

***Thekla of the Unmercenary Healers
Apostolic Work of Healing
Demonstrating the Love of God
Preparation for the Lord's Return***

**The Unmercenary Healers
September 24, 2016
Revision C**

**Gospels: Matthew 10:1-8
John 15:17-16:2
Luke 10:16-21
Luke 12:32-40**

**Epistles: 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:8
2 Timothy 2:1-10
2 Timothy 3:10-15
Galatians 5:22-6:2**

In the history of the Church, there have been a number of saints and martyrs that possessed an extraordinary measure of the gift of healing. As the Lord had instructed the Twelve, “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8), those coming later followed the same example and refused to accept payment for their services. This became surprising since many of the unmercenary healers were physicians by trade.

The Orthodox Church today has a healing service called “The Sacrament of Holy Oil.” It is used infrequently and privately. Its theme comes from the mission of the Twelve Apostles who performed their healing accompanied by the anointing of oil (Mark 6:13, James 5:14).

During the Holy Oil service, the names of some of the Unmercenary Healers are mentioned by way of the example of their prayers. Those mentioned are listed in Table I. Other healers are mentioned as part of the Sunday Matins commemoration; these are listed in Table II. Appendix I contains a list of other healers that are well-known for their work.

**TABLE I
HEALERS REMEMBERED DURING
HOLY OIL SERVICE**

Name	Doctor	Century	Feast	Died	Gospel	Epistle
Cosmas ¹ & Damian of Asia	yes	4 th	Nov. 1	?	Matt 10:1-8	1 Cor 12:27-13:8
Cyrus & John	yes	4 th	Jan. 31	martyr	Matt 10:1-8	1 Cor 12:27-13:8
Panteleimon	yes	4 th	July 27	martyr	Luke 21:12-19	2 Tim 2:1-10
Hermolaus	no	4 th	July 26	old age	-----	1 Tim 3:13-4:5
Sampson	yes	6 th	June 27	old age	Luke 12:32-40	2 Cor 9:6-11
Diomedes	yes	3 rd	Sept. 11	martyr	-----	1 Tim 3:13-4:5
Photius	no	4 th	Aug. 12	martyr	-----	-----
Anicetas	no	4 th	Aug. 12	martyr	-----	-----

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¹ There is another Cosmas and Damian of Rome (martyred 284 AD) who were also doctors and unmercenary healers and are remembered on July 1 with the same Gospel and Epistle Readings.

**TABLE II
HEALERS REMEMBERED DURING
SUNDAY MATINS**

Name	Doctor	Century	Feast	Died	Gospel	Epistle
Spiridon	no	4 th	Dec. 12	old age	John 10:1-9	Eph 5:8-19
Charalampos	no	3 rd	Feb. 10	martyr	John 15:17-16:2	2 Tim 2:1-10
Menas	no	4 th	Nov. 11	martyr	-----	2 Cor 4:6-15
Eleutherias	no	2 nd	Dec. 15	martyr	-----	2 Tim 1:8-18
Catharine	yes	4 th	Nov. 24	martyr	Mark 5:24-34	Gal 3:23-4:5
Thekla	yes	1 st	Sept. 24	martyr	Matt 25:1-13	2 Tim 3:10-15
Paraskeva	no	3 rd	Oct. 28	martyr	-----	Gal 3:23-4:5
Irene	no	1 st	May 5	old age	-----	-----

One will note that all these healers are post-Apostolic. The earliest of the group, Thekla of Iconium, was a convert of the Apostle Paul, but did most of her work in the late 1st and early 2nd Century. Also, all of them were celibate and most were martyrs. Except for Irene, the only non-martyrs lived after peace came to the Church in the 4th Century.

In the lives of these healers, there are a number of themes that are illustrated by the Scripture readings that have been chosen for their feast days.

Apostolic Work of Healing

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GOSPELS:	EPISTLES:
Matthew 10:1-8	2 Timothy 2:1-10
John 15:17-16:2	2 Timothy 3:10-15
Luke 10:16-21	
Luke 12:32-40	

The Apostolic Work of Healing

Many miracles accompanied the work of the Twelve and the Seventy in their various missionary journeys. This was true both when they were first sent out by the Lord (Matthew 10:8, Luke 10:9, 17), later on after Pentecost (Acts 3:1-8, 5:15-16, 9:39-42) and wherever they went on their missionary journeys. Paul joined them later and performed similar miracles: “God performed unusual miracles by the hands of Paul so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11, 12). Paul refers to this: He did not come to Corinth “with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Corinthians 2:4).

