

July 8

The Holy Great Martyr Procopius



Born in Jerusalem, having received an excellent education, having lost his Christian father early, he served under Diocletian and was sent by him to persecute Christians in Egypt. "Dear one", he heard a voice from Heaven who reproached him for rising up against Christ Himself, and after Procopius asked: "who art Thou, O Lord?" answered him: "I am the crucified Jesus, the Son of God". Thus Procopius, similar to Apostle Paul, received "knowledge not from man but from heaven", "being caught in the net of Christ". After that he saw the wonderful image of the cross in Heaven that even more impressed the mind and heart of Procopius, not for the persecution of Christians, but "for the suffering One calling" him. In Alexandria Procopius not only did not begin to persecute Christians, but he himself left the "darkness of idolatry" and destroyed idols. His mother who was a pagan reported this to Diocletian and Procopius was taken to prison. Baptized in prison, he "receiving a variety of wounds from the enemy", through his difficult torture he converted two groups of warriors with their officers, 20 women and his mother to Christ. All of them were beheaded in the year 303 in Caesarea, Palestine.

The Kontakion, Tone 2

**Set ablaze by divine zeal for Christ, Procopius,
And protected by the might of the Cross,
You cast down the insolence and boldness of the enemy!
You raised up an honorable Church, //
Excelling in faith and giving Light to us all!**

(Text: Holy Myrrh-bearing Women Monastery)

The Commemoration of the sign, appearing from an icon of the honorable and glorious Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos in the city of Great Ustiug in 1290.

By the invisible intercession of Our Mother of God, but through the prayers of St. Procopius, Ustiug was saved from a stone cloud (see below). Healing myrrh poured out from the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, which healed the sick who were anointed with it.

St. Procopius, Fool for Christ, Wonderworker of Ustiug

He was a foreign merchant trading in Novgorod. Captivated by Orthodox worship and "the divine teaching" of the Holy Orthodox faith, he accepted Orthodoxy, distributed "his accumulated wealth", scorned worldly vanity and, "with glowing piety", became a monk in the monastery of the Venerable Barlaam of Khutyn. Fleeing from popularity, he then withdrew from the city of Ustiug, and chose the "turbulent and, according to the apostle, foolish way of life," and became the first fool for Christ in Russia. He became very stressed in fulfilling his difficult asceticism. With three *kachergami*, or wooden crutches, under his arms, he went without footwear and in poor clothes summer and winter, eating whatever scraps were given him, spending the night frequently at the entrance to the church, "suffering every irritation", "shunning every evil thing", "glowing with faithful sense" and resembling "the patience of the ancient Job". "Having a gracious soul, a pure mind, a vigorous heart, an unblemished faith and a truly immeasurable love", he maintained "meekness without malice for everyone, consolation for the mourning and speedy help to those in trouble ", overlooking that many offended him, quite often beat him and sneered at him" with violence for the sake of Christ". Accepting alms from the compassionate, he never took anything from the rich men who made usurious profits, was even hungry, and quite often and for a few days went without any food. For his great ascetic feats Procopius received the gift of clairvoyance. In conversation with pious people each of his words and actions was instruction and caution. Through his prayers he saved Ustiug from a stone cloud, which then burst about 20 versts [about 13 miles] from the city over an empty space. He died in 1303 at the gate of the Archangel monastery, "with light wings he flew from many troubled parts of the world" and "inherited paradise". His relics are in the Ustiug cathedral.

Troparion, Tone 4

**O Divinely-wise One,
Having been enlightened by divine grace
With full understanding in your heart,
You turned from the vanity of the world to the infallible Creator,
With chastity and much patience.
When you ended the course of your temporary life,
You kept your faith undefiled.
Therefore after your death,
The light of your way of life revealed itself.
For an inexhaustible fountain of miracles
Is pouring out to those who hasten to your holy grave,
O all blessed Procopius: pray to Christ God to save our souls.**

Kontakion, Tone 4

With the covered hardship of the fool for Christ,

**And having inviolably come in angelic arms,
You reached the throne of the King,
And from the King of all Christ God
You have received the gift of healing.
For your many wonders and awesome signs
Have amazed your city of Great Ustiug.
Having asked mercy for your people,
You prayerfully summoned myrrh
From the honorable image of the Most Holy Theotokos,
And you healed the infirm.
Therefore, O wonder-bearer Procopius, we entreat you
To unceasingly pray to Christ God to grant remission of our sins.**

The Readings and the rest see July 5 for the Venerable Sergius.

