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ST. ANDREW



ST. JAMES



ST. JOHN

"The Acts After Acts"

with Protodeacon Michael Schlaack

Adult Education Mini Lecture Series

Without the voice of Church History and Tradition, it is rare to hear about the works and lives of the Disciples after the conclusion of the Book of Acts. During the Apostles Fast this year, Protodeacon Michael will offer an in-person and virtual mini-series detailing the lives and martyrdoms of our Lord's Disciples as they began their ministry.



ST. PHILIP



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MAGDALENE
ORTHODOX CHURCH**



ST. JAMES



ST. JUDE



ST. SIMON



ST. PAUL

“The Acts after Acts” Mini Lecture Series

Guided by Protodeacon Michael Schlaack

In this Packet

1. Acts of the Apostles -Survey of Basic Information
2. Timeline of Martyrdom
3. Map of the Apostles Ministry
4. Workbook of the Actos of the Apostles after the Books of Acts

Bonus Material:

Document outlining St. Paul, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. Photini

Zoom Lectures available on a playlist on our YouTube @SaintMaryMagdalene

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Acts of the Apostles SUMMARY OF BASIC INFORMATION¹

DATE: 85, give or take five to 10 years.

AUTHOR BY TRADITION (SECOND CENTURY) ATTRIBUTION: Luke, a physician, the fellow worker and traveling companion of Paul. Less well attested: a Syrian from Antioch.

AUTHOR DETECTABLE FROM CONTENTS: An educated Greek-speaker and skilled writer who know the Jewish Scriptures in Greek and who was not an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry. He drew on Mark and a collection of sayings the Lord (Q), as well as some other available traditions, oral or written. Probably not raised a Jew, but perhaps a convert to Judaism before he became a Christian. Not a Palestinian.

DIVISION:

1:1-26: INTRODUCTION: PREPARING JESUS' FOLLOWERS FOR THE SPIRIT

1. Jesus instructs his disciples and ascends to heaven (1:1-11).
2. Awaiting the Spirit; replacement of Judas (1:12-26).

2:1-8A: MISSION IN JERUSALEM

1. The Pentecost scene; Peter's sermon (2:1-36).
2. Reception of the message; Jerusalem communal life (2:37-45).
3. Activity, preaching, and trials of the apostles (3:1-5:42).
4. The Hellenists; toleration; Stephen's trial and martyrdom (6:1-8:1a).

8:1B-12:25: MISSION IN SAMARIA AND JUDEA

1. Dispersal from Jerusalem; Philip and Peter in Samaria (8:1b-25).
2. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch en route to Gaza (8:26-40).
3. Saul en route to Damascus; return to Jerusalem and Tarsus (9:1-31).
4. Pete at Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea, and back to Jerusalem (9:32-11:18).
5. Antioch; Jerusalem; Herod's persecution; Peter's departure (11:19-12:25).

13:1-15:35: MISSION OF BARNABAS AND SAUL CONVERTING GENTILES; APPROVAL AT JERUSALEM

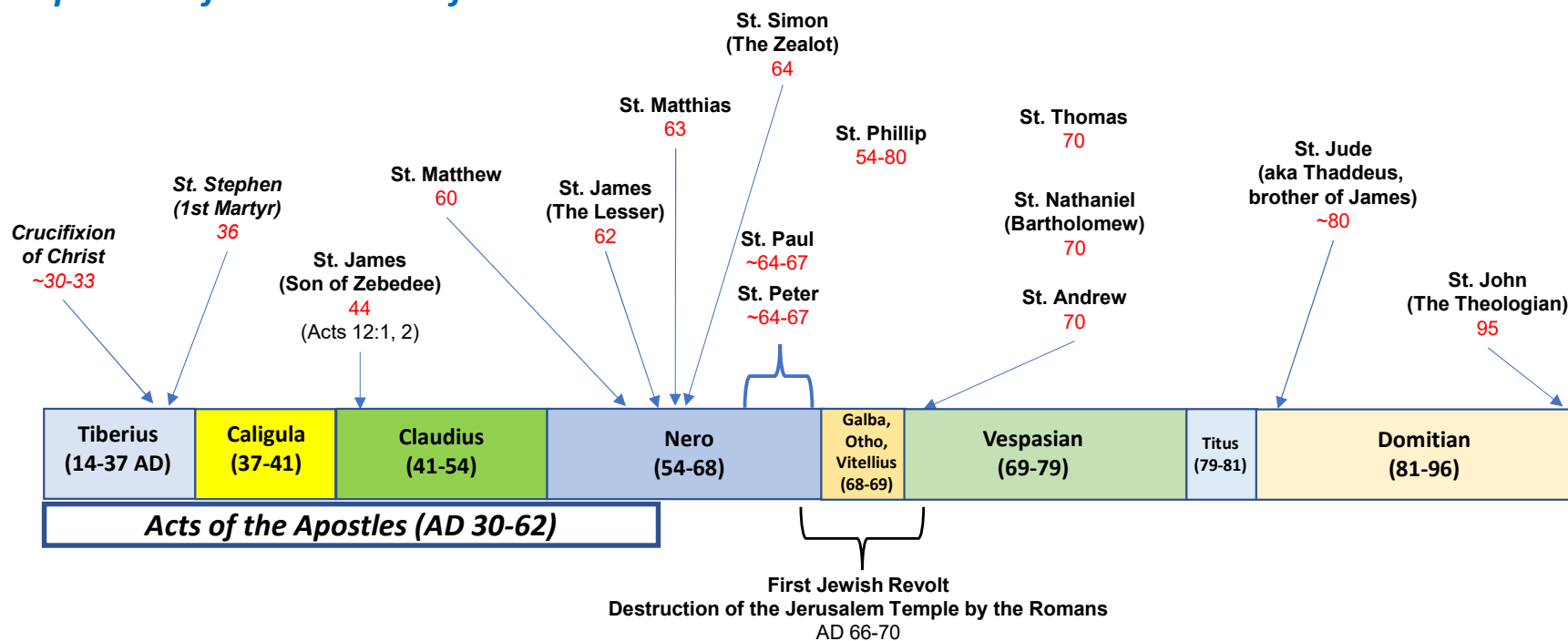
1. Antioch church sends Barnabas and Saul; Mission to Cyprus and SE Asia Minor (13:1-14:28).
2. Jerusalem conference and approval; return to Antioch (15:1-35).

15:36-28:31: MISSION OF PAUL TO THE END OF THE EARTH

1. From Antioch through Asia Minor to Greece and return (15:36-18:22)
2. From Antioch to Ephesus and Greece and return to Caesarea (18:23-21:14).
3. Arrest in Jerusalem; Imprisonment and trials in Caesarea (21:15-26:32).
4. Journey to Rome as a prisoner (27:1-28:14a).
5. Paul at Rome (28:14b-31).