The Gospel readings for the feast days of some of the Unmercenary Healers have similar themes. For example, the feast days for Cyrus and John, Cosmas & Damian of Asia and Cosmas & Damian of Rome use Matthew 10:1, 5-8 which is the account of the sending out of the Twelve. The feast days for the Apostles Luke and Tryphon of the Seventy use Luke 10:16-21, which is the account of the return of the Seventy.

Both with the Twelve and the Seventy, there was extensive conflict with the forces of Satan. They were both instructed to heal the sick and cast out demons (Matthew 10:8, Luke 10:9, 17), and the Twelve were given the additional authority to raise the dead (Matthew 10:8). Commenting on this conflict at the return of the Seventy, the Lord said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:18, 19).

John Cassian classified² healing into three different classes in decreasing order of effectiveness. (1) Healing done by holy men and women. (2) Healing done by the faith of caretakers or by the sick themselves. There are many limitations on those involved. (3) Faked healing done by demons.

“The first is indeed for the sake of healing when the grace of signs accompanies certain elect and righteous men on account of the merits of their holiness. For example, the Lord said, ‘Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give’” (Matthew 10:8).

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² John Cassian, Second Conference of Abbot Nesteros, II, xv, 1.

“The second is for edification of the Church and proceeds from either the faith of those who bring the sick or from those who are to be cured. “The virtue of health proceeds even from sinners and men unworthy of it. Of whom the Savior says, ‘Many shall say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your Name, and in Your Name cast out devils, and in Your Name done many mighty works? And then I will confess to them, I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of iniquity’ (Matthew 7:21-23). If the faith of those who bring the sick or if the faith of the sick is lacking, it prevents those on whom the gifts of healing are conferred from receiving the healing. For example, Mark said, ‘And Jesus could not do any mighty works there because of their unbelief.’ (Mark 6:5-6). The Lord Himself said, ‘Many lepers were in Israel in the days of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed but Naaman the Syrian’” (Luke 4:27).

“The third class of healing is copied by the deceit and contrivance of demons. When a man who is regarded as a saint and a servant of God is enslaved to sins, men may be persuaded to copy his sins out of admiration for his miracles. Thus an opening is made for objections and the sanctity of the Faith may be brought into disgrace. Or else he who believes that he possesses the gift of healing may be puffed up by pride of heart and so fall more grievously. When the names are invoked of those who have no merits of holiness or any spiritual fruits, the demons pretend that by their merits they are disturbed and made to flee from the bodies they have possessed. Moses had said, ‘If there rise up in the midst of you a prophet, or one who says he has seen a dream, and declare a sign and a wonder. And that which he has spoken comes to pass, and he says to you: Let us go and follow after other gods whom you do not know, and let us serve them. You shall not hear the words of that prophet or of that dreamer, for the Lord your God is tempting you that it may appear whether you love Him or not with all your heart and with all your soul’ (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). The Lord said, ‘There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall give great signs and wonders, so that, if it were possible, even the elect should be led astray’” (Matthew 24:24).

Hatred by the World

As one can expect, there was a reaction by the world to the work of the Apostles and the Unmercenary Healers. Just as all of the Twelve except John died the death of a martyr, so did many of the Unmercenary Healers. The reason for this is explained in the Gospel reading for the feast day of some of the Unmercenary Healers, such as Panteleimon and Haralampos (John 15:7-16:2). This reading addresses the hatred of the world in response to their work. This hatred is a very passionate, but often totally illogical hatred. How can one logically hate people who go around healing their fellow men for free?

Usually it was the civil authorities and seemingly good people that were behind the hatred and martyrdom of the Apostles and the Unmercenary Healers. But why would seemingly good people persecute the righteous? This is something that occurs today also, and this is described in the above Gospel reading. In the case of the Lord and the Twelve, it was the Jewish leaders or King Herod (trying to please the Jewish leaders). This was not the underbelly of Jewish society but the leaders who were respected and who upheld the law -- seemingly good

people. There was a dark side to this, however. The Lord pointed out that there was considerable hypocrisy involved regarding the Jewish leaders (Matthew 23). And the Jewish historian, Josephus, describes in chapter after chapter the sordid, scheming, homicidal family life of the Herods. But most people didn't see this side of it; it seemed like good people were persecuting the righteous.

The Lord said, "If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John 15:18). Because Christ and the Twelve were not of the world, they were hated by the world (John 15:19). Because they were of the Father (John 17:11, 12) and the ruler of this world hated the Father, they were hated by the world. This then led to persecution of the Lord and the Twelve by the world. In the centuries that followed, the same thing applied to the Unmercenary Healers: they stood out very dramatically as being of the Father.

This same Gospel lesson is used for the warrior-martyrs Demetrios of Thessalonica and George of Cappadocia. For a more detailed discussion of this, see the study for October 26 on the feast day of Demetrios and George.

