

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2020
HOLY MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS
GURIAS, SAMONAS AND ABIBAS, OF EDESSA

The Holy Martyrs and Confessors Gurias, Samonas and Habibus: during the persecution against Christians under the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and Maximian (305-311). The two friends Gurias and Samonas, preachers of the Word of God, were arrested in the city of Edessa. The saints refused to offer sacrifice to the gods, and boldly confessed their faith in Christ. For this they were subjected to cruel tortures: they were beaten, hung up by their hands, heavy weights were tied to their feet, and they were cast into a stifling prison.

The martyrs endured everything with firmness and Samonas uttered a prayer to the Lord, which one of the witnesses to their death wrote down: "O Lord my God, against Whose will not a single sparrow falls into the snare. It was You Who made room for David in his sorrow (Ps. 4:1), Who proved the Prophet David stronger than lions (Dan. ch. 6), and granted a child of Abraham to be victor over torture and flames (Dan. ch. 3, ch. 14). You know also, Lord, the infirmity of our nature, You see the struggle set before us. Our foe strives to snatch us, the work of Your right hand, away from You and to deprive us of the glory which is in You. With Your compassionate eye watching over us, preserve in us the inextinguishable light of Your Commandments. Guide our steps by Your light, and make us worthy of Your Kingdom, for You are blessed unto ages of ages." By night, they took the martyrs out beyond the city and beheaded them (+ 299-306). Christians buried their holy bodies with reverence.

After some years, the last pagan emperor, Licinius (311-324), began a persecution against Christians. Habibus, a deacon of the Church of Edessa whom the emperor ordered to be arrested for his zealous spreading of the true Faith, presented himself before the executioners when he learned they were searching for him. The saint confessed his faith in Christ and was sentenced to be burned alive. The martyr went willingly into the fire and with a prayer surrendered his soul to the Lord. When the fire went out, the mother and relatives of the saint found his body unharmed. They buried the martyr next to Sts Gurias and Samonas.

After the death of the saints, numerous miracles were wrought by them for those who entreated their help with faith and love. Once, a certain Gothic soldier, sent to serve at Edessa, took the pious virgin Euphemia as his wife. Before this the barbarian vowed to her mother Sophia at the graves of the Martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Habibus that he would do his spouse no harm, and would never insult her, but would always love and cherish her.

At the completion of his service in Edessa, he took Euphemia with him back to his native land. It turned out that he had deceived her, for he already had a wife at home, and Euphemia became her slave. Her evil husband threatened to kill her if she revealed to anyone that they were married. Euphemia suffered much abuse and humiliation. When she gave birth to a son, the jealous Gothic woman poisoned him. Euphemia turned with prayer to the holy Martyrs Gurias, Samonas and Habibus, the witnesses to the perjurer's oath, and the Lord delivered Euphemia from her suffering and miraculously returned her to Edessa, where she was welcomed by her mother. After a certain while the Goth was again sent to serve in Edessa. The whole city learned of his misdeeds after he was denounced by Sophia. The Goth was executed by order of the prefect of the city. In an Akathist, the Holy Church addresses the martyrs: "Rejoice, Gurias,

Samonas and Habibus, Heavenly Patrons of honorable marriage." We pray to them for deliverance from family turmoil, and from marital difficulties, especially where one spouse hates the other without cause.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: *Seven stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 6, followed by three for the martyrs*

Resurrection tone 6:

Possessing victory over hell, O Christ,
since You are free among the dead,
You ascended the Cross
raising with Yourself those who sat in the shades of death.//
O Almighty Savior, Who drew life from Your own light, have mercy on us!

Today Christ tramples on death,
for He is risen as He said!
Let us all sing this song,
for He has granted joy to the world:
“O Light unapproachable, O Fountain of life!//
Savior Almighty, have mercy on us!”

Where shall we sinners flee from You, for You are in all creation?
In heaven You dwell!
In hell You trampled on death!
In the depths of the sea?
Even there is Your hand, O Master!
To You we flee, and falling before You, we pray://
“As You rose from the dead, have mercy on us!”

In Your Cross, we glory, O Christ.
We sing and glorify Your Resurrection.
For You are our God,//
and we know no other than You.

We will always bless the Lord
by singing of His Resurrection!
for He endured the Cross,//
trampling down death by death.

Glory to Your might, O Lord,
for You overthrew the prince of death!
By Your Cross You have renewed us,//
granting us life and incorruption.

Your burial destroyed the bonds of hell, O Lord.
Your Resurrection from the dead enlightened the world.//
O Lord, glory to You!

Martyrs, tone 4:

The most wise Abíbus, the wondrous Samónas, and the glorious Gúrias,
the three passion-bearers who have formed a common choir for the faithful,
now join our chorus and rejoice with us;
for God has granted to the souls of the martyrs//
to behold spiritually the things that are taking place.

You endured pain and unbearable torments,
you suffered valiantly, O Samónas, Abíbus, and blessed Gúrias,
martyrs who are equal in number to the Trinity.
Now you enjoy the bliss of the eternal delight of Christ,
Who grants you the reward of your labors.
Entreat Him fervently that our souls may be saved!