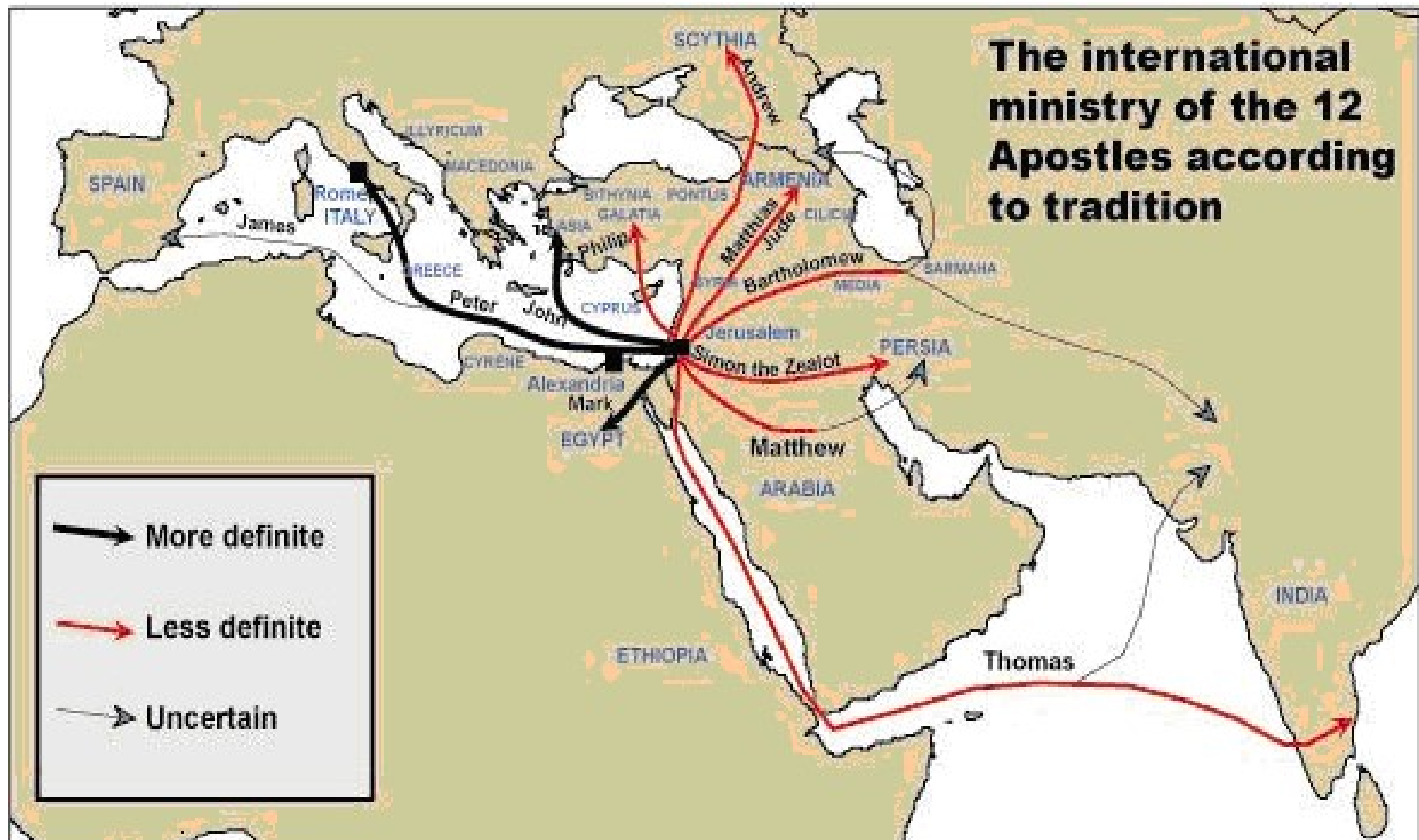
¹ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament, Abridged Edition*, ed. Marion L. Soards, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 99.

The Apostles After the Book of Acts



Source:

Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament, Abridged Edition*,
ed. Marion L. Soards, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), xix-xxii.



The Acts for the Apostles After the Book of Acts

June 2023

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Introduction

The works of the Holy Apostles do not end with the information we have in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. Holy Church Tradition provides us with a fascinating account of the further “Acts for the Apostles.” We will explore what the Church has to say to help fill in the gaps between the end of the Scriptures and martyrdom of the Holy Apostles of Christ.

The purpose of this study is to provide some additional background into the later life of the Holy Apostles. The focus will be on the Orthodox Christian resources and traditions. The dates and other details of the martyrdom of the Saints may vary depending on the source, so to establish a baseline of authority, I will be focusing on the Orthodox tradition. This is not to imply that it is the only source and the most accurate; it will be used as the “jumping-off” point for all further discussions.

The Apostles discussed in this study are the original eleven chosen by Christ as described in Mark 3:16-18: “*Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean.*” Judas Iscariot has been omitted since the end of his life is described in Matt. 27:1-10. St. Paul has been omitted as well, since he was not part of the original apostles, and his life is well documented through his epistle writings. I have included St. Mathias since he was chosen early in the post-Resurrection Church to take the place of Judas Iscariot.

The information covering the lives of the Apostles provided below is extracted from the OCA.org website unless otherwise noted. The order of the presentation is based on the accepted date of martyrdom.

The Twelve Apostles in the New Testament.

The table below lists the twelve apostles as described in the Synoptic Gospels.

Matthew (10:2-4)	Luke (6:14-16)	Mark (3:16-19)
Simon, also known as Peter	Simon, whom he named Peter	Simon (to whom he gave the name, Peter)
Andrew	Andrew,	James, the son of Zebedee
James, son of Zebedee	James and,	John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder)
John (brother of James)	John	Andrew
Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew
Thomas	Matthew (<i>aka Levi</i>)	Mathew (<i>aka Levi</i>)
Matthew the tax collector (<i>aka Levi</i>)	Thomas	Thomas
James, son of Alphaeus	James, son of Alphaeus	James son of Alphaeus
Thaddeus* (<i>aka Jude</i>)	Simon, who is called the Zealot	Thaddeus (<i>aka Jude</i>)
Simon the Cananaean	Judas, son of James (<i>aka Jude</i>)	Simon the Cananaean
Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.	Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor	Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

*Other ancient authorities read *Lebbaeus*, or *Lebbaeus called Thaddeus*.¹

¹ The Oxford Annotated Bible, Revised 4th Ed., Michael D. Coogan, ed., 2010, Oxford University Press: New York, 1760.

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Apostle James the Brother of St. John the Theologian (Son of Zebedee)

Commemorated on April 30 (Martyred 44 AD)

The Holy Apostle James, the son of Zebedee, was the brother of Saint John the Theologian, and one of the Twelve Apostles. He and his brother, Saint John, were called to be Apostles by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who called them the “Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17). It was this James, with John and Peter, who witnessed the Raising of the Daughter of Jairus, the Lord’s Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Saint James, after the Descent of the Holy Spirit, preached in Spain and in other lands, and then he returned to Jerusalem. He openly and boldly preached Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, and he denounced the Pharisees and the Scribes with the words of Holy Scripture, reproaching them for their malice of heart and unbelief.

The Jews could not prevail against Saint James, and so they hired the sorcerer Hermogenes to dispute with the apostle and refute his arguments that Christ was the promised Messiah Who had come into the world. The sorcerer sent to the apostle his pupil Philetus, who was converted to belief in Christ.

Hermogenes sent demons to capture James and Philetus. But as the demons drew near the house of the James and Philetus, the angel of the Lord, at the command of God, captured the demons, bound and tormented them. After pleading with James, the demons were freed on the condition that they bring Hermogenes bound to them. Since God does not desire the death of anyone, James released the tormented Hermogenes and gave him his staff as protection against the demons.²

Then Hermogenes himself became persuaded of the power of God, he burned his books of magic, accepted holy Baptism, and became a true follower of Christ.

The Jews persuaded Herod Agrippa (40-44) to arrest the Apostle James and sentence him to death (Acts 12:1-2). The Church historian and bishop Eusebius (*Born in Palestine c. 260; Died: May 30, 339*) provides some of the details of the saint’s execution (CHURCH HISTORY II, 9). Saint James calmly heard the death sentence and continued to bear witness to Christ. Along the way to his execution, James met a man on the side of the road who was paralyzed and was healed immediately by the prayers of the condemned saint.³

One of the false witnesses, whose name was Josiah, was struck by the courage of Saint James. He came to believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah. When they led the apostle forth to execution, Josiah fell at his feet, repenting of his sin and asking forgiveness. The apostle embraced him, gave him a kiss and said, “Peace and forgiveness to you.” Then Josiah confessed his faith in Christ before everyone, and he was beheaded with Saint James in the year 44 at Jerusalem. Saint James was the first of the Apostles to die as a martyr.

² *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, trans. Rdr. Isaac E. Lambertsen, (Buena Vista, CO: Holy Apostles Convent, 2019), 77.

³ *Ibid*, 76.

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After his beheading, the body of St. James was taken by his disciples to Spain where miracles and healings are credited to the Holy relics.⁴

Apostle and Evangelist Matthew

Commemorated on November 16 (Martyred 60 AD)

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, was also named Levi (Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27); he was one of the Twelve Apostles (Mark 3:18; Luke 6:45; Acts 1:13), and was brother of the Apostle James Alphaeus (Mark 2:14). He was a publican, or tax-collector for Rome, in a time when the Jews were under the rule of the Roman Empire. He lived in the Galilean city of Capernaum. When Matthew heard the voice of Jesus Christ: "Come, follow Me" (Mt. 9:9), he left everything and followed the Savior. Christ and His disciples did not refuse Matthew's invitation and they visited his house, where they shared table with the publican's friends and acquaintances. Like the host, they were also publicans and known sinners. This event disturbed the pharisees and scribes a great deal.