The Purpose of Suffering³

One of the Epistle readings for the Unmercenary Healers is 2 Timothy 2:1-10. This is used for Panteleimon (Table I), Haralampos (Table II) and Laurence (Appendix I) as well as for the warrior-martyrs Demetrios and George. Paul penned his last words before his martyrdom in encouraging Timothy to continue the Apostolic work that he was called to. Paul wrote that he himself had "finished the race" and that "his departure (i.e. martyrdom) was at hand" (2 Timothy 4:6,7). Sometime earlier, Paul had established Timothy as Bishop of Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3), and his encouragements to Timothy were:

- Be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1).
- The things you heard from me, commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2).
- You must endure hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:3).

Why should Timothy, Paul, the Lord, the Twelve and the Unmercenary Healers have to suffer? The answer is that they do this for the sake of those who follow them in the Faith. They help others to see what is beyond this life and what really matters.

John Chrysostom made⁴ some analogies. Wounded soldiers who recover are an encouragement to their fellow soldiers; so holy men and women who bear up patiently under persecution are an encouragement to the Church.

"In war, the Captain who sees his General wounded and recovered again, is much encouraged. Thus it produces some consolation to the faithful, that the Apostle Paul should have been exposed to great suffering and not rendered weak by the utmost of them. Timothy heard that Paul, who possessed so great powers (see Acts 19:11-12), was a prisoner and afflicted, yet was not impatient or discontented on the desertion of his friends. Timothy, if ever exposed to the same

³ For more discussion on the purpose of suffering, see the Epistle lesson for the Feast Day of Demetrios and George.

⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, IV, vv. 1-7.

sufferings himself, would not consider that it proceeded from human weakness, nor from being a disciple, nor because he was inferior to Paul, but that all this happened in the natural course of things. For if Paul endured these things, much more Timothy ought to be able to bear them.”

In this regard, the Lord had said, “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. If they have called the Master of the house ‘Beelzebub’, how much more will they call those of His household” (Matthew 10:24).

Chrysostom added⁵ that Timothy knew where the battle lines were drawn and that “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood” (Ephesians 6:12). Paul said to stand firm not to depress Timothy but to excite him.

“Be sober therefore, he means, and watch; have the Grace of the Lord cooperating with you, and aiding you in the contest; contribute your own part with much cheerfulness and resolution”. When we go to watch a wrestling match today, we don’t go there in depression, but with excitement to root for our favorite contestant. In the same vein, we are all contestants in a larger wrestling match where the angels and saints are cheering for us.

Chrysostom concluded⁶ with a very fitting example: a comparison of the Emperor Nero with the Apostle Paul, where it was Nero who had Paul beheaded. Even though Nero had all the power, he couldn’t stop Paul from proclaiming the Word. Nero had all the honor from the world; Paul had none. Yet at the Second Coming of Christ, this situation will be reversed.

“Nero had the glory of this world; Paul had the dishonor of this world. Nero was a tyrant who had great success, many trophies, wealth overflowing, numerous armies, the greater part of the world in his sway, the Senate crouching to him and a splendid palace to live in. When he went out, he was arrayed in gold and precious stones and was surrounded by guards and attendants. When he sat down, he was clothed in robes of purple. He was called lord of land and sea, Emperor, King and other high-sounding names. Even wise men, potentates and sovereigns trembled at him for he was said to be a cruel and violent man. He wished to be thought of as a god, and he despised both all the idols and the very God Who is over all.”

“Now in opposition to him, let us consider Paul, a Cilician, a tent-maker, a poor man, unskilled in the wisdom of Rome, knowing the Hebrew language, which was especially despised by the Italians. He was a man that often lived in hunger, often went to bed without food, a man that didn’t have clothes to put on, often in cold and nakedness (2 Corinthians 11:27). Paul was cast into prison by Nero himself, confined with robbers, impostors, grave-robbers and murderers, and scourged as a malefactor. Yet (in the 4th Century), the greater part of the world had never heard of Nero while Paul is daily celebrated among Greeks, Barbarians, Scythians and those who inhabit the extremities of the earth. No one knows

⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, IV, vv. 1-7.

⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Timothy, IV, Moral.

where Nero's grave⁷ is, while the tent-maker occupies the midst of the city⁸ as if he were a king and living."

"Yet let us consider what the case was when Paul was in chains, dragged bound from prison, while Nero was clothed in purple and walked out from a palace. Nero, with armies at his command, said, 'Do not disseminate the Word of God!' Paul said, 'I cannot stop, the Word of God is not chained!' (2 Timothy 2:9) Thus the Cilician, the prisoner, the poor tent-maker, who lived in hunger, despised the rich Roman emperor with all his armies. He that was in chains was a conqueror; he that was in a purple robe was conquered. A single man defeated the Emperor and his armies. The surrounding multitudes were all slaves of Nero, yet they admired not their lord but him who was superior to their lord."

