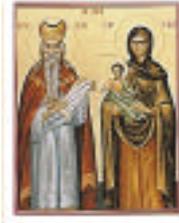


September 5

D.  *The Holy Prophet Zechariah, father of the Honorable John the Forerunner
(and Holy Righteous Elizabeth, his mother).*



St. Zechariah, son of Barachiah, was a priest at the temple. "Serving God with a pure heart", he together with his wife Elizabeth was righteous and pious and was worthy from the Lord to be the father of the greatest prophet. "Clearly accepting the sayings of the Divine Spirit", he predicted to his son John: "and you, Child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways (Luke 1:76)". At the festal Entry of the Virgin Mary into the Temple St. Zechariah, at the suggestion of God, led Her into the Holy of Holies. At the massacre of the innocents in Bethlehem, Elizabeth with her son was hidden from the murderers in a settlement in the mountains. Then Herod required payment of his son from Zechariah. The Elder refused to fulfill so severe a demand. For this he was, by the command of Herod, murdered between the sanctuary and the altar (Mt. 23:35). St. Elizabeth, a branch "of the daughters of Aaron" and "the glory of barren mothers", was the natural sister of St. Anna, the mother of the Most Holy Virgin. According to the words of the Church, she, "believing that the coming Messiah will be His Lord", "will walk in all the commandments of the Lord without blemish", had "boundless love for God and boundless love for neighbors". She offered many bitter tears, before the Lord condescended to take away from her the shame of barrenness. The Holy Righteous Elizabeth died soon after the murder of St. Zechariah. See Jan. 7.

Troparion (to Zechariah), tone 4

**Wrapped in the vestment of priesthood, O wise Zechariah,
You offered in a priestly manner acceptable whole burnt offerings according
to the Law of God;
And you became a beacon and beholder of mysteries,
Manifestly bearing in you signs of grace, O All-wise.
Slain by the sword in the temple of God, O Prophet of Christ, //
With the Forerunner intercede that our souls may be saved.**

Troparion (for both), tone 2

**Celebrating the memory of Thy Righteous Zechariah and Elizabeth,
O Lord, we pray Thee:
Save our souls through them.**

Kontakion (to Zechariah), tone 3

**Today the Prophet and Priest of the Most High, Zechariah,
The parent of the Forerunner
Sets the table of his memorial, nourishing the faithful,
And mixing for them a drink of righteousness, //
For whom he has died as a divine mystic of the grace of God.**

Kontakion (for both), tone 4

**Like a full moon, you received the light of truth
From the ideal sun of the Messiah,
And you walked in all the commandments of the Lord with Zechariah,
O Blessed of God, Elizabeth.
Therefore, blessing you with worthy hymns,
We magnify the all-compassionate Light of the Lord //
Which enlightens all.**

Epistle: Heb. 6:13-20, sel. 314. **Gospel:** Mt. 23:29-39, sel. 96.

Martyrs Urban, Theodore and Medimnus, and those with them (80 in number), suffered during the reign of Valens in the year 370. The Constantinople Christians sent them to the Emperor in Nicomedia with complaints about the oppression by the Arians. The Emperor, an Arian, was furious with them, ordered them put on a ship and when it got out to the middle of the sea, burned it.

Martyr Abdias (or Obadiah) was unmercifully beaten with knotty canes for confessing Christ in Persia during the reign of Yazdgird I (408-420).

Martyr Sarbelus was stoned to death.

Martyr Thephael, who was cut asunder with a saw, and his sister *Thebea*, who was pierced with a spear. Both died during the reign of Trajan.

Martyr Rhais was beheaded.

Martyrs Juventinus and Maximus, bodyguards of the Emperor Julian the Apostate. For disobeying the order of the Emperor to sprinkle blood offered to idols on food sold in the market place for Christians, they were beheaded in Antioch.

Blessed Russian Prince Gleb, in holy baptism David was murdered. See May 2 and July 24.

St. Peter, in Athyras. The celebration for the Apostle Peter in the church in the city of Athyras, near Constantinople, was made because of the appearance of this apostle to the Emperor Justinian before his election in the year 552.

Martyrdom of the Venerable Athanasius of Brest

St. Athanasius (Filippovich) was born in the year 1597 from noble and pious parents. Having an excellent education and having learned the vanity of the world, in 1627 he became a monk in Vilna, and then was tonsured in the monasteries: Kuteinsk, Mezhegorodsk, Dubovsk and, finally, was made the hegumen of the St. Simeon Monastery in the city of Brest-Litovsk. In this rank he was shown to be a zealous advocate of Orthodoxy from the attacks by the Latins. Through the intrigues of the Jesuits, he endured prison in Warsaw, where he was subjected to beatings and hunger. Released from prison (in 1645), he lived in Kiev, and then moved to Brest, where for his declaration of the illegality of the Unia he was put into an underground prison. Sincerely and unrestrainedly devoted to Orthodoxy, firm confessor of the holy truths, he remained unbowed, not fearing for himself even the martyr's death and bravely proclaimed to the Polish government the anger of God for the insult to human rights and for defending that which proves to be offensive to the Orthodox Church. For this the Poles beheaded him in 1648. His honorable body, pointed out by a seven-year old boy, soon was taken from the earth and with honor transferred to the Orthodox Church of the Most Holy Theotokos in the St. Simeon's Monastery (now closed). Today the relics of the Venerable Athanasius repose openly in the St. Simeon Church of Brest-Litovsk. Besides September 5, the memory of St. Athanasius is again done on July 20, the day of the discovery of his relics. Significantly the last words of the Venerable Athanasius were prophetic: "The true-believing church", said the Venerable Athanasius, "will suffer a great persecution, but then will blossom again. And where my body will be placed, there in neighboring places will never be an assembly of evil-minded adversaries, apostates from the holy faith, who cannot do harm even up to the last defense before the righteous Judgment Seat of Christ". Really, the Unia (begun in 1596) in Brest and in all its environs for a long time was stopped and the true faith shines and radiates now with rays of evangelistic truth.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0314-0316
Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © January 6, 2004. All rights reserved.*