Publicans who collected taxes from their countrymen did this with great profit for themselves. Usually greedy and cruel people, the Jews considered them pernicious betrayers of their country and religion. The word "publican" for the Jews had the connotation of "public sinner" and "idol-worshipper." To even speak with a tax-collector was considered a sin, and to associate with one was defilement. But the Jewish teachers were not able to comprehend that the Lord had "come to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mt. 9:13).

Matthew, acknowledging his sinfulness, repaid fourfold anyone he had cheated, and he distributed his remaining possessions to the poor, and he followed after Christ with the other apostles. Saint Matthew was attentive to the instructions of the Divine Teacher, he beheld His innumerable miracles, he went together with the Twelve Apostles preaching to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 10:6). He was a witness to the suffering, death, and Resurrection of the Savior, and of His glorious Ascension into Heaven.

Having received the grace of the Holy Spirit, which descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, Saint Matthew preached in Palestine for several years. At the request of the Jewish converts at Jerusalem, the holy Apostle Matthew wrote his Gospel describing the earthly life of the Savior, before leaving to preach the Gospel in faraway lands.

In the order of the books of the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew comes first. Palestine is said to be the place where the Gospel was written. Saint Matthew wrote in Aramaic, and then it was translated into Greek. The Aramaic text has not survived, but many of the linguistic and cultural-historical peculiarities of the Greek translation give indications of it. The original text in Aramaic was believed to have been written some eight years after the Ascension of Christ.⁵

The Apostle Matthew preached among people who were awaiting the Messiah. His Gospel manifests itself as a vivid proof that Jesus Christ is the Messiah foretold by the prophets, and that there would not be another (Mt. 11:3).

⁴ *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, 74-75.

⁵ *Ibid*, 211.

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The holy Apostle brought the Gospel of Christ to Syria, Media, Persia, Parthia, and finishing his preaching in Ethiopia with a martyr's death. This land was inhabited by tribes of cannibals with primitive customs and beliefs.

The holy Apostle Matthew converted some of the idol-worshippers to faith in Christ. He founded the Church and built a temple in the city of Mirmena, establishing there his companion Platon as bishop.

When the holy apostle was fervently entreating God for the conversion of the Ethiopians the Lord Himself appeared to him in the form of a youth. He gave him a staff and commanded him to plant it at the doors of the church. The Lord said that a tree would grow from this staff, and it would bear fruit, and from its roots would flow a stream of water. When the Ethiopians washed themselves in the water and ate the fruit, they lost their wild ways and became gentle and good.

When the holy apostle carried the staff towards the church, he was met by the wife and son of the ruler of the land, Fulvian, who were afflicted by unclean spirits. In the Name of Christ, the holy apostle healed them. This miracle converted several of the pagans to the Lord. But the ruler did not want his subjects to become Christians and cease worshiping the pagan gods. He accused the apostle of sorcery and gave orders to execute him.

They put Saint Matthew head downwards, piled up brushwood and ignited it. When the fire flared up, everyone then saw that the fire did not harm Saint Matthew. Then Fulvian gave orders to add more wood to the fire, and frenzied with boldness, he commanded twelve idols around the fire. But the flames melted the idols and flared up toward Fulvian. The frightened Ethiopian turned to the saint with an entreaty for mercy, and by the prayer of the martyr the flame went out. The body of the holy apostle remained unharmed, and he departed to the Lord.

The ruler Fulvian deeply repented his deed, but still he had doubts. By his command, they put the body of Saint Matthew into an iron coffin and threw it into the sea. In doing this Fulvian said that if the God of Matthew would preserve the body of the apostle in the water as He preserved him in the fire, then this would be proper reason to worship this One True God.

That night the Apostle Matthew appeared to Bishop Platon in a dream and commanded him to go with clergy to the shore of the sea and to find his body there. The righteous Fulvian and his retinue went with the bishop to the shore of the sea. The coffin carried by the waves was taken to the church built by the apostle. Then Fulvian begged forgiveness of the holy Apostle Matthew, after which Bishop Platon baptized him, giving him the name Matthew in obedience to a command of God.

Soon Saint Fulvian-Matthew abdicated his rule and became a presbyter. Upon the death of Bishop Platon, the Apostle Matthew appeared to him and exhorted him to head the Ethiopian Church. Having become a bishop, Saint Fulvian-Matthew toiled at preaching the Word of God, continuing the work of his heavenly patron.

Apostle James, son of Alphaeus (aka: "James the Lesser")

Commemorated on October 9 (Martyred 62 AD)

Holy Apostle James the son of Alphaeus one of the Twelve Apostles, was the brother of the holy Evangelist Matthew. He heard the Lord's words and witnessed His miracles. After the Descent of the Holy

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Spirit, the Apostle James Alphaeus and the Apostle Andrew the First-Called (November 30), made missionary journeys preaching in Judea, Edessa, Gaza, Eleutheropolis, proclaiming the Gospel, healing all sorts of sickness and disease, and converting many to the path of salvation.

Burning with zeal for the Lord, James smashed idols, destroyed their temples, healed diseases and drove out evil spirits. As a result of his work, he brought many to Christ acquired the name, the "Divine Seed." St. James finished his apostolic work in the Egyptian city of Ostrachina, where he was crucified on the cross by the pagans.⁶

Apostle Peter

Commemorated on June 29 (Martyred 67 AD)

Besides what we know about St. Peter from the Gospels and the Acts, St. Symeon Metaphrastes (*Commemorated November 9; died ~1000*) fills in some of the lesser-known spiritual feats.

From Jerusalem, St. Peter went to Caesarea of Palestine, where he consecrated a bishop from among the priests following him. He continued his journeys, preaching and healing as well as consecrating bishops in the cities he visited.

In Antioch, Peter encountered the Samaritan sorcerer Simon Magus, who was hiding from soldiers sent by Emperor Claudius to arrest him. Hearing that Peter was in Antioch, Simon Magus left for Judea. While in Antioch, Peter healed the sick and consecrated many bishops to serve the growing Church in the areas surrounding Antioch. Peter eventually returned to Jerusalem and there meets the Apostle Paul (Gal. 1:18).

Peter & Simon Magus

Peter received a vision from the Lord Jesus Christ to "go to the West: the time hath come for it to be enlightened by thy preaching."⁷ At that time, Simon Magus had already been arrested and brought to Rome to be punished for his deeds but was able to trick the officials through his magic and was being venerated as a deity. Simon Magus was able to use his sorcerer's skills to trick the Emperor Claudius, who ordered that a statue of Simon be made and set up between the two bridges over the Tiber River with the following inscription: "To Simon, the holy god."⁸

Peter traveled from Jerusalem to Antioch where he met the holy Apostle Paul and proceeded to consecrate several bishops. Peter moved on to Macedonia where he continued to consecrate bishops to support the churches in those areas. Afterwards, Peter proceeded to Rome.

While in Rome, Peter preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and converted many to the Christian faith. Seeing the success of Peter's ministry in Rome, Simon Magus jealously set out to undermine Peter's preaching and openly declared his opposition of Peter throughout the city. Simon deluded people by conjuring up ghosts which appeared to surround him, which the people believed to be the souls of the dead. Simon also appeared to heal the lame, which was nothing more than an illusion set to trick the people into believing that Simon was a god. Peter would only have to look upon the works of Simon and the illusions vanished.

Learning that Simon was calling himself the Christ and was working great miracles, Peter went to the house of Simon to confront him. Upon reaching Simon's home, Peter found the gate guarded by a black

⁶ *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, 219.

⁷ *Ibid*, 12.

⁸ *Ibid*.

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dog which the people claimed could read the thoughts of men and would slay anyone who thought badly of Simon. Peter announced boldly that Simon Magus was from the devil and ordered the dog to inform Simon that Peter wanted to meet. The dog, in a human voice that all could hear, conveyed the message to his master and allowed Peter to enter the house.⁹

The death of a noble woman's young son brought Peter and Simon Magus to the woman's house. Simon proposed a challenge to Peter: "If I raise the youth, will you slay Peter?"¹⁰ The crowd of onlookers agreed and through the use of sorcery, Simon made it appear that the dead boy moved his head, amazing and convincing the crowd. Peter then announced: "If this youth is really alive, let him rise up and speak and walk; until ye see this, doubt not that Simon is deceiving you with his sorcery."¹¹

Simon invoked the power of the demons but was unable to raise the dead youth. Attempting to flee in shame, Simon was restrained by the crowd. Then Peter, invoking the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, prayed that life would be restored to dead boy. Peter called for the dead youth to arise, and the boy opened his eyes and began to walk and speak. The account was first related by Hegesippus (a Palestinian Christian chronicler; died in c. 180 AD) and later corroborated by Marcelus the Roman, who was formally a disciple of Simon Magus but was enlightened and baptized by Peter.