"And yet I am but praising the lion for his claws, when I ought to be speaking of his real honors. How will Paul come in shining garments with the King of Heaven? How will Nero stand then, mournful and dejected? Let us, my beloved children, be imitators of Paul, not in his faith only, but in his life, that we may attain to heavenly glory, and trample upon that glory that is here".

Doing Battle with Demons

Sickness of all kinds is related to activities of demons⁹ that try to discredit God and turn man away from God. For example, the Patriarch Job was the most righteous man of his day, yet Satan demanded, and received, permission to afflict Job with very painful diseases. It was so bad that Job's own wife advised her husband to just "curse God and die" (Job 2:9). Another example of the connection between demons and sickness is the healing of various physical ailments by merely casting out the demon, who brought on the ailment. This occurred for the blind and mute demoniac (Matthew 12:22), the mute demoniac (Matthew 9:32-33) and the epileptic demoniac (Matthew 17:14-18, Mark 9:17-27, Luke 9:38-42).

If sickness is demon-related, then the Apostles and the Unmercenary Healers are likely to incur a great deal of demonic wrath by their work. It should be no surprise, then, that many of the Apostles and the Unmercenary Healers died as martyrs.

One of the traditional activities of many ascetics for the last 2,000 years has been to withdraw from society in order to do battle with demons, either in seclusion or in company with other ascetics. Again, it should be no surprise that all or most of the Unmercenary Healers were also ascetics.

Exposing the World for What It Is

⁷ See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nero>. When Nero was about to be overthrown, he committed suicide and was buried in the Mausoleum of the Domitii Ahenobarbi, in what is now the [Villa Borghese \(Pincian Hill\)](#) area of Rome.

⁸ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle. Paul's gravesite was in the middle of the city of Rome at the [Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls](#).

⁹ For more details on the relationship of sickness to demoniac activity, see the Gospel lesson for the 6th Sunday of Luke

Another aspect of the Apostolic work performed by the Unmercenary Healers is illustrated by the Epistle reading for Thekla of Iconium (Table II). This reading, 2 Timothy 3:10-15, is also used for the Sunday of the Pharisee and the Publican prior to Lent, which can be consulted for more details on this topic.

Paul begins by referring to Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians who resisted Moses. Paul stated “these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the Faith. They will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs (i.e. Jannes’ and Jambres’) also was” (2 Timothy 3:8, 9).

Paul comments that people will come into contact with Timothy who are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God and who have a form of piety but deny its power. Like Jannes and Jambres, they will have corrupt minds [having the characteristics described in 2 Timothy 3:2-4, 1 Timothy 6:3-5] and will resist the Truth. In verse 13, Paul refers to them as “evil men and impostors...deceiving and being deceived.” Yet, Paul says, they will advance no farther, for their folly will be manifest to all as was that of Jannes and Jambres when Egypt was destroyed by the plagues and in the Red Sea (v.9).

John Chrysostom points out that this may seem contradictory, since Paul had just said, “They will increase to more ungodliness” (2 Timothy 2:16). “He there means that beginning to innovate and deceive, they will not pause in their error but will always invent new deceits and corrupt doctrines, for error is never stationary. But here (2 Timothy 3:9), he says that they shall not be able to deceive, nor carry men away with them; for however at first they may seem to impose upon them, they will soon be easily detected”. “For their folly, will be manifest to all, as (Jannes’ and Jambres’) also was” (2 Timothy 3:9). For if errors flourish at first, they do not continue to the end. For so it is with things that are not attractive by nature, but attractive in appearance; they flourish for a time, then are detected and come to nothing. But not such are our doctrines, and of these, you (Timothy) are a witness. For in our doctrines there is no deceit, for who would choose to die for a deceit?” (Homily VIII on 2 Timothy 3).

But there is a partially hidden agenda here. The key is in verse 12, “All who desire to live piously in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (i.e. like Moses and like Paul himself). The Lord spelled out the reasons for this in John 15:18-16:4: some people simply hate God! Jesus said, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you”, and “if they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (John 15:18, 20).

And why does the world hate God? Because He exposes its inadequacy just as Moses and Aaron exposed the inadequacy and impotence of the secret arts of Jannes and Jambres.

This happens to us also, without our even trying. Jesus said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him and We will come to him and make our abode with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words...” (John 14:23-24). The world, on the other hand, loves the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (John 2:5-17). By loving God, we testify that all this is passing away and is inadequate and impotent - whether we say anything or not! The Unmercenary Healers made this contrast very obvious.