Having gone over to the serene harbor,
to the quiet life and to the all-tranquil haven,
you have exchanged your pains for abiding dispassion.
You have received fitting honors from God
as a reward from God for your labors//
O blessed passion-bearing martyrs.

GLORY...for the martyrs, tone 2:

Edessa rejoices,
for she is enriched with the shrine of the three martyrs,
holy Abíbus, Samónas and Gúrias.
She cries out, summoning the Christ-loving flock:
“Come, all who love the martyrs,
be illuminated on their splendid memorial!
Come and rejoice, all who love the feasts of the Church!
Come and behold the heavenly lights who lived on earth!
Come and hear what a bitter death the valiant and steadfast ones
endured for the sake of everlasting life!
As guarantors of the Truth they saved the virgin who was thrown alive in a grave,
committing the pitiless murderer who reviled them to condemnation.
They pray earnestly to the Holy Trinity
that those who celebrate their memory in faith//
may be delivered from corruption, temptations and all evil.

NOW AND EVER...the Dogmatikon in tone 6:

Who will not bless you, O most holy Virgin?

Who will not sing of your most pure childbearing?
The only-begotten Son shone timelessly from the Father,
but from you He was ineffably incarnate.
God by nature, He became Man for our sake,
not divided into two persons but manifest as One in two natures.
Entreat Him, O pure and all-blessed Lady,//
to have mercy on our souls!

APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 6:

Your Resurrection, O Christ our Savior,
the Angels in heaven sing!
Enable us on earth//
to glorify You in purity of heart!

Destroying the gates of hell,
breaking the chains of death,
You resurrected the fallen human race as almighty God!//
O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You!

Desiring to return us to Paradise,
Christ was nailed to the Cross and placed in a tomb.
The Myrrhbearing Women sought Him with tears, crying,
“Woe to us, O Savior!
How do You deign to descend to death?
What place can hold Your life bearing body?
Come to us as You promised!
Take away our wailing and tears!”
Then the Angel appeared to them:
“Stop your lamentations!
Go, proclaim to the Apostles:
‘The Lord is risen,//
granting us purification and great mercy!’”

Having been crucified as You willed,
by Your burial You captured death, O Christ,
and rose on the third day as God in glory,//
granting the world unending life and great mercy!

Glory...now & ever... tone 6:

My Maker and Redeemer, Christ the Lord,
was born of you, O most pure Virgin.
By accepting my nature, He freed Adam from his ancient curse.
Unceasingly we magnify you as the Mother of God!
Rejoice, O celestial Joy!
Rejoice, O Lady://

the Protection, Intercession and Salvation of our souls!

Troparia

Resurrection, tone 6

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave,
seeking Thy most pure Body.
Thou didst capture hell,
not being tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord who didst rise from the dead: glory to Thee.

Martyrs, tone 5

Christ our God, You have granted us the miracles of Your holy martyrs
Gúrias, Samónas, and Abíbus,
as a stronghold and protection.
Through their prayers, strengthen those in authority in ev'ry good deed,//
for You alone are merciful and lovest mankind!

Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion, tone 5

Rejoice, Impassable Gate of the Lord!
Rejoice, Wall and Protection of those who run to you!
Rejoice, Unshakable Refuge!
Rejoice, you who knew not wedlock,
who gave birth in the flesh to your Creator and God!//
Do not cease praying for those who praise and worship your Son!

THE DIVINE LITURGY

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 6

The angelic powers were at Thy tomb;
the guards became as dead men.
Mary stood by Thy grave,
seeking Thy most pure Body.
Thou didst capture hell,
not being tempted by it.
Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.
O Lord who didst rise from the dead: glory to Thee.

Saint John of Damascus

Teacher of Orthodoxy, piety, and purity!

Enlightener of the universe!
And divine inspiration to monastics
by your teachings we are all enlightened,
and by your spiritual music, O all-wise John of Damascus,
pray to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls!

Martyrs, tone 5

Christ our God, You have granted us the miracles of Your holy martyrs
Gúrias, Samónas, and Abíbus,
as a stronghold and protection.

Through their prayers, strengthen those in authority in ev'ry good deed,//
for You alone are merciful and lovest mankind!

KONTAKIA

Resurrection, tone 6

When Christ God the Giver of Life,
raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand,
He bestowed resurrection on the human race.
He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Martyrs, tone 2

You received grace from on high, all praised martyrs,
and you intercede for those in the midst of temptations!
Therefore, holy ones, you freed a young woman from bitter death.
You are indeed the glory of Edessa and the joy of the world.

Steadfast Protectress of Christians

Steadfast protectress of Christians,
Constant advocate before the creator:
Do not despise the cry of us sinners,
But in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith.
Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos,
For you always protect those who honor you.

PROKEIMENON, tone 6: O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance!
vs. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!

EPISTLE: EPISTLE: (220) Ephesians 2:4-10 Brethren, God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Alleluia in the sixth tone: He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven.

vs. He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my protector and my refuge, my God. In Him will I trust!

GOSPEL: (53) LUKE 10:25-37 And behold, at that time, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” So he answered and said, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and your neighbor as yourself.” And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

COMMUNION HYMN: Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest!
Alleluia....