In another incident, Simon claimed that he could raise himself from the dead after being decapitated. To fool the people, Simon had a sheep disguised as a human on the chop block. Peter revealed the trick and all saw that it was a sheep that was beheaded and not Simon Magus.

Unable to defeat Peter through his sorcery and trickery, Simon vowed to fly up to heaven. Summoning all his demons, Simon, with a laurel wreath on his head, stood in the city center of Rome and began to be lifted by the demons. "Romans, since ye have hitherto remained in your ignorance and, abandoning me, have followed after Peter, I am leaving you; I will no longer protect this city, but will command mine angels to take me up in their arms, as ye watch and will ascend to my father in heaven, from whence I shall send down upon you great punishments for not having heeded my words and believed in my deeds."¹²

After saying this, the sorcerer rose into the air carried by demons. The people watching were amazed, having never before witnessed someone flying through the air. But Peter prayed to God and then commanded the demons to release Simon while still in mid-air. Simon fell to the earth breaking his bones. The people then praised and believed in the God of Peter.

Although severely injured, Simon remained alive long enough to realize the errors of his ways, filling him with shame. By the next day, after suffering all night in agony, Simon vomited his soul, surrendering it to the demons, who carried it down to hell. Peter then began to teach the people about the true God and His only Son, Jesus Christ. As a result, many people were converted to the Christian faith.

After learning of the shameful death of his friend Simon Magus, the Emperor Nero became angry with Peter but waited several years before ordering his execution. After consecrating Linus as the bishop of Rome, Peter traveled to Spain and then to Carthage and Egypt, consecrating bishops along the way. Receiving a vision, Peter returned to Jerusalem to be present for the Dormition of the Theotokos, which took place about 25 years after Christ's Ascension.¹³

⁹ *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, 14.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

¹² *Ibid*, 17.

¹³ *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, 19.

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Peter's missionary travels eventually took him to Britain where he received a vision informing him that the time had come for his martyrdom in Rome. Peter arrived in Rome during the 12th year of the reign of Nero, and consecrated Clement as the bishop of Rome. Clement was of noble birth but was separated from his parents and brothers during a storm at sea, so he decided to search for them. During his travels he arrived in Alexandria and met the Apostles Barnabas and Peter. There he also found his two missing brothers, Faustinus and Faustinian, who were followers of Peter. He also found his mother and father as well. His family reunited, Clement returned to Rome and was responsible for spreading the Gospel among many of the noble men and women of the city.

Two women who were converted and baptized happened to be two of Nero's concubines. Having received baptism, they decided to lead a life of chastity, infuriating the emperor. As a result of this insult, and the death of his friend, Simon Magus, Nero sought to put Peter to death. According to Hegesippus, Peter originally was convinced to hide himself outside of the city, but that night the Lord Jesus Christ visited him in a dream. Peter asked the Lord: "Whither goest Thou, Lord?" And the Lord answered him, "I go to Rome, to be crucified anew!" By this vision Peter understood that he needed to prepare for his own martyrdom.¹⁴

According to St. Symeon Metaphrastes, Peter was arrested along with Clement and other faithful leaders for the Church. Clement and the others were ordered to be decapitated, but Peter was to be crucified. Since he was a kinsman of the emperor, Clement was freed but the other leaders of the Church were executed. Considering himself unworthy to be crucified in the same manner as his Lord, Peter asked to be hung on the cross upside down so that he could see heaven. Peter surrendered his soul in the year 67. Clement removed Peter's body from the cross and buried it along with the other martyrs of the Church.

Apostle Matthias of the Seventy

Commemorated on August 9 (Martyred ~63 AD)

The Holy Apostle Matthias was born at Bethlehem of the Tribe of Judah. From his early childhood he studied the Law of God under the guidance of Saint Simeon the God-Receiver (February 3).

When the Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself to the world, Saint Matthias believed in Him as the Messiah, followed constantly after Him and was numbered among the Seventy Apostles, whom the Lord "sent them two by two before His face" (Luke 10:1).

After the Ascension of the Savior, Saint Matthias was chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve Apostles (Acts 1:15-26). After the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Matthias preached the Gospel at Jerusalem and in Judea together with the other Apostles (Acts 6:2, 8:14). From Jerusalem he went with the Apostles Peter and Andrew to Syrian Antioch and was in the Cappadocian city of Tiana and Sinope. Here the Apostle Matthias was locked in prison, from which he was miraculously freed by Saint Andrew the First-Called.

The Apostle Matthias journeyed after this to Amasea, a city on the shore of the sea. During a three-year journey of the Apostle Andrew, Saint Matthias was with him at Edessa and Sebaste. According to Church

¹⁴ Ibid, 22.

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Tradition, he was preaching at Pontine Ethiopia (presently Western Georgia) and Macedonia. He was frequently subjected to deadly peril, but the Lord preserved him to preach the Gospel.

Once, pagans forced the saint to drink a poison potion. He drank it, and not only did he himself remain unharmed, but he also healed other prisoners who had been blinded by the potion. When Saint Matthias left the prison, the pagans searched for him in vain, for he had become invisible to them. Another time, when the pagans had become enraged intending to kill the Apostle, the earth opened up and engulfed them.

The Apostle Matthias returned to Judea and did not cease to enlighten his countrymen with the light of Christ's teachings. He worked great miracles in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and he converted a great many to faith in Christ.

The Jewish High Priest Ananias hated Christ and earlier had commanded the Apostle James, Brother of the Lord, to be flung down from the heights of the Temple, and now he ordered that the Apostle Matthias be arrested and brought for judgment before the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem.

The impious Ananias uttered a speech in which he blasphemously slandered the Lord. Using the prophecies of the Old Testament, the Apostle Matthias demonstrated that Jesus Christ is the True God, the promised Messiah, the Son of God, Consubstantial and Coeternal with God the Father. After these words the Apostle Matthias was sentenced to death by the Sanhedrin and stoned. After his death by stoning, the high priest ordered that the Holy Apostle be beheaded with the sword, so to please the Romans.¹⁵ The Apostle Matthias received the martyr's crown of glory in the year 63.

Holy, Glorious Apostle Thomas

Commemorated on October 6 (Martyred ~70 AD)

The Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas was born in the Galilean city of Pansada and was a fisherman. Hearing the good tidings of Jesus Christ, he left all and followed after Him. The Apostle Thomas is included in the number of the holy Twelve Apostles of the Savior.

According to Holy Scripture, the holy Apostle Thomas did not believe the reports of the other disciples about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).

On the eighth day after the Resurrection, the Lord appeared to the Apostle Thomas and showed him His wounds. "My Lord and my God," the Apostle cried out (John 20:28). "Thomas, being once weaker in faith than the other apostles," says Saint John Chrysostom, "toiled through the grace of God more bravely, more zealously and tirelessly than them all, so that he went preaching over nearly all the earth, not fearing to proclaim the Word of God to savage nations."

Some icons depicting this event are inscribed "The Doubting Thomas." This is incorrect. In Greek, the inscription reads, "The Touching of Thomas." In Slavonic, it says, "The Belief of Thomas." When Saint Thomas touched the Life-giving side of the Lord, he no longer had any doubts.

¹⁵ *The Lives of the Holy Saints*, 240.

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According to Church Tradition, the holy Apostle Thomas founded Christian churches in Palestine, Mesopotamia, Parthia, Ethiopia and India.

