

April 4

D. *Our Ven. Father Joseph the Hymnographer*

Ven. Joseph was born in Sicily of pious parents and while yet a youth distinguished himself by abstinence, humility of mind, meekness and obedience. When his parents moved to Greece, St. Joseph was tonsured a monk in a Salonican monastery, where he began to carry out the strictest ascetical life. During the persecution against holy icons he was revealed as one of the most zealous defenders of iconolatry and some times he was sentenced to prison for this. The last time St. Joseph returned from prison to Constantinople was during the reign of Basil the Macedonian.

Patriarch Ignatius honored Joseph with the position of Keeper of the Vessels of the Great Church, but Patriarch Photius made him the father confessor for all the Constantinopolitan clergy and called the venerable one a man of God, an angel in the flesh, a father of fathers.

St. Joseph was worthy of such a gift of clairvoyance that he saw sins, which people did not want to reveal to him. He did not accuse such sinners, but tried to guide them to sincere voluntary repentance.

Venerable Joseph died in peace during the night between April 3 and 4 in 883. He wrote about 300 Canons. For this he also received the name of hymnographer. In his "sweet melodies" he praises the "divine regiments", "glorifying all things holy and preaching these victories".

Kontakion, tone 4

**You are an inexhaustible source of repentance,
An endless bearer of comfort,
And the abyss of tenderness, O Joseph,
Grant us tears of divine repentance,
With them comfort us where we are weeping,
Let us turn to you asking your help from God, O Saint.**

Our Ven. Father George, Anchorite of Malea, practiced asceticism on Mount Malea (and is why he is referred to "as the Maleonite") in the Peloponnesus in the 4th century. "Adorned with the humility of goodness", he has gained "a pure heart", "his holiness was fulfilled, radiating through faith and grace".

Ven. Zosimas of Palestine



A monk of a Palestinian monastery, after 53 years of asceticism, disturbed in thought about the height of his perfection, and after looking to God, he opened the refuge of Mary of Egypt and learned humility. He died at the age of 100 years in 518-526.

Virgin Martyr Pherbutha (sister of St. Simeon - April 17) and her sister with a slave, suffered in Persia in 341 or 343. Serving at the court, they were accused of desiring to poison the wife of King Shapur. The magi assured Shapur that for his wife to recover she should pass between the dissected parts of the Christian women and so they finished them off with martyrdom.

Ven. Theonas, Metropolitan of Thessalonica (16th century)

He was a monk first in the Monastery of the Pantocrator on Mount Athos, but then in the Iberian monastery (on Mount Athos), under the direction of Ven. James (November 1) up to the death of the latter. After serving as rector in the Monastery of St. Anastasius in Galachist, he was for his holy life installed as the Metropolitan of Salonica. His relics are in the Monastery of St. Anastasius.

Ven. Zosimas of Verbozoma

Disciple of Ven. Cornelius of Komel, he founded the Annunciation Monastery on an island in Verbozoma Lake, about 20 versts [13.2 miles] from the city of Belozersk (Novgorod Province). Having well directed his monastery, the venerable one died in 1550. His relics are in a hidden place in the temple of his monastery (now abolished).

Hieromartyr Nicetas

An Albanian Slav, a monk of a Russian Mt. Athos Monastery, for preaching Christ and an accusation of Mohammedanism in Serres he was subjected to terrible torture and finally strangled in 1808.

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp0130-01312.
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