

# February 12

## *E. Our Father among the Saints Meletius, Archbishop of Great Antioch*

Saint Meletius was born in Armenian Melitene and was elected Bishop of Sebaste in about 357. In consequence of the volatile spirit of the Sebastians, the gentle shepherd left his cathedra for the hermetical life in Syrian Berea. From here, as "the pillar of Orthodoxy and advocate of piety", he soon was called by the Emperor in Antioch for the defense of Orthodoxy against the Arians. Having taken the Antiochian cathedra, Saint Meletius zealously accused the Arians in their errors and with their accusations has so turned them against themselves, that more than once by their intrigues and slander, they were removed from Antioch. In 381 Saint Meletius presided at the Second Ecumenical Council. "Having accomplished ascetical efforts of piety, and having finished the flow of goodness, and having piously taught the true faith", Saint Meletius died in peace during the Council. His relics were translated from Constantinople to Antioch.

### *Kontakion, tone 6*

**The apostate Macedonius fled in fear from your spiritual courage.  
We your servants run to you for your prayerful service.  
O Meletius, converser with angels and fiery sword of Christ our God,  
We hymn you, the lamp that enlightens all.**

## *✙ Our Father among the Saints Alexis, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Russia, Wonderworker*

Saint Alexis was born into a boyar family and was named Eleutherius. He was born in Moscow in 1293 and from his early youth studied reading and writing, which he successfully learned. "God chose Saint Alexis before his youth to be a shepherd of His flock and a great teacher" and when he was 12 years old, God was pleased to reveal to him a mysterious vision of his future high service. Since then the adolescent became thoughtful, silent, and abandoned child's play and with more searching began to read the divine books. His leaning to soul-saving reading and prayer grew in him with each passing year, and soon his most burning desire was to enter a monastery in order to completely enlighten himself with God. When he was 20 years old he left the world without regret and went to the Moscow Theophany Monastery where he accepted monasticism, taking the name Alexis. Alexis remained at the Theophany Monastery for twenty years, exhausting himself

with fasting and vigil, prayers and tears, studying Hagiography, perfecting himself and deepening his spiritual life. Metropolitan Theognostes, learning about Alexis and valuing his piety and great gifts, asked him to join him, charging him with the management of church affairs in the rank of deputy to the Metropolitan. In 1352 he was consecrated Bishop of Vladimir on the Kliasma. Having become Metropolitan in 1354, Saint Alexis with indefatigable zealousness became involved in church affairs. He built a few monasteries (see the Moscow and Nizhni Novgorod diocese). The glory of his holy life reached the distant capital of the Tartar khan. The wife of the Khan Khanibek, Taidula, fell into a serious illness and finally became blind. No medicines could restore her sight, and she decided to approach the hierarch Alexis, whom she heard was a holy man. At the request of the Khan, the Hierarch arrived in his capital and healed his sick wife. The Khan and his healed wife presented Saint Alexis with rich gifts and let him return in honor to Moscow. Holy zeal for the good of the country forced Saint Alexis to undertake the same journey once again. His son Berdibek maliciously killed Khan Khanibek, and also killed his 12 brothers and began to demand heavy tribute from all the Russian princes. Saint Alexis undertook the difficult assignment of asking mercy from the Khan. He again went to the capital of the Khan and in the presence of Taidula, the mother of Berdibek, asked for the granting of mercy for the state and the Church.

The mind and extensive education, persistence and backbone, piety and strict life of Saint Alexis won him universal respect. Zealously caring for the piety of all his flock and teaching them the performance of Christian duties, the hierarch was the teacher and the peacemaker of the princes quarreling among themselves for their possessions.

The Holy Church glorifies him as "the nourisher of widows, and father to orphans, the helper of all those in grief, the comfort for those who sorrow, the shepherd and teacher for all who have gone astray", "the beauty of the church", "great wonderworker", "the luminary of all the Russian Metropolia", "the golden radiance of the Russian star".

Saint Alexis died on February 12, 1377. Saint Alexis left for posterity theological literature consisting of letters, lectures and translations. His translations from the Greek language and written gospels in his own hand are kept in the Moscow Chudov Monastery. The general church established the commemoration of the memory of Saint Alexis by the end of 1448. The relics of the Hierarch Alexis today openly repose in the Chudov Monastery founded by him in Moscow. See May 20.

*Troparion, tone 8*

**As successor to the throne of the Apostles,  
And a most good physician, and a favorable server,  
We hasten to your honorable shrine,  
O Hierarch Alexis, Divinely wise Wonderworker.  
Gathering with love in your memory,  
We brightly celebrate and rejoice in songs and hymns,  
And we glorify Christ, who granted you such gifts of healing,  
And who bestowed great strengthening to your city.**

*Kontakion, tone 8*

**O divine and most honorable Hierarch of Christ,  
The new wonderworker Alexis,  
Truly all the people singing with love that we may magnify you,  
As the great shepherd, the servant, and all wise teacher of the Russian land.  
Today we joyfully hymn him in God-bearing hymns poured out in his memory.  
For having boldness before God, deliver us in diverse circumstances,  
That we may call out to you:  
Rejoice in the foundation of our city.**

**Paramoegas:** see Feb. 11. **Matins Gospel:** John 10:9-16; sel. 36. **Epistle:** Heb. 13:17-21; sel. 3\_5. **Gospel:** Luke 6:17-23; sel. 24.