Doing Battle with Demons

Sickness of all kinds is related to activities of demons that try to discredit God and turn man away from God. For example, the Patriarch Job was the most righteous man of his day, yet Satan demanded, and received, permission to afflict Job with very painful diseases. It was so bad that Job's own wife advised her husband to just "curse God and die" (Job 2:9). Another example of the connection between demons and sickness is the healing of various physical ailments by merely casting out the demon who brought on the ailment. This occurred for the blind and mute demoniac (Matthew 12:22), the mute demoniac (Matthew 9:32-33) and the epileptic demoniac (Matthew 17:14-18, Mark 9:17-27, Luke 9:38-42). For more details on the relationship of sickness to demoniac activity, see the Gospel lesson for the 6th Sunday of Luke.

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One of the traditional activities of many ascetics for the last 2,000 years has been to withdraw from society in order to do battle with demons, either in seclusion or in company with other ascetics. Again, it should be no surprise that all or most of the Unmercenary Healers were also ascetics.

THE LOVE OF GOD IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

A major characteristic of the lives of the Unmercenary Healers is a vivid demonstration of the love of God, but always within the Body of Christ, which is the Church.

What is the Body of Christ?

Paul speaks of the Trinity as One Spirit, One Lord and One God and Father of all (Ephesians 4:4-6). Interspersed between these references to the Trinity are the references to one body, one faith and one baptism; the result is that God the Father is above all, through all and in all. The glue that holds all this together is love (Ephesians 4:2). Chrysostom comments, “The love which Paul requires of us is no common love, but that which cements us together and makes us cleave inseparably to one another; it accomplishes as great and as perfect a union as though it were between limb and limb” (Homily XI on Ephesians 4). One of the most intimate moments of this union occurs as the Body of Christ (the Church) meets to worship her Lord and Head and partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper. This is a great mystery: how the body of Christ partakes of the body of Christ.

Chrysostom refers to the Body of Christ as, “the faithful throughout the whole world, both which are, and which have been, and which shall be. And again, they that before Christ’s coming who pleased God are ‘one body’ also, because they knew Christ. ‘Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad’ (John 8:56). And again, ‘If you had believed Moses, you would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me’ (John 5:46). And the prophets, too, would not have written of One of whom they knew not what they said. They both knew Him and worshipped Him. Thus they were also ‘one body’ “ (Homily X on Ephesians 4).

In order to establish and promote this union, each one of us was given Grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift to us (v.7). These gifts, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc., are for the equipping of the saints for the work of (literally) deaconing and for the building up of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11, 12, 16). These gifts have their purposes listed as follows:

- That we all come to the Unity of the Faith and knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13).
- That we all come to a Perfect Man (Ephesians 4:13). This is the New Man referred to elsewhere (Ephesians 2:15, 4:24).
- That we all come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).
- That the truth of this might be preserved in spite of deceitful attempts to undo it (Ephesians 4:14).
- That the whole body might grow up in love with every part of the body doing its share, being joined and knit together with every joint supplying (Ephesians 4:15, 16).

Thus, all the gifts are directed toward an unselfish end as directed by the Head of the Body.

The members of the Body of Christ are the elect of God, are holy and beloved, (Colossians 3:12) and are sanctified by the Spirit according to the foreknowledge (Greek *prognosis* = before + knowledge) of God (1 Peter 1:2).

It behooves us therefore to bear with one another and forgive one another (Colossians 3:13) by putting on (v.12):

- tender mercies
- kindness
- humility
- meekness
- long suffering

An illustration of how we do this in everyday life comes from the way we treat the different limbs of our own body. If our eye has a speck in it, the other members of the body treat the eye tenderly, kindly and with long suffering until the speck has been removed.

By doing so, we put on love (Colossians 3:14) which is the greatest of the gifts of God (1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13) and is the bond of perfection. John Chrysostom referred to love as the rigging ropes of a sailing ship and the ligaments of an arm or leg. It ties things together and makes the sails or the arm functional; without it the sails or the arm would be useless (Homily VIII on Colossians 3). Love also covers a multitude of sins and weakness in the Body (1 Peter 4:8). Isaac of Syria put it this way: “Let our compassion be a mirror where we may see in ourselves that likeness and true image which belongs to the Divine nature and Divine essence” (Directions on Spiritual Training, Text 85). In other words, let us love as God loves.

