her life to consecrated virginity while serving Christ in the imperial palace; ardently promoted devotion to the Theotokos after the Third Ecumenical Council; as Empress, along with her consort, Emperor Marcian, called the Fourth Ecumenical Council

St. Leo the Great - Bishop of Rome; his dogmatic letter (*Leo's Tome*) forms the basis of the doctrinal proclamation of the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon

St. Germanus of Auxerre - outstanding French bishop who twice visited England and put an end to the Pelagian heresy there

St. Patrick - from western England; evangelizer of Ireland and first great bishop there

Sixth Century

The era of concerted, though unsuccessful, efforts to reconcile the Monophysites, most dramatically at the Fifth Ecumenical Council; the strengthening and spreading of Western monasticism; the further political estrangement of East and West despite Emperor Justinian's temporary success in winning Italy from the Ostrogoths

St. Benedict of Nursia - great monastic leader in Italy; he based his *Rule* in large measure on the monastic guidelines of St. Basil the Great and St. John Cassian; his approach to communal monasticism will dominate Western monasticism until the 11th century

Sts. Justinian the Great and Theodora - devout Byzantine Emperor and Empress who labored much for the reconciliation of the Monophysites; Justinian wrote excellent theological treatises on Christology, as well as the hymn in the Divine Liturgy, "O Only Begotten Son and Word of God," and he called the Fifth Ecumenical Council

{To be continued}