

# December 18

*E. Holy Martyr Sebastian (defender of the church) and his companions (Nicostratus, master of the rolls, his wife Zoë and his brother Castorius, the Presbyter Tranquillinus and his two sons, Deacons Marcellian and Mark, Claudius the interpreter, his son Symphorian and brothers Victorinus, Tiburtius and Castulus, suffered for Christ in Rome about 287.*



St. Sebastian was the chief of the court guards. Secretly confessing Christ, he used all means to ease the suffering of persecuted Christians and at the same time convinced them to courageously die for Christ. Accused of this, he was turned over to torture: attached to a tree, he was completely pierced with arrows and then hammered to death with canes. Nicostratus (prison chief), Castorius, Claudius, Victorinus and Symphorian, converted to Christ, were drowned in the sea. Tranquillinus was beaten with stones and thrown into the river. Marcellian and Mark taken first for torture were crucified headlong. Tiburtius was beheaded by the sword. Castulus was buried alive. After being tortured for Christ Zoë, formerly a deaf mute healed by Sebastian, was thrown into the Tiber River. The relics of St. Sebastian repose in Rome. The Church hymns for this day are devoted mainly to glorifying Martyr Sebastian. The other holy martyrs Zoë, Mark, Marcellian and Tiburtius are commemorated in these hymns.

## *St. Modestus, Archbishop of Jerusalem*

He was born in Sebastea. Brought up in piety, St. Modestus at first practiced asceticism on Sinai, and then in his declining years was installed as the archbishop of Jerusalem. The hierarch labored hard at the restoration of Jerusalem and its churches destroyed by the Persians, and died in peace in 634. The Prologue narrates this about him: "A certain Jerusalem man's cattle was dying, spewing out a stream of serpent's venom, with diabolical slander, he found a saint for this, who raised up the cattle and destroyed the serpents" <sup>1</sup>).

## *Ven. Florus, Bishop of Amisus*

A court guard and then a patrician in Constantinople, after the death of his wife and children, he left secular vanity and practiced asceticism as a monk in Annapolis. For his holy life he later was elected bishop of Amisus in Cappadocia. He died at the end of the sixth century.

*Ven. Confessor Michael*

He was born in Jerusalem and accused of iconoclasm he underwent exile by Emperor Theophilus. During the reign of Emperor Michael, St. Michael was installed as Synkellos of the Constantinopolitan patriarchy. He died about 845.

*Martyr Ebbiotus* suffered for Christ during the reign of Maximian and died in peace in 318.

*Ven. Sebastian of Poshekhonie*

He was the founder and rector of the Transfiguration Monastery on the Sokhoti River, about 25 versts (16.5 miles) from Poshekhonie, Iaroslavl Province. Ven. Sebastian lived in the 15th century, distinguished by a highly virtuous life and extraordinary diligence. He frequently loved to repeat this to his disciples: "brethren, suffer grief and misfortune that you may avoid eternal torment". He died in 1542. His relics are in a hidden place in his monastery (see Iaroslavl Diocese).

*Saturday before the Nativity of Christ*

**Refer to the Typicon: At the liturgy the Prokeimenon, Alleluia and Communion Hymn is of the day. If it happens that a saint is celebrated, we also sing another Prokeimenon, likewise read two Epistles: first for the Saturday according to the order of the reading pericope and then for the Saint, and then to have likewise two Gospels also.**

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<sup>1</sup>). In ancient Rus the icon of St. Modestus was circulated with cattle before him. By decree of the Holy Synod such an icon was prohibited in 1725.

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0460-0461  
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