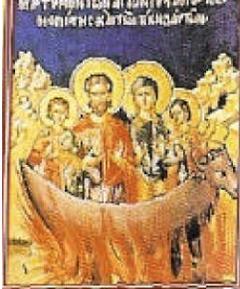


## September 20

† *Holy Great Martyr Eustathius (Eustace) and those with him (his intimates, i.e. his wife, Theopistes and their children Agapius and Theopistus)*



St. Eustathius, in paganism Placida, distinguished by goodness, mercy and righteousness, was famous as a Roman commander during the reign of Emperors Titus and Trajan. By a special suggestion from above received by him once during a hunting trip, he accepted holy baptism together with all his family. Enlightened by the light of the Christian faith, Placida lived devoutly with his wife in full happiness. But God was to test the faith of St. Eustathius. Illness and death came to the house of Eustathius. First the servants, then all the cattle perished. Thieves stole everything that was possible to carry away, and Eustathius unexpectedly loses all his estate. Rich people shun him and he is obligated to feed his family with the labor of his hands. Having left Rome, he wandered in sackcloth from village to village looking for day work. Finally, he decides to completely leave his fatherland and sets sail with his family on a ship going to Egypt. The crafty and greedy owner of the ship conceived the idea of selling the wife of Eustathius and receiving for her beauty a large sum of money, landed Eustathius and his children on the coast of Africa and sailed off on the sea with his wife. This violent terrible kidnapping of his wife was hard on Eustathius. But, strengthened by prayer to God and hope, he "bravely endured the capture of his wife". Fully obeying the will of God and relying on the help of the Lord in everything, St. Eustathius and his children went deeply into a strange country to find a place to live and work. But the Lord prepares an even greater test for him. On the way Eustathius meets a shallow, but swift river, and he, having left the oldest son on the shore, carries the youngest one and puts him on the grass. When the father reaches the middle of the river, a lion carries away the oldest son into the desert, and a wolf carries away the youngest son into the bushes. And Eustathius loses everything that was so dear to him in life, and he remains alone, without family, country and home. Enduring all this, he never murmured, but humbly bowed before Providence, went on further and in the next settlement was employed to guard barns. He lived there in scarcity and poverty, continually and ascetically struggling in the effort of prayer. And the Lord did not abandon Eustathius without reward. The need for a good military leader capable of protecting Rome from enemies was apparent, and Emperor Trajan sent warriors to search for Placida. Found by the warriors, Eustathius was restored in rank as captain, gloriously defeating the enemies and became famous for many victories. Meanwhile both of his sons stolen by predatory wild beasts were rescued by shepherds, who raised them and entered them into military service. Both of them were in the army of Placida, distinguished by handsomeness, nobility and courage. Having become friends with each other, they, once having opened to each other the

past as far as they knew it confirmed to them that they were blood brothers. Determined to find their parents and turning for help in this effort in glorious victories and by the goodness of heart of Placida they were led to the revelation that he was their father, and they were his children. Soon, by God's mercy, the wife of Placida was also found. "Protected by the hand of God from the tyranny of the enemy" she was sold into slavery, sincerely working for her master and living in strict piety, "protecting her chastity", and, after the death of the master, she was freed and lived in that settlement where Placida stopped on his return trip to Rome after his glorious victories. Wishing to return to Rome, St. Theopistes asked Placida if she could travel together with the army and, recognizing her husband in him, she was revealed to him. Eustathius returned to Rome with indescribable joy, receiving high honors and wealth through 15 years, his wife and sons and became famous for his great victories. But soon after this, being consumed with envy of the glory of the victorious commander, Emperor Hadrian subjected him and his family to torture because they refused to take part in the Roman pagan celebration for the gained victories. The holy confessors were thrown to the wild beasts, but the beasts would not touch them. Then the furious emperor ordered to cast the holy martyrs in a red hot bronze bull where they died in the year 118. However their holy bodies were not harmed at all by the heat and now repose in Rome in the church of his name. In the services St. Eustathius is glorified as "a second Job", "a pillar of patience", "faithful in life, unshakeable in temptations and victor in travail". Together with St. Eustathius, his wife and children are also glorified in the service although not referred to by name.