The Appearance of the Image of the Most Holy Theotokos in the City of Kazan

In 1579 a nine-year old girl Matrona, whose parent's home in Kazan burned down during a fire, saw in a dream an image of the Mother of God and heard a voice who commanded her to recover a holy icon hidden in the ashes of the burnt home. The holy icon was found wrapped in an old cloth under the furnace in the burned down house, where it probably was buried during the Tatar occupation of Kazan when the Orthodox were often compelled to hide their faith. The holy icon was triumphantly transferred to the nearest church of St. Nicholas, and then to the Annunciation Cathedral and became glorified by healing the blind¹. A document was prepared for this Holy Icon and in the same year of 1579 sent to Tsar Ivan the Terrible, who ordered the construction of a women's monastery on the place of the appearance of the holy icon, wherein the holy icon was placed (see Kazan Diocese). The special feast was established on July 8, 1595 in honor of the appearance of the icon. Again see October 22.

Troparion, Tone 4

**Tenderhearted defender, Mother of our Lord,
Intercede for us before your Son, Christ our God!
Save all who hasten to take shelter
Under your strong protection!
Defend, Mistress, Empress and Lady,
All who in danger or misfortune
Or weakened with the malady of many sins,
Stand before your holy image,
Praying with tears and humble mind,
Repentant heart and invincible hope.
Free them from all evil; give them the grace they need,
And save us all, Virgin Mother of God,**

For you are the divine refuge of your followers.

(Text: Holy Myrrh-bearing Women Monastery)

Kontakion, Tone 8

Let us run to the gracious and quiet haven

The fervent helper, ardent and eager to save all.

Let us run to the virgin's protection and hasten to repentance.

The pure Theotokos grants us unfailing mercy//

She comes to help all, delivering her faithful servants from tribulations.

(Text: Holy Myrrh-bearing Women Monastery)

Readings: 1) Gen. 28:10-17; 2) Ezek. 44:1-4; 3) Pr. 9:1-11. **Matins Gospel:** Lk. 1:39-49, 56; sel. 4. **Epistle:** Phil. 2:5-11; sel. 240. **Gospel:** Lk. 10:38-43, 11:27-28; sel. 54.

The Venerable Theophilus the Myrrh-gusher

A Slav from Macedonia, he was a presbyter, distinguished for piety and fervent care for his congregation. Having left for Mt. Athos, he served the Lord as a monk up to his death in 1548. The body of this passionless, silent, and continually praying person was thrown in the forest without burial according to his humble will, was found incorruptible with myrrh flowing from it and was placed in the Pantocrator monastery.

The Venerable Martyr Anastasius

Born in Janina, the Turks beheaded this hieromonk of a suburban parish church near Constantinople in 1743 for his confession of Christ and censure of Islam.

Procopius, Fool for Christ of Ustia

He struggled in the Vologda province during the 17th century. He had so pleased the Lord that when his relics were wondrously discovered they were releasing a fragrant odor while reposing incorrupt in the Entry of the Believers Church in the Whale District.

Nizhni- Lomov Kazan Icon of the Mother of God

In 1643 this icon appeared near Nizhni-Lomov about 26 versts (17 miles) from the city of Penza (see Penza Diocese).

The Karpov Kazan Icon of the Mother of God

In 1725 this icon was transferred from the Karpov Hermitage to the Kursk Znamenny Monastery.

The Kazan Icon of the Mother of God

The Kazan Icon of the Mother of God existing in the former Katashin St. Nicholas Monastery, (now the parish church in the village of Katashin, about 18 versts [12 miles] from Novozibkov, Chernigov Province). It appeared before 1622.

The Kaplunov Kazan Icon of the Mother of God; see Sept. 11.

The Kazan Icons of the Mother of God

The Icons of Our Lady of Kazan: in the Moscow Ascension women's monastery, in the village of Pavlovsk, Zvenigorod District, in Irkutsk, and in Kargopole.

The Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Tobolsk; Appeared in 1661.

The Kazan Icon of the Mother of God

The Kazan icon of the Mother of God is in the Kazan Yaroslavl women's monastery. It appeared in 1588.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 232-234.
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¹That is why we pray before this icon for the recovery of sight of the blind and in general for the healing of the diseases of the eye.