**Special note:** If it is not Lent and the Rector wishes to sing to the Hierarch Alexis with the vigil, we sing to him according to the order of a great saint having a vigil (see the Ustav (Rubrics) for February 12 for the order of this service). If it is Lent: we sing to him according to the appointed chapter in the Ustav and Menaion, which calls for the singing for the Finding of the Honorable Head of the Forerunner (see February 24 below). And where his relics repose in the temple, we sing his service according to the appointed chapter in the Ustav and Menaion, as for the Meeting of the Lord (see February 2 above).

We sing the service for St. Meletius at Compline, or when the rector wishes (see the Ustav for February 12).

*Saint Anthony, Patriarch of Constantinople*

He was born in Constantinople circa 830 of rich and devout parents. From his childhood excelling in piety, Saint Anthony entered a monastery after the death

of his mother when he was 12 years old, and, imitating the rector, spent the night in prayer and led the life of a true man of faith. In due course, against his will, he became a Hieromonk and then the rector of the monastery in which even his father was tonsured a monk. During his rectorship Saint Anthony excelled in mercy and especially with love for the needy and those living in misery, extending his benefactions to the remote Scythians, Thracians and Moesians. In 893 he became Patriarch and together with the Emperor Leo the Wise did much good for the Church. He paid special attention to the poor clergy and asked the rich to grant them relief; he was zealous for establishing piety in the people and did not spare his power and health in the fulfillment of his great hierarchical duties. He died in peace in the year 895 and soon after his death performed many miracles 1).

Note 1)

Although this Patriarch lived after Photius, the Western Church reveres him as a saint on February 12.

### *Venerable Maria, named Marinus, and her father Eugene*

They were born in Bethany and were tonsured together in the same monastery, 32 versts (21 miles) from Alexandria. After the death of his wife and wishing to accept monasticism, Saint Eugene took his daughter with him and they were tonsured together, she taking the name Marinus. After the death of Saint Eugene, the Venerable Maria was accused of adultery and the mother brought her son to her, as if she were the father, for his rearing. The slander was revealed only after the death of the Venerable Maria in 508. Her relics were transferred to Constantinople, and in 1113 from there to Venice.

### *Iberian Icon of the Mother of God*

This holy icon during the iconoclasm belonged to a devout widow living with her only son near Nicaea. Having a special reverence to the holy icon, the pious widow kept it in the church built by her near her home. During the reign of Theophilus the iconoclast, the Emperor sent agents to destroy the holy icons everywhere and came to the pious Nicaean widow. One of the warriors, a detective, saw the holy icon, with his sword in exasperation thrust it into the cheek of the Mother of God represented on the icon. But to horror of the warrior, blood poured out from the wound. Struck by this miracle, the repenting warrior fell before the icon of the Mother of God and left the heresy and later accepted monasticism. According to the advice of the repentant warrior, the widow decided to hide the holy icon to save it from desecration. After fervent tearful prayers

before the icon of the Mother of God, the pious woman placed the icon into the sea, praying the Mother of God to protect the icon from submersion, and she and her son from the rage of the impious Emperor. To her great joy the widow saw that the holy icon sailed directly on the waves in the direction of the west. Fleeing from persecution, the son of the pious widow, on her advice, left Nicaea and settled on Mount Athos, leading a life of monastic ascetic efforts, and died there in peace. From him the Athonite monks heard about the icon, about how his mother put it on the water, and its tradition was kept among the elders. After many years, this holy icon appeared "in a fiery column" on the sea, near the Iberian monastery on Mount Athos. At this time the Holy Elder (Staretz) Gabriel who was born in Iberia lived in the Iberian Monastery (see May 13). The Mother of God appeared to him in a dream and asked him to announce to the rector and the brothers of the community that She wishes to give them Her icon for Her help and intercession, asked the elder to come without fear closer on the water to the holy icon and to receive it in his hands. "Fulfilling the word of the Mother of God", the Venerable Gabriel, "went on the water as if it were dry land", took the holy icon and carried it to shore. The monks with reverence met the holy icon on the shore, brought it to the Monastery and placed it on the altar. On the following day before morning they did not find the holy icon in that spot where it was placed. After a long search they found it on the wall above the monastery gates and they carried it to the earlier place, but the next morning they found it again above the gates. Such transferring and returning were repeated a few times. After this they built a temple above the gates of the monastery in which the holy icon abides even up to this day. It was called Iberian after the name of the monastery, and the place above the gates where it abides was called the Face of the Gates (Vratanitsi). Innumerable miracles and healings occurred from the holy Iberian Icon of the Face of the Gates. Many times the Iberian Monastery, which is found on the seacoast, was exposed to attacks of enemies, but the wonderful defense of the Mother of God protected it even until now. And in our country there are a few holy Iberian Icons of the Mother of God that have become famous through their wonderworking. Yet during the reign of Nikon (the New Savior (Novospassky) archimandrite and subsequently the Patriarch of All-Russia), at his request, two exact copies of the Athonite Iberian icons, written on Mount Athos during lent and with the prayers of all the Iberian Monastery brothers, were sent (one on Oct. 13, 1648, and the other on Feb. 12, 1656). The first holy icon, as asserted by some, is the same one which today is in Moscow in the chapel at the Resurrection Gate since 1669; the second holy icon is in the Iberian Saints of the Lake (Sviato-Ozersky) Monastery (Novgorod Diocese). Besides these, other wonderworking Iberian icons are known: in the Sofronievoi Hermitage (Kursk Diocese), in Mozdo\_ (Terek Province), in Kozelsk (Chernigov Diocese), in Stavropol, in the St. Nicholas Babaievsky Monastery (Kostroma