While on his way to India, Thomas and his traveling companion stopped in the city of Andrapolis. At that time the king was celebrating the wedding of his daughter and he ordered that everyone should join in with the wedding feast. Thomas, in fear of the king of that city, obeyed and attended the party, although he sat alone and did not eat or drink. The wine master of the feast, seeing that Thomas was not drinking or joining in on the revelry, slapped him on the face. Thomas replied to the wine master: "May the Lord reward thee in this life! May I see the hand which struck me dragged about by a dog in the sight of many." The wine master later went out to the well to get water to mingle the wine and was attacked by a lion. After the lion left, a pack of dogs proceeded to dismember the wine master's body. One of the dogs then entered the banquet hall and dropped the hand in sight of everyone.¹⁶

When the king heard about the events between Thomas and the wine master, he invited Thomas to his house to bless the newly wedded couple. Thomas spent the evening preaching the gospel to the young couple, who decided to dedicate their lives to Christ in chasity. When the king learned of this he knew that Thomas had influendced the young couple's decision, but by that time Thomas had already left to continue his journey to India.¹⁷

Presenting himself to King Gundafor in India, Thomas proceeded to make scetches for the king of buildings rendered in the Greek style. The king ordered the buildings to be built according to Thomas' scetches. The king was extremely pleased with the plans, earning the apostle large amounts of gold, silver, wine, oil and other expensive items. Rather that keep the payment or use it for the construction of the building, Thomas returned to the sight of the building he planned and distributed the treasure to poor, preaching the Gospel and converting many to Christ.¹⁸

At that time the young couple who Thomas ministered to in Andrapolis found the holy apostle in India. Thomas instructed them in the Christian faith, baptizing the as Pelagia, and the man was baptized as Dionysius. The woman would later die a martyr's death and the man would become a bishop. Returning to their native land, they spread the word of God and established churches in the cites.¹⁹

After two years the king inquired about the progress of the construction of his new palace. The apostle told the king that everything was completed except for the roof. Delighted with the report, the king thought Thomas was actually constructing the building and sent more gold so that a magnificent roof could be constructed. But after receiving the gold, Thomas again returned to the construction site and distributed the treasure to the poor and needy.²⁰

The king, learning that his palace had never been constructed and that all his treasure was given away to the poor became extremely angry and orded Thomas to be seized and brougjt before the king. When asked about the new palace, Thomas replied: "During thy lifetime thou canst not see this palace; but

¹⁶ *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, 188.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 189.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 191.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 192.

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when thou wilt depart from this life, though wilt see it and dwelling in it with joy, thou shalt live there for eternity."²¹ Thomas and his companion were thrown in prison to be flayed alive and burning on a pyre.

While in prison, the king's brother, Gad, became ill and died. An angel showed Gad the great palace that his brother the king had built with the funds used by Thomas, and having his soul returned to his body, Gad then awoke as if sleeping and went to his brother the king and requested to have the heavenly palace given to him in exchange for all his worldly possessions. The king instead offered to release Thomas so that he may also build the heavenly palace for the king's brother. Thomas was released from prison and proceeded to witness the Gospel to the two brothers, who would become faithful Christians, loving God and giving much of their wealth to the poor.²²

[Read the account of Thomas at the Dormition of the Theotokos, *The Lives of the Holy Apostle*, 196-98.]

Preaching the Gospel earned him a martyr's death. For having converted the wife and son of the prefect of the Indian city of Meliapur [Melipur], the holy apostle was locked up in prison, suffered torture, and finally, pierced with five spears, he departed to the Lord. Part of the relics of the holy Apostle Thomas are in India, in Hungary and on Mt. Athos. The name of the Apostle Thomas is associated with the Arabian (or Arapet) Icon of the Mother of God (September 6).

Apostle Bartholomew of the Twelve

Commemorated on June 11 (Martyred ~70 AD)

The Holy Apostle Bartholomew was born at Cana of Galilee and was one of the Twelve Apostles of Christ. After the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, it fell by lot to the holy Apostles Bartholomew and Philip (November 14) to preach the Gospel in Syria and Asia Minor. In their preaching they wandered through various cities, and then met up again. Accompanying the holy Apostle Philip was his sister, the holy virgin Saint Mariamne.

Traversing the cities of Syria and Myzia, they underwent much hardship and tribulations, they were stoned and they were locked up in prison. In one of the villages they met up with the Apostle John the Theologian, and together they set off to Phrygia. In the city of Hieropolis by the power of their prayers they destroyed an enormous viper, which the pagans worshipped as a god. The holy Apostles Bartholomew and Philip with his sister confirmed their preaching with many miracles.

At Hieropolis there lived a man by the name of Stachys, who had been blind for 40 years. When he received healing, he then believed in Christ and was baptized. News of this spread throughout the city, and a multitude of the people thronged to the house where the apostles were staying. The sick and those beset by demons were released from their infirmities, and many were baptized. The wife of the governor of the city, a man named Nicanor, was bitten by a snake and near death. Hearing that the holy Apostles Philip and Bartholomew in the home of Stachys, she commanded her servants to bring the apostles. The governor's wife was healed and as a result, came to believe in Christ.²³

²¹ *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, 192.

²² *Ibid*, 194.

²³ *Ibid*, 174-5.

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Enraged that his wife was now a believer in Christ, Nicanor gave orders to arrest the preachers and throw them in prison, and to burn down the house of Stachys. At the trial pagan priests came forth with the complaint that the strangers were turning people away from the worship of the ancestral gods.

Thinking that perhaps some sort of magic power was hidden away in the clothes of the apostles, the prefect gave orders to strip them. But Saint Mariamne became like a fiery torch before their eyes, and none dared touch her. They sentenced the saints to death. The Apostle Philip was crucified upside down. Suddenly there was an earthquake, and a fissure in the earth swallowed up the prefect of the city, together with the pagan priests and many of the people. Others took fright and rushed to take down the apostles from the crosses. Since the Apostle Bartholomew had not been suspended very high, they soon managed to take him down. The Apostle Philip, however, had died. After making Stachys Bishop of Hieropolis, the Apostle Bartholomew and Saint Mariamne left the city and moved on.

Preaching the Word of God, Mariamne arrived in Lykaonia, where she peacefully died (February 17). The Apostle Bartholomew went to India, where he translated the Gospel of Matthew into their language, and he converted many pagans to Christ. He also visited Greater Armenia (the country between the River Kura and the upper stretches of the Tigrus and Euphrates Rivers), where he worked many miracles and healed the daughter of King Polymios from the demons afflicting her. In gratitude, the king sent gifts to the apostle, who refused to accept them, saying that he sought only the salvation of the souls of mankind.

Then Polymios together with his wife, daughter, and many of those close to them accepted Baptism. And people from more than ten cities of Greater Armenia followed their example. But through the intrigues of the pagan priests, the Apostle Bartholomew was seized by the king's brother Astiagus in the city of Alban (now the city of Baku), and crucified upside down. But even from the cross he did not cease to proclaim the good news about Christ the Savior. Finally, on orders from Astiagus, they flayed the skin from the Apostle Bartholomew and cut off his head. Believers placed his relics in a leaden coffin and buried him.

In about the year 508 the holy relics of the Apostle Bartholomew were transferred to Mesopotamia, to the city of Dara. When the Persians seized the city in 574, Christians took the relics of the Apostle Bartholomew with them when they fled to the shores of the Black Sea. But since the enemy overtook them there, they were compelled to leave the coffin behind, and the pagans threw it into the sea. By the power of God the coffin miraculously arrived on the island of Lipari. In the ninth century, after the taking of the island by the Arabs, the holy relics were transferred to the Neapolitan city of Beneventum in Italy, and in the tenth century part of the relics were transferred to Rome.

The holy Apostle Bartholomew is mentioned in the Life of Saint Joseph the Hymnographer (*Commemorated: April 4; died: April 3, 866*). Having received from a certain man part of the relics of the Apostle Bartholomew, Saint Joseph conveyed them to his own monastery near Constantinople, and he built a church in the name of the Apostle Bartholomew, placing in it a portion of the relics. Saint Joseph ardently desired to compose hymns of praise in honor of the saint, and he fervently besought God to grant him the ability to do so.

On the Feast Day in memory of the Apostle Bartholomew, Saint Joseph saw him at the altar. He beckoned to Joseph and took the holy Gospel from the altar table and pressed it to his bosom with the words, "May the Lord bless you, and may your song delight the whole world." And from that time Saint Joseph began to write hymns and canons to adorn not only the Feast Day of the Apostle Bartholomew, but also the Feast days of many other saints, composing about 300 canons in all.

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Saints John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Epiphanius of Cyprus and certain other teachers of the Church regard the Apostle Bartholomew as being the same person as Nathanael (John 1:45-51, 21:2). According to *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (page 796), Nathanael was thought to be the same person as Bartholomew, because the latter's name followed Philip's in three lists of the Apostles (Matthew 10:2-5; Mark 3:14-19; and Luke 6:14-16). The Synoptic Gospels mention Bartholomew as one of the Twelve Apostles, but they do not mention Nathanael. On the other hand, Saint John's Gospel makes mention of Nathanael, but not of Bartholomew.