Cyril of Alexandria, quoting Isaiah, saw the Body of Christ, the Church, as a lofty mountain: “The blessed Prophet Isaiah introduced those who by faith in Christ have been won unto life, as calling out eagerly unto one another, and saying: ‘Come, let us go unto the mountain of the Lord, and unto the house of the God of Jacob, and He shall teach us His way, and we will walk in it’ (Isaiah 2:3 LXX). Now by the mountain here we affirm to be meant not any earthly mountain, for to imagine this would be foolish, but rather the church which Christ has rescued for Himself. For it is high and conspicuous to people everywhere, and exalted, because there is nothing in it which brings men down to earth. For those who dwell within it care nothing for the things of earth, but rather desire those things that are above” (Homily 112 on Luke 10).

Demonstrating the Love of God

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Revision C

**Epistle: 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:8
Galatians 5:22-6:2**

Unmercenary Healers Demonstrate the Love of God

The Epistle reading for the feast days of Cosmas and Damian of Asia, Cyrus and John (Table I), and Cosmas and Damian of Rome (Appendix I) is 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:8. In this reading, Paul advises the Corinthians to earnestly desire the greater gifts (v.31) where he listed the gift of Apostle first (v.28).

John Chrysostom stated that Paul listed the gift of Apostle first in honor since they had all the gifts plus an abundance of love for their fellow man. Chrysostom defined workers of miracles (1 Corinthians 12:29) as having the power both to punish and to heal, whereas the gift of healing (1 Corinthians 12:30) involved cures only. Yet Paul listed both of these after prophets and teachers. This was for two reasons: (1) Miracles and healings are done for the sake of teaching. (2) Teachers teach by word and by their life; miracle workers and healers may possibly have a corrupt life. As examples, Chrysostom listed Judas Iscariot (John 12:6) and those at the Judgment who are dismayed at being rejected even though they worked miracles in Jesus' name (Matthew 7:22, 23). Chrysostom also noted that Paul always listed the gift of tongues last since this was being used for selfish purposes (1 Corinthians 14:4-14) and not for edifying the brethren (Homily xxxii on 1 Corinthians 12).

Yet Paul also pointed out "a more excellent way": whether one has the gift of:

- Tongues: speaking to men or angels (v.1)
- Prophecy: understanding all mysteries and knowledge (v.2)
- Faith: able to move mountains (v.2)
- Asceticism: selling everything to feed the poor (v.3)
- Martyrdom: giving up ourself to be burned (v.3)
-

If one doesn't have love, it profits one nothing. The more excellent way is love because love makes us able to handle and direct the other gifts without pride or arrogance, and love gives us a vision beyond this present life.

From the Epistle reading, love:

- Suffers long and is kind (v.4)
- Does not envy (v.4)
- Does not parade itself, is not puffed up (v.4)
- Does not behave rudely (v.5)
- Does not seek its own (v.5)

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- Is not provoked (v.5)
- Thinks no evil (v.5)
- Does not rejoice in iniquity; rejoices in the truth (v.6)
- Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (v.7)
- Never fails (v.8)

These characteristics of love apply very well to the Unmercenary Healers, especially to those that were physicians by trade but wouldn't take any payment for their work. For details on the lives of some of the Unmercenary Healers, see Appendix II which contains a brief summary from the Prologue of those listed in Tables I and II.

The Lord had stated that the greatest love was that of martyrdom, "Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). Yet Paul points out that even martyrdom ("thought I give my body to be burned", v.3) without love profits me nothing. If love for one's fellow man can be thought of as a way of life, then our way of life is more important than any of the gifts of the Spirit. A pure life can lead to salvation; but as the example of Judas and the unrighteous miracle-workers at the Judgment show, the gifts of the Spirit don't guarantee that one will escape punishment. The testimony of the Unmercenary Healers is that they had a righteous life, filled with love for their fellow man.

In the First Century, perhaps more commonly than today, many people gave up all their goods to feed the poor (v.3). An example of this is the early church in Jerusalem where "all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need" (Acts 3:44, 45). This included Barnabas, who sold his land (which included property near the Mount of Olives) and brought the money and laid it at the Apostles' feet (Acts 4:34-37). Ananias and Sapphira did this also, but without love similar to Judas, and paid dearly (Acts 5:1-10).

John Chrysostom commented on this kind of love as follows: "If love were truly observed, there would be neither slave nor free, neither ruler nor ruled, neither rich nor poor, neither small nor great. Nor would any devil then ever have been known. For sooner would grass endure the application of fire than the devil the flame of love. Love is stronger than any wall, is firmer than any adamant; or if you can name any material stronger than this, the firmness of love transcends them all."

