

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2017
MARTYRS GALACTEON AND EPISTEMIS

November 5

The Martyrs Galacteon and his wife Epistime at Emesa There was a rich and distinguished couple named Kletophon and Leukippe, who lived in the Syrian city of Emesa, and for a long time they were childless. They gave much gold to the pagan priests, but still they remained childless.

The city of Emesa was governed by a Syrian named Secundus, put there by the Roman Caesars. He was a merciless and zealous persecutor of Christians, and to intimidate them he ordered that the instruments of torture be displayed on the streets. The slightest suspicion of belonging to "the sect of the Galilean" (as thus Christians were called by the pagans), was enough to get a man arrested and handed over for torture. In spite of this, many Christians voluntarily surrendered themselves into the hands of the executioners, in their desire to suffer for Christ.

A certain old man by the name of Onuphrius, who concealed his monastic and priestly dignity beneath his beggar's rags. He walked from house to house in Emesa, begging alms. At the same time, whenever he saw the possibility of turning people away from the pagan error, he preached about Christ.

Once, he came to the magnificent house of Leukippe. Accepting alms from her, he sensed that the woman was in sorrow, and he asked what was the cause of this sadness. She told the Elder about her familial misfortune. In consoling her, Onuphrius began to tell her about the one true God, about His omnipotence and mercy, and how He always grants the prayer of those turning to Him with faith. Hope filled the soul of Leukippe. She believed and accepted Holy Baptism. Soon after this it was revealed to her in a dream that she would give birth to a son, who would be a true follower of Christ. At first, Leukippe concealed her delight from her husband, but after the infant was born, she revealed the secret to her husband and also persuaded him to be baptized.

They named the baby Galacteon and his parents raised him in the Christian Faith and provided him a fine education. He could make

an illustrious career for himself, but Galacteon sought rather an unsullied monastic life in solitude and prayer.

When Galacteon turned twenty-four, his father resolved to marry him off and they found him a bride, a beautiful and illustrious girl by the name of Epistime. The son did not oppose the will of his father, but by the will of God, the wedding was postponed for a time. Visiting his betrothed, Galacteon gradually revealed his faith to her. Eventually, he converted her to Christ and he secretly baptized her himself.

Besides Epistime he baptized also one of her servants, Eutolmius. The newly-illuminated decided on the initiative of Galacteon, to devote themselves to the monastic life. Leaving the city, they hid themselves away on Mount Publion, where there were two monasteries, one for men and the other for women. The new monastics had to take with them all the necessities for physical toil, since the inhabitants of both monasteries were both old and infirm. For several years the monastics struggled in work, fasting and prayer. Once, Epistime had a vision in her sleep: she and Galacteon stood in a wondrous palace before a radiant King, and the King bestowed golden crowns on them. This was a prefiguring of their impending martyrdom.

The pagans became aware of the existence of the monasteries, and a military detachment was sent to apprehend their inhabitants. But the monks and the nuns succeeded in hiding themselves in the hills. Galacteon, however, had no desire to flee and so he remained in his cell, reading Holy Scripture. When Epistime saw that the soldiers were leading Galacteon away in chains, she began to implore the Abbess to permit her to go also, since she wanted to accept torture for Christ together with her fiancé and teacher. The Abbess tearfully blessed Epistime to do so.

The saints endured terrible torments, while supplicating and glorifying Christ. Their hands and legs were cut off, their tongues were cut out, and then they were beheaded.

Eutolmius, the former servant of Epistime, and who had become her brother in Christ and fellow ascetic in monastic struggles, secretly buried the bodies of the holy martyrs. He later wrote an account of their virtuous life and their glorious martyrdom, for his contemporaries and for posterity.

GREAT VESPERS

***LORD I CALL: Seven stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 5,
followed by three of the Martyrs***

Martyrs, tone 8:

You were raised on the milk of the ascetic life,
coming to Christ in maturity, O Galacteon.
Through many tortures and afflictions,
you gave yourself as an acceptable offering and perfect sacrifice.
By your free will, and firm, unwavering faith,//
you came to God and now dwell in divine glory.

You wisely sought the Source of all blessings,
and the consummation of all desire, O Epistemis.
By His illumination you were enlightened in soul and
understanding.

By your steadfastness, O divinely blessed One
you destroyed the ancient and crafty serpent.//
You are the divine adornment of monastics, O long-suffering
martyr.

The two radiant stars arise by grace from the spiritual east,
enlightening with virtue the whole creation,
shining with the brilliance of their struggles and the divine grace of
healing.

As we celebrate their feast, let us glorify Christ,//
Who through them sanctifies all.

GLORY... NOW AND EVER...the Dogmatikon in tone 5

APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 5

DIVINE LITURGY

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
Coeternal with the Father and the Spirit,
Born for our salvation from the Virgin;
For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,

To endure death,
And to raise the dead
By His glorious Resurrection.

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 4

Let us the faithful honor these two betrothed athletes:
Galacteon and the modest Epistemis.
Their ascetic labors blossomed into martyrdom,
Therefore we cry to them:
“Glory to Him who has strengthened you!
Glory to Him who has crowned you!
Glory to Him who through you grants healing to all!”

KONTAKIA

Resurrection, tone 5

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior,
Shattering its gates as almighty;
Resurrecting the dead as Creator,
And destroying the sting of death,
Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man,
And we all cry to Thee O Lord, save us!

Martyrs, tone 2

You are numbered among the hosts of martyrs
For you were illustrious in mighty contests.
Galacteon, together with Epistemis, your faithful wife and
companion in struggle,
Unceasingly intercede to the one God for us all.

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 5: thou, O Lord shalt protect us and
preserve us from this generation for ever!

vs. Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly

EPISTLE: (215) Galatians 6:11-18 Brethren, see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these try to compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the Cross of Christ. For not even they themselves who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh... But God forbid that I should glory, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Alleluia in the fifth tone: I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation.

Vs. For Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever; Thy truth will be prepared in the heavens.

GOSPEL: (39) LUKE 8:41-56 And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her

livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer, your faith has made you well. Go in peace." While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." and they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

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