Apostle Andrew, the Holy and All-Praised First-Called

Commemorated on November 30 (Martyred ~70 AD)

The Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called was the first of the Apostles to follow Christ, and he later brought his own brother, the holy Apostle Peter, to Christ (John 1:35-42). The future apostle was from Bethsaida, and from his youth he turned with all his soul to God. He did not enter into marriage, and he worked with his brother as a fisherman. When the holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John began to preach, Saint Andrew became his closest disciple. Declaring Christ to be the Lamb of God, Saint John the Baptist himself sent to Christ his own two disciples, the future Apostles Andrew and John the Theologian.

After the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, Saint Andrew went to the Eastern lands preaching the Word of God. He went through Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, he reached the River Danube, went along the coast of the Black Sea, through Crimea, the Black Sea region and along the River Dniepr he climbed to the place where the city of Kiev now stands.

He stopped overnight on the hills of Kiev. Rising in the morning, he said to those disciples that were with him: "See these hills? Upon these hills shall shine forth the beneficence of God, and there will be a great city here, and God shall raise up many churches." The apostle went up around the hills, blessed them and set up a cross. Having prayed, he went up even further along the Dniepr and reached a settlement of the Slavs, where Novgorod was built. From here the apostle went through the land of the Varangians towards Rome for preaching, and again he returned to Thrace, where in the small village of Byzantium, the future Constantinople, he founded the Church of Christ. The name of the holy Apostle Andrew links the mother, the Church of Constantinople, with her daughter, the Russian Church.

On his journeys the First-Called Apostle endured many sufferings and torments from pagans: they cast him out of their cities and they beat him. In Sinope they pelted him with stones, but remaining unharmed, the persistent disciple of Christ continued to preach to people about the Savior. Through the prayers of the Apostle, the Lord worked miracles. By the labors of the holy Apostle Andrew, Christian Churches were established, for which he provided bishops and clergy. The final city to which the Apostle came was the city of Patra, where he was destined to suffer martyrdom.

The Lord worked many miracles through His disciple in Patra. The infirm were made whole, and the blind received their sight. Through the prayers of the Apostle, the illustrious citizen Sosios recovered from serious illness and Maximilla and Stratokles, the wife and brother of the governor of Patra, were healed. The miracles accomplished by the Apostle and his fiery speech enlightened almost all the citizens of the city of Patra with the true Faith.

Few pagans remained at Patra, but among them was the prefect of the city, Aegeatos. The Apostle Andrew repeatedly turned to him with the words of the Gospel. But even the miracles of the Apostle did not convince Aegeatos. The holy Apostle with love and humility appealed to his soul, striving to reveal to

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him the Christian mystery of life eternal, through the wonderworking power of the Holy Cross of the Lord. The angry Aegeatos gave orders to crucify the apostle. The pagan thought he might undo Saint Andrew's preaching if he were to put him to death on the cross.

Saint Andrew the First-Called accepted the decision of the prefect with joy and with prayer to the Lord, and went willingly to the place of execution. In order to prolong the suffering of the saint, Aegeatos gave orders not to nail the saint's hands and feet, but to tie them to the cross. For two days the apostle taught the citizens who gathered about. The people, in listening to him, with all their souls pitied him and tried to take Saint Andrew down from the cross. Fearing a riot of the people, Aegeatos gave orders to stop the execution. But the holy apostle began to pray that the Lord would grant him death on the cross. Just as the soldiers tried to take hold of the Apostle Andrew, they lost control of their hands. The crucified apostle, having given glory to God, said: "Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit." Then a blazing ray of divine light illumined the cross and the martyr crucified upon it. When the light faded, the holy Apostle Andrew had already given up his holy soul to the Lord. Maximilla, the wife of the prefect, had the body of the saint taken down from the cross, and buried him with honor.

A few centuries later, under the emperor Constantine the Great, the relics of the holy Apostle Andrew were solemnly transferred to Constantinople and placed in the church of the Holy Apostles beside the relics of the holy Evangelist Luke and Saint Paul's disciple Saint Timothy.

Apostle Simon the Zealot

Commemorated on May 10 (Martyred 74 AD)

Saint Simon was from Cana in Galilee and was known to the Lord and His Mother. Tradition says that he was the bridegroom at the wedding where the Savior performed His first miracle. After witnessing the miracle of the water which had been turned into wine, he became a zealous follower of Christ. For this reason, he is known as Saint Simon the Zealot.

Saint Simon was one of the twelve Apostles and received the Holy Spirit with the others on Pentecost. He traveled to many places from Britain to the Black Sea, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. After winning many pagans to the Lord, Saint Simon suffered martyrdom by crucifixion.

Saint Demetrius of Rostov says that this Saint Simon is to be distinguished from the Apostle Simon Peter, and from the Lord's relative Simon (Mt. 13:55), who was the second Bishop of Jerusalem. Saint Simon is also commemorated on June 30 with the other Apostles.

Holy, All-Praised Apostle Philip

Commemorated on November 14 (Martyred 80 AD)

The Holy and All-praised Apostle Philip was a native of the city of Bethsaida in Galilee. He had a profound depth of knowledge of the Holy Scripture, and rightly discerning the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies, he awaited the coming of the Messiah. Through the call of the Savior (John 1:43), Philip followed Him. The Apostle Philip is spoken about several times in the Holy Gospel: he brought to Christ the Apostle Nathaniel (i.e. Bartholomew, April 22, June 30, and August 25. See John. 1:46). The Lord asks him where to buy bread for five thousand men (John. 6: 5-7). He brought certain of the Hellenized Jews wanting to see Jesus (John. 12:21-22); and finally, at the Last Supper he asked Christ to show them the Father (John. 14:8).

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After the Ascension of the Lord, the Apostle Philip preached the Word of God in Galilee, accompanying his preaching with miracles. Thus, he restored to life a dead infant in the arms of its mother. From Galilee he went to Greece, and preached among the Jews that had settled there. Some of them reported the preaching of the Apostle to Jerusalem. In response, some scribes arrived in Greece from Jerusalem, with one of the Jewish chief priests at their head, to interrogate the Apostle Philip.

The Apostle Philip exposed the lie of the chief priest, who said that the disciples of Christ had stolen away and hidden the body of Christ. Philip told instead how the Pharisees had bribed the soldiers on watch, to deliberately spread this rumor. When the Jewish chief priest and his companions began to insult the Lord and lunged at the Apostle Philip, they suddenly were struck blind. By his prayer the Apostle restored everyone's sight. Seeing this miracle, many believed in Christ. The Apostle Philip provided a bishop for them, by the name of Narcissus (one of the Seventy Apostles, January 4).

From Greece the Apostle Philip went to Parthia, and then to the city of Azotus, where he healed an eye affliction of the daughter of a local resident named Nikoklides, who had received him into his home, and then baptized his whole family.

From Azotus the Apostle Philip set out to Syrian Hieropolis (there were several cities of this name) where, stirred up by the Pharisees, the Jews burned the house of Heros, who had taken in the Apostle Philip, and they wanted to kill the apostle. The apostle performed several miracles: the healing of the hand of the city official Aristarchus, withered when he attempted to strike the apostle; and restoring a dead child to life. When they saw these marvels, they repented and many accepted holy Baptism. After making Heros the bishop at Hieropolis, the Apostle Philip went on to Syria, Asia Minor, Lydia, Emessa, and everywhere preaching the Gospel and undergoing sufferings. Both he and his sister Mariamne (February 17) were pelted with stones, locked up in prison, and thrown out of villages.

Then the Apostle Philip arrived in the city of Phrygian Hieropolis, where there were many pagan temples. There was also a pagan temple where people worshiped an enormous serpent as a god. The Apostle Philip by the power of prayer killed the serpent and healed many bitten by snakes.

Among those healed was the wife of the city prefect, Amphipatos. Having learned that his wife had accepted Christianity, the prefect Amphipatos gave orders to arrest Saint Philip, his sister, and the Apostle Bartholomew traveling with them. At the urging of the pagan priests of the temple of the serpent, Amphipatos ordered the holy Apostles Philip and Bartholomew to be crucified.