*Kontakion, tone 2*

**Having openly imitated the passions of Christ,  
And having zealously drunk of His cup, O Eustathius,  
You became a partaker and fellow-heir of His glory,  
Receiving divine forgiveness from on high from the God of all.**

**Epistle and Gospel:** see Feb. 4 for St. George.

*+ Holy Martyr and Confessor Great Prince Michael and his Boyar Theodore,  
Wonderworkers of Chernigov*

They suffered for Christ by the Horde in 1246. Prince Michael, son Vsevolod Olgovich Chermny, from his youth loved spiritual piety and chastity even more", was distinguished by a pious soul, meekness and humility of spirit, love for neighbor and living participation in the fate of the poor and prayerful asceticism. During the destruction of Kiev by the Tartars, Michael was in Hungary where he asked the Hungarian King Bela to raise a combined force against a common enemy, but he was not able to convince him, so he turned to others for help. After returning to his own country, he settled in the destroyed Chernigov. Summoned by

Batu of the Horde, Michael went with his grandson Boris of Rostov, the Boyar Theodore, etc. On behalf of the khan, the pagan priests demanded that Michael be passed through fire (because of the Tatar's belief that any evil intention of the person going to their sovereign would be destroyed) and to bow down before pagan idols, otherwise threatening him with death. Michael replied: "I am ready to bow before your king, but I, as a Christian, cannot bow down before that which the pagan priests bow down". They and the young Boris and others who were princes in the Horde persuaded him in vain. The holy prince, being deeply faithful, "looking at the reward existing in the heavens", was not frightened "of the rage of the impious king", was prepared for death by partaking with the saints and has courageously confessed Christ. The executioners were called, seized Michael, stretched out his hands and legs, with fists and canes beat him on the chest, and then turned his face to the ground and for a long time trampled down his legs while, finally a certain apostate from the Christian faith, Domanus, cut off his head. The Tatars began to persuade Boyar Theodore, offering him various honors to renounce Christ, but he followed the lead of his prince. He like Michael was tortured and finally beheaded. The bodies of both holy martyrs were thrown as food to dogs, but the Lord wondrously protected them while Christians transferred them to Vladimir and then to Chernigov. Now their relics are in the Archangel Cathedral in Moscow. See Feb. 14.

*Troparion, tone 4*

**Having completed your life as martyrs,  
Having been adorned with crowns of confession flowing up to heaven,  
O Wisest Michael and Valiant Theodore:  
Pray to Christ God to protect your country, Emperor and people,  
According to His great mercy.**

*Kontakion, tone 8*

**Having reckoned an earthly kingdom as nothing,  
Having abandoned transient glory,  
You voluntarily made the ascetic effort.  
You preached the Trinity before impious torturers,  
O Passion-bearer Michael and Valiant Theodore.  
Standing before the powers of the King  
Pray without harm to protect your country, Emperor and people  
Who continually honor you.**

**Their Synaxis is done where their relics lie.**

**Paramoera:** 1) Is. 43:9-14; 2) Wis. 3:1-9; 3) Wis. 4:7-15. **Matins Gospel and Epistle:** see February 4 for St. George. **Gospel:** See February 17.

*John*, Egyptian Confessor, was beheaded during the reign of Maximian in Palestine in the year 310.

*Anastasius and Anastasius*, disciples of St. Maximus the Confessor. One of them is still commemorated on January 21.

*Sts. Theodore and Euprepius*, confessors and disciples of St. Maximus the Confessor.

*Ven. Martyr Hilarion*

Born on the island of Crete, he, being light-headed, accepted Islam in Constantinople, but soon deeply repented and, prepared for torture, fearlessly confessed Christ before the Turkish judge. After severe torture for Christ he was beheaded in the year 1804.

*Holy Faithful Prince Oleg Romanovich of Bryansk, grandson of the Holy Prince Michael of Chernigov.*

Having abandoned his principedom, St. Oleg practiced asceticism as a monk and peacefully died at the end of the 13th century (probably about 1289). He was buried in Sts. Peter and Paul Monastery constructed by him in Bryansk (see the Orlovsky Diocese).

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp. 0341-0343  
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