Diocese) and in the Trinity Monastery (in Smolensk). The specially honored Iberian Icon is found in the chapel at the Resurrection Gate in Moscow. Since 1693 there is evidence that this holy icon was used for special reverent honoring of inhabitants of the capital and was carried to houses. Since this time the reverent honoring of the holy Icon grew more and more and at the present time each day from early in the morning until late in the evening the holy icon travels within the city as a source of healing and a comfort to the ill and grieving 1). Since 1656 the translation of the Holy Iberian Icon to the Sviato-Ozersky Monastery is celebrated on February 12. In the Athonite Iberian Monastery the festival in honor of the holy icon is made on Tuesday of Pascha. The Moscow Synodal printing house and also the Kiev Monastery of the Caves printing house published "The Service and Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos in Honor of the Appearance Her Iberian Icon" in a special book.

*Troparion, tone 1*

**From your holy icons, O Queen Theotokos,  
You freely grant healing and recovery to those who with faith and love  
approach them.  
Visit my infirmity and have mercy on my soul, O Good One,  
And heal my body through your grace, O Most Pure One.**

*Kontakion, tone 8*

**When the widow cast your holy icon into the sea, O Theotokos,  
Not able to save it from enemies,  
You were revealed the Protectress of Mount Athos,  
And the Gate of the Iberian Monastery, frightening enemies,  
And delivering those who honor you  
From all troubles and from danger in the Russian Orthodox land.**

*Prayer to the Iberian Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos*

**O Most Holy Virgin Mother of the Lord, Queen of heaven and earth!  
Attend to the many pained sighs of our souls, look down on us from the height  
of your holy place. We venerate your most pure image with faith and love. For  
sinking under these sins, bestormed by troubles, and seeking your image for  
you are really alive for us, we offer our humble prayers. For we have no other  
help, nor other intercessor, nor comforter, except you, O Mother, for all those**

**grieving and heavily laden. Help us impotent ones, assuage our grief, lead us prodigal ones to the right way, heal and save the hopeless, grant us another season of life in the world and lead us to tranquility, grant a Christian end to our lives, and be a merciful intercessor for us at the dread judgment of your Son, that we may always sing, magnify and glorify you as the good intercessor for the Christian race, with all who are pleasing to God. Amen.**

**Note 1)**

This Iberian Icon of the Mother of God is the subject of reverent honor not only by the inhabitants of Moscow, but also of all Russia, not only the Orthodox, but also the Old Believers, and even the heterodox. Very important persons give a deeply instructive example of honoring the wonderworking icon. Each time they come to Moscow, they consider it their obligation to visit the Iberian chapel and to kiss the holy icon of the Mother of God. As much as the inhabitants of Moscow and visitors to the capital fervently honor the holy icon, one may see from this, that from early in the morning until evening, the chapel is constantly crowded with those praying. Besides the General Moliebens, they also continually serve special intention Moliebens in the chapel. Pilgrims from all corners of Moscow flow into the services of the General Moliebens. Without exaggeration one may say that hardly any person whether or not from Moscow who during his life time prayed before the holy Icon of the Iberian Mother of God did not find hope or comfort in his prayer. In 1869 the city of Moscow solemnly celebrated the 200th anniversary of the holy Iberian Icon.

*Martyr Kristo (Chrestos)*

Kristo was born an Albanian Serb. He lived in Constantinople and was a gardener. Slandered by the Turks that he desired to accept the Moslem faith, St. Kristo was turned over to the court and courageously confessed his Christian faith before it. For this they subjected the holy martyr to terrible tortures and later they beheaded him in 1748.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp., (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 80-84  
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