Suddenly, an earthquake struck, and it knocked down all those present at the place of judgment. Hanging upon the cross by the pagan temple of the serpent, the Apostle Philip prayed for those who had crucified him, asking God to save them from the ravages of the earthquake. Seeing this happen, the people believed in Christ and began to demand that the apostles be taken down from the crosses. The Apostle Bartholomew was still alive when he was taken down, and he baptized all those believing and established a bishop for them.

But the Apostle Philip, through whose prayers everyone remained alive, except for Amphipatos and the pagan priests, died on the cross.

Mariamne his sister buried his body, and went with the Apostle Bartholomew to preach in Armenia, where the Apostle Bartholomew was crucified (June 11); Mariamne herself then preached until her own death at Lykaonia.

The holy Apostle Philip is not to be confused with Saint Philip the Deacon (October 11), one of the Seventy.

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Apostle Jude, Brother of James

Commemorated on June 19 (Martyred ~80 AD)

Saint Jude, also called Thaddeus or Levi (June 19), was one of the Twelve Apostles, and should not be confused with Thaddeus of the Seventy. Due to his original unbelief in the divinity of his brother by the Virgin Mary, Jude would refer to himself only as the brother of James (brother of Jesus), rather than as being the brother of Jesus. St. John the Theologian refer to St. Jude's unbelief in his Gospel: "Neither did His brethren believe in Him" (Jn. 7:5).²⁴

In another incident, Jude and two of his other brothers did not want a portion of Joseph's legacy to go to Jesus, since he was not born of the same mother. Only St. James, the fourth son of Joseph, agreed to share his portion with Jesus and is thus called the "Brother of God." In his epistle, St. James acknowledges his own unworthiness: "Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James" (Jude 1:1).²⁵

St. Jude spread Christianity to several parts of the world: Judea, Galilee, Samaria, Idumaea, and later in Arabia, Syria, and Mesopotamia. He also preached in the city of Edessa after St. Thaddeus of the Seventy. It was also believed that he preached in Persia, where his catholic epistle was written.²⁶

The Holy Apostle Jude also had other names: the Evangelist Matthew terms him "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddeus" (Mt. 10:3). The Holy Evangelist Mark also calls him Thaddeus (Mark 3:18), and in the Acts of the Holy Apostles he is called Barsabas (Acts 15: 22). This was customary at that time.

The Holy Apostle Jude died as a martyr around the year 80 near Mt. Ararat in Armenia, where he was crucified and pierced by arrows.

Apostle and Evangelist John, the Theologian

Commemorated on May 8 (Died 95 AD)

The Apostle John the Theologian was late to begin his work in his assigned area of Asia Minor due to his care of the Holy Theotokos, as assigned by him by Christ while He was suffering on the cross: "Woman, here is thy son." "Behold, thy mother" (Jn. 19:26-27). It was not until after her Dormition did John set out on his evangelistic work.²⁷

While living and working in Ephesus, St. John performed many miracles, including raising the dead in the name of Jesus Christ, often fighting against the demons of the Artemis, the pagan patron of the city.

During the time of the Domitian persecution of the Christians, St. John was called to Rome to answer some slanderous charges made against him. Having endured beatings and poisoning, John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, which had no effect on either his body or his faith. After witnessing his surviving such horrendous tortures, the people of Rome cried out, "Great is the Lord of the Christians!" Caesar considered John immortal since he could not be killed and ordered that he be exiled to the island of Patmos. This fulfilled the words of Christ given to John in a dream: "Thou shalt suffer much, and shalt be exiled to a certain island, which shall be much to thy benefit."²⁸

²⁴ *The Lives for the Holy Apostles*, 223.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 224.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 225.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 80.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 100.

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When Saint John was more than one hundred years old, he told seven of his disciples to take spades and follow him to a certain place outside the city of Ephesus, and then he told everyone to sit down while he went off to pray by himself for a while. When he returned, he told his disciples to dig a grave as long as he was tall, in the form of a cross. After giving them instructions and kissing them, he climbed into the grave and said: "Take some earth, my mother earth, and cover me."

They covered him with earth up to his knees, and he said: "Now take some more earth and cover me up to my neck."

As soon as he they had done this, Saint John spoke again: "Bring a linen cloth and place it on my face, then kiss me again for the last time, because you shall not see me anymore in this life."

After the Apostle dismissed them, they buried him and wept bitterly. Later, they returned and opened the grave, but the Saint's body was not there. They wept and returned to the city.

Every year, on May 8, red dust appears on his grave, which heals the sick, through the prayers of the Holy Apostle John. People call this dust "manna from the earth."

Saint Augustine knew about this dust, and Saint Gregory of Tours also wrote about it. Some sources call this Feast "rodismos" (ροδισμός) i.e. Day of the Roses. Some think that this manna is called ποδής (a pink ointment, or a rose-colored dust). Others say that by this name they celebrate the roses of spring, just as we decorate the church with greenery and flowers on Pentecost.

Saint John's principal Feast Day is September 26, but today the Church commemorates Saint John because of the annual pilgrimage to his grave.

There is a special title to be used when commemorating Saint John at the Dismissal: "The holy, glorious Apostle and Evangelist, Virgin, Beloved friend of Christ, John the Theologian."

Apostle Paul

Commemorated June 29 (*Martyred ~64-67*)

Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesaria in Palestine wrote in his Ecclesiastical History that after his two years of imprisonment in Rome, Paul was set free because of his innocence of any crime, and then spent the next ten years preaching the Word of God in Rome and in other lands in the West.¹

St. Symeon Metaphrastes writes that after departing from Rome, Paul passed through Spain, Gaul and all of Italy, spreading the faith and converting pagans. While in Spain, Paul went to the home of Xanthippe and Probus, a noble and wealthy couple. When Paul entered their home, Xanthippe saw written golden letters on Paul's forehead: "Paul the Preacher of Christ." No one else could see the writing. Falling at the Apostle's feet, she begged Paul to baptize her. Her husband, Probus, and the entire household was baptized, including Philotheus, the magistrate of the city.²

After his mission to the West, Paul returned to Rome where he wrote Timothy of his impending martyrdom (II Tim. 4:6-8). Several ecclesiastical historians recorded Paul's suffering: Gaius, the ecclesiastical chronicler; Zepherinus, Bishop of Rome (+Dec. 20, 217); and Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth (c. 171). They all place the date the death of both Peter and Paul on the same day, June 29, 67, during the 13th year of the reign of Nero. It was claimed by Nicephorus Callistus (died 1350) and St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (+Mar. 11, 638), that Paul was executed a full year after Peter, and the reason for Paul's execution was he exhorted many maidens and women to embrace chastity. There were also claims that Paul aided Peter in his opposition to Simon Magus, who was favored by Emperor Nero. Peter was executed on the cross as a non-citizen and Paul was decapitated.³ When the head of Paul was cut off, milk flowed from wound along with blood. The execution was performed outside the city and his relics were interred at the site of his execution.

While being led outside the city to his execution, Paul encountered a woman named Perpetua who was blind in her right eye. Paul asked for the woman's handkerchief, and it was used as the blindfold for Paul's execution. Miraculously the handkerchief returned to the woman after the execution and she rubbed it on her eyes, immediately receiving sight in her right eye. Perpetua loudly proclaimed the glory of God and was ordered executed by tying a heavy weight around her neck and being thrown into the Tiber River.⁴

San Paolo alle Tre Fontane, in English "St Paul at the Three Fountains" is a Roman Catholic church dedicated to Paul the Apostle, at the presumed site of his martyrdom in Rome. In Latin it is known as Sancti Pauli ad Aquas Salvias ("St Paul at Aquae Salviae"). The church is located on the grounds of the Tre Fontane Abbey located on Via di Acque Salvie 1 in the Quartiere Ardeatino (Q. XX.). Legend relates that when Paul was decapitated, his head bounced three times and fountains miraculously sprang up at each place where it touched the ground. However, the springs, called the *Aquae Salviae*, as in the Latin name for the church, were known in pre-Christian times, and excavations have revealed ancient mosaic pavements.⁵

¹ *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, 46-7.

² Ibid, 47.

³ Ibid, 48-9.

⁴ Ibid, 49.

⁵ "San Paolo alle Tre Fontane," Wikipedia, accessed June 22, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Paolo_alle_Tre_Fontane.