"Therefore Paul says that the love which we are speaking of is the mother of all good things, and he prefers it to miracles and all other gifts. For where there are vests and sandals of gold, we require some other garments by which to distinguish the king. But if we see the purple and the crown, we require not to see any other sign of his royalty. Similarly, when the crown of love is upon our head, it is enough to point out the genuine disciple of Christ; not to ourselves only, but to the unbelievers. For, 'by this', says He, 'all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13:35). So that this sign is greater surely than all signs, in that the disciple is recognized by it. For though anyone should work 10,000 signs, but be at strife one with another, they will be a scorn to the unbelievers. Just as if they do no signs, but love one another exactly, they will continue to be revered by all men" (Homily xxxii on 1 Corinthians 13).

Chrysostom continued to examine what makes up love, and to dissect what it is composed of. In enumerating this, he noted that Paul began with long-suffering (v.4), which

Chrysostom called the root of self-denial. “A man that is long-suffering is of great understanding. By this we implement the Lord’s command of not returning evil for evil; by this we bless those who curse us and show love of our enemies” (cf Matthew 5:43-48). Yet one could have a love that is long-suffering and still be envious; if so, the envy would spoil the excellency of the love (Homily xxxiii on 1 Corinthians 13).

Further, one could have a deep love for one’s fellow man which includes kindness and long-suffering, yet continually parade this virtue and be puffed up over it. Perfect love, however, does not allow pride to swell up in this manner.

Love also does not behave unseemly (literally shapelessly, compare 1 Corinthians 7:36). Chrysostom phrased it this way: “In suffering the most shameful things for him whom she loves, love does not ever count the things an unseemliness. She does not even entertain any sense at all of the shame. For the lovers of money endure all manner of reproaches for the sake of that sordid traffic of theirs. Far from hiding their faces, they even exult in it. Much more will he that has love refuse nothing whatsoever for the safety’s sake of those whom he loves. Nothing that he can suffer will shame him.”

“For our Lord Jesus was both spit upon and beaten with rods by pitiful slaves; not only did he not count it an unseemliness, but he even exulted and called the thing glory. In discoursing with a harlot, when the by-standers all accused Him (Luke 7:37-39), He counted the thing not only not to be disgraceful, but allowed her to kiss His feet, wash His body with her tears, and wipe them with her hair; and all this amid a company of spectators who were His enemies” (Ibid.).

Paul had earlier said, “Let no one seek his own good, but each one the others’ good” (1 Corinthians 10:24). Here Paul repeats that aspect of love: “love does not seek its own way” (1 Corinthians 13:5). Chrysostom added, “For your own profit lies in the profit of your neighbor, and his in yours. This is as if one had his own gold buried in the house of his neighbor; should he refuse to go and there look for it and dig it up, he will never see it. So likewise, he that will not seek his own profit in the advantage of his neighbor will not attain the crowns due to this” (Ibid.).

The context in which Paul wrote these things was a church where self-centeredness was prevalent. At the love feast¹⁰ that accompanied the Lord’s Supper, “each one takes his own supper ahead of others, and one is hungry and another is drunk” (1 Corinthians 11:21). During the worship, many spoke in tongues, just edifying themselves (1 Corinthians 14:4); Paul encouraged them to seek to edify the Church instead of just themselves (1 Corinthians 14:12).

The Church in Corinth also had a number of factions, some following Peter, some Apollos, some Paul and some claiming to follow just Christ (1 Corinthians 1:12). This undoubtedly caused many disagreements because of their lack of love for each other. Thus Paul added to the characteristics of love by saying that love “is not provoked and does not even think

¹⁰ In the 1st Century, Churches imitated the original Lord’s Supper, and served it with a meal. Because of problems such as occurred at Corinth, this was changed so that people might be able to discern the Lord’s body and blood better.

evil” (1 Corinthians 13:5). If one did not even suspect or think anything amiss in one’s brothers, the disagreements and factions would not occur.

Paul also said that love “does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6). Paul amplified on this in his Epistle to the Romans, which he wrote a few months after writing 2 Corinthians: “Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:15-18).

Paul concluded this characterization of what is love by saying that love “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things and never fails” (1 Corinthians 13:7, 8). As an example of this, Chrysostom pointed to King David in his dealing with his rebellious son Absalom: “For what could be more intolerable than to see a son rising up against him, aiming for usurping the throne and thirsting for his father’s blood? Yet this did that blessed one (David) endure such that he could not bear to throw out one bitter expression against the parricide. But even when he left all the rest to his captains, he gave a strong injunction respecting Absalom’s safety (2 Samuel 15-18). For strong was the foundation of his love” (Ibid.)

In the case of Absalom, David bore all things, believed all things, hoped all things and endured all things even though Absalom might have been characterized as worthless, and was certainly considered such by David’s commander, Joab (2 Samuel 18:9-18, 1 Kings 2:1-6, 28-34). “For love does not merely hope but also believes from its great affection. And even if these good things should not turn out according to its hope, but the other person should prove yet more intolerable, it bears even these things. For love endures all things” (Ibid.)