Myrrh bearer and Equal of the Apostles Mary Magdalene

Commemorated on July 22, *(Died 1st century)*

On the morning of His glorious resurrection, the Lord granted Mary the grace to be the first of his disciples to see Him in His resurrected body. She ran into the house where the Apostles remained in dismay, and proclaimed to them the joyous message, "I have seen the Lord!" This was the first preaching in the world about the Resurrection.

The Apostles proclaimed the Glad Tidings to the world, but she proclaimed it to the Apostles themselves. Holy Scripture does not tell us about the life of Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection of Christ, but it is impossible to doubt, that if in the terrifying minutes of Christ's Crucifixion, she was at the foot of His Cross with His All-Pure Mother and Saint John, she must have stayed with them during the happier time after the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. Thus, in the Acts of the Apostles Saint Luke writes that all the Apostles with one mind stayed in prayer and supplication, with certain women and Mary the Mother of Jesus and His brethren.

Holy Tradition testifies that when the Apostles departed from Jerusalem to preach to all the ends of the earth, then Mary Magdalene also went with them. A daring woman, whose heart was full of reminiscence of the Resurrection, she went beyond her native borders and went to preach in pagan Rome. Everywhere she proclaimed to people about Christ and His teaching. When many did not believe that Christ is risen, she repeated to them that she had said to the Apostles on the radiant morning of the Resurrection: "I have seen the Lord!" With this message she went all over Italy.

Tradition relates that in Italy Mary Magdalene visited Emperor Tiberias (14-37 A.D.) and proclaimed to him Christ's Resurrection. According to Tradition, she brought him a red egg as a symbol of the Resurrection, a symbol of new life with the words: "Christ is Risen!" Then she told the emperor that in his Province of Judea the unjustly condemned Jesus the Galilean, a holy man, a miracle worker, powerful before God and all mankind, had been executed at the instigation of the Jewish High Priests, and the sentence confirmed by the procurator appointed by Tiberias, Pontius Pilate.

Mary repeated the words of the Apostles, that we are redeemed from the vanity of life not with perishable silver or gold, but rather by the precious Blood of Christ.

Thanks to Mary Magdalene the custom to give each other paschal eggs on the day of the Radiant Resurrection of Christ spread among Christians over all the world. In one ancient Greek manuscript, written on parchment, kept in the monastery library of Saint Athanasius near Thessalonica, is a prayer read on the day of Holy Pascha for the blessing of eggs and cheese. In it is indicated that the igumen in passing out the blessed eggs says to the brethren: "Thus have we received from the holy Fathers, who preserved this custom from the very time of the holy Apostles, therefore the holy Equal of the Apostles Mary Magdalene first showed believers the example of this joyful offering."

Mary Magdalene continued her preaching in Italy and in the city of Rome itself. Evidently, the Apostle Paul has her in mind in his Epistle to the Romans (16: 6), where together with other ascetics of evangelic preaching he mentions Mary (Mariam), who as he expresses "has bestowed much labor on us." Evidently, she extensively served the Church in its means of subsistence and its difficulties, being exposed to dangers, and sharing with the Apostles the labors of preaching.

According to Church Tradition, she remained in Rome until the arrival of the Apostle Paul, and for two more years following his departure from Rome after the first court judgment upon him (c. late 50s). From Rome, Saint Mary Magdalene, already bent with age, moved to Ephesus where the holy Apostle John unceasingly labored. There the saint finished her earthly life and was buried.

Her holy relics were transferred in the ninth century to Constantinople and placed in the monastery Church of Saint Lazarus. In the era of the Crusader campaigns, they were transferred to Italy and placed

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at Rome under the altar of the Lateran Cathedral. Part of the relics of Mary Magdalene are said to be in Provence, France near Marseilles, where over them at the foot of a steep mountain a splendid church is built in her honor.

St. Photini Apostle to the Samaritans

Commemorated on March 20 (*Martyred c. 66*)

The holy Martyr Photini was the Samaritan Woman, with whom the Savior conversed at Jacob's Well (John. 4:5-42).

During the time of the Emperor Nero (54-68), who displayed excessive cruelty against Christians, Saint Photini lived in Carthage with her younger son Iosés, and fearlessly preached the Gospel there. Her eldest son Victor fought bravely in the Roman army against barbarians and was appointed as military commander of the city of Atalia (Asia Minor). Later, Nero called him to Italy to arrest and punish Christians.

Sebastian, an official in Italy, said to Saint Victor, "I know that you, your mother and your brother, are followers of Christ. As a friend I advise you to submit to the will of the Emperor. If you inform on any Christians, you will receive their wealth. I shall write to your mother and brother, asking them not to preach Christ in public. Let them practice their faith in secret."

Saint Victor replied, "I want to be a preacher of Christianity like my mother and brother." Sebastian said, "O Victor, we all know what woes await you, your mother and brother." Then Sebastian suddenly felt a sharp pain in his eyes. He was dumbfounded, and his face was somber.

For three days he lay there blind, without uttering a word. On the fourth day he declared, "The God of the Christians is the only true God." Saint Victor asked why Sebastian had suddenly changed his mind. Sebastian replied, "Because Christ is calling me." Soon he was baptized, and immediately he regained his sight. After witnessing the miracle Saint Sebastian's servants were also baptized.

Reports of this reached Nero, and he commanded that the Christians be brought to him at Rome. Then the Lord Himself appeared to the confessors and said, "Fear not, for I am with you. Nero, and all who serve him, shall be vanquished."

The Lord said to Saint Victor, "From this day forward, your name will be Photinos, because through you, many will be enlightened and will believe in me." The Lord then told the Christians to strengthen and encourage Saint Sebastian to persevere until the end. All these things, and even future events, were revealed to Saint Photini. She left Carthage in the company of several Christians and joined the confessors in Rome.

In Rome the Emperor ordered the Saints to be brought before him and he asked them whether they truly believed in Christ. All the confessors refused to renounce the Savior. Then Nero ordered that the joints of the martyrs' fingers be broken. During their torments, the confessors felt no pain, and their hands remained unharmed.

Nero ordered that Saints Sebastian, Photinos and Iosés be blinded and locked up in prison, and Saint Photini and her five sisters Anatolé, Photó, Photida, Paraskevế and Kyriakế were sent to the imperial

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court under the supervision of Nero's daughter Domnina. Saint Photin  converted both Domnina and all her servants to Christ. She also converted a sorcerer, who had brought her poisoned food.

Three years passed, and Nero sent to the prison for one of his servants, who had been locked up. The messengers reported to him that Saints Sebastian, Photinos and Ios s, who had been blinded, had recovered their sight, and that people were visiting them to hear their preaching, and indeed the whole prison had been transformed into a bright and fragrant place where God was glorified.

Nero then commanded the Saints to be crucified, and their naked bodies to be beaten with straps. On the fourth day the Emperor sent servants to see whether the martyrs were still alive. But, approaching the place of the tortures, the servants became blind. An Angel of the Lord freed the martyrs from their crosses and healed them. The Saints took pity on the blinded servants and restored their sight by their prayers to the Lord. Those who were healed came to believe in Christ and were soon baptized.

Enraged, Nero ordered that the skin to be flayed from Saint Photini's body, and then to throw her into a well. Sebastian, Photinos and Ios s had their legs amputated, and they were thrown to dogs. Then their skin was flayed off. Saint Photini's sisters also suffered terrible torments. Nero ordered soldiers to cut off their breasts, and then to flay their skin. An expert in cruelty, the Emperor prepared the most painful execution for Saint Photida. Her feet were tied to the tops of two trees which had been bent to the ground. When the ropes were cut the trees sprang upright, tearing the martyr apart. The Emperor ordered the others beheaded. Saint Photini was removed from the well and locked up in prison for twenty days.

After this Nero had her brought to him and asked if she would now relent and offer sacrifice to the idols. The courageous Photini spat in the Emperor's face. Mocking him she said, "O most impious of the blind, you profligate and stupid man! Do you think me so deluded that I would consent to renounce my Lord Christ and instead offer sacrifice to idols which are as blind as you are?"

After hearing such words, Nero ordered that the martyr be thrown into the well again. There she surrendered her soul to God (+ ca. 66).

In Greek usage Saint Photini is commemorated on February 26.

In Constantinople there were two churches dedicated to Saint Photini, where many miracles occurred, especially the healing of eye diseases.

The head of Saint Photini is kept at Grigoriou Monastery on Mount Athos.