Paul counseled the Thessalonians regarding those who refused to receive his words: “Do not keep company with him that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2 Thessalonians 3:14, 15). Chrysostom added, “For it is the work of the devil to tear us apart from one another, and he has used great diligence to take away love that he may cut off the way of correction. Thus he may retain him in error and you in enmity, and block the way of his salvation. For when the physician hates the sick man and leaves, and the sick man turns away from the physician, when will the distempered person be restored? Do you turn away from him because he is ungodly? For this cause you ought to welcome and attend to him, that you may raise him up in his sickness. Even if he is incurably sick, still you have been bidden to do your part. Judas was incurably sick yet God did not refuse to continue attending to him. Wherefore, neither should you grow weary. For even if after much labor you fail to deliver him from his ungodliness, yet you shall receive the deliverer’s reward. And you will cause him to wonder at your gentleness, and so all this praise will pass on to God. For though you should work wonders and raise the dead and whatever work you do, the heathen will never wonder at you as much as when they see you displaying a meek, gentle, mild disposition. And this is no small achievement, since many will even be entirely delivered from their evil way; there is nothing that has such power to draw men as love.

Bearing One Another's Burdens

The Corinthians were not the only ones Paul wrote to concerning how love bears all things (1 Corinthians 13:7). He also wrote of this to the Galatians and the Colossians, and the sections where Paul discussed bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 5:22-6:2; Colossians 3:12-16) are used as the Epistle lessons for six of the healers listed in Appendix I: Pachomius, David of Thessalonica, Cyriacus, Daniel the Stylite, and both Simeon Stylites. In Galatians, Paul listed this along with other "fruits of the Spirit" such as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. In Colossians, Paul linked this with forgiving one another by putting on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness and long-suffering (Colossians 3:12, 13). After all, this is what the Body of Christ is all about and this is what we are called to (Colossians 3:15).

This brings up a faith-works issue. These "fruits of the Spirit" are things that we do as a result of our faith. As James said, "Faith was working together with works and by works, faith was made perfect" (James 2:22). In the case of the Unmercenary Healers, they performed great miracles which would lead us to expect that they had great faith. As the Lord said, "If you have faith (the size of) a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'move from here to there', and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you" (Matthew 17:20).

John Chrysostom pointed out that Paul mentioned the flesh "those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24); and also the Spirit, "if we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). What is the place, then, of the soul? "The mastery of the passions belongs to her and concerns her (the soul). Being placid amid vice and virtue, if she has used the body fitly, she has wrought it to be spiritual. But if she separate from the Spirit and give herself up to evil desires, she makes herself more earthly. You observe throughout that Paul's discourse does not relate to the substance of the flesh, but to moral choices, that which is or is not vice. He refers to 'the fruit of the spirit' (Galatians 5:22) because evil works originate in ourselves alone and therefore he calls them 'works'. But good works require not only our diligence but God's loving kindness" (Commentary on Galatians 5). Knowing the Scriptures is part of this, "that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17). "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

Another example of good works is illustrated by the Epistle lesson for Sampson the Hospitable (Table I). This Epistle lesson, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, is also used for the 18th Sunday after Pentecost and aptly illustrates the life of Sampson. Born of wealthy parents and trained as a physician, he gave away his wealth and lived very simply as an Unmercenary Healer. As this Epistle lesson describes, Sampson was a cheerful giver who sowed abundantly, and therefore will reap abundantly of treasure in heaven (2 Corinthians 9:6, 7, Matthew 19:21, Mark 10:21, Luke 12:33). For more details on this see the Epistle lesson for the 18th Sunday after Pentecost.

Preparation for the Lord's Return

September 24, 2016
Revision C

Gospel: Luke 12:32-40

Unmercenary Healers Prepare for the Lord's Return

While the passions and desires of the flesh tend to hinder us from a close walk with God and Paul encouraged us to live and walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:24, 25) the Lord also encouraged us to be ever mindful of His return in glory. The Gospel lesson for the 6th Century Unmercenary Healer, Sampson the Hospitable, illustrates this spirit of watchfulness. In this Gospel lesson, Luke 12:32-40, the Lord began with the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21). For a detailed discussion of this, see the Gospel lesson for the 9th Sunday of Luke. Then He spoke of the birds and the flowers and living very simply; for further discussion of this, see the Gospel lesson for the 3rd Sunday after Pentecost.

With these as background, the Lord began the Gospel lesson with “Do not fear, little flock, for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). He then went on to give some specific things we can do to get ready. These include:

- Sell what you have and give alms; this is treasure in heaven (v.33).
- Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (v.34).
- Be ready to depart; let your waist be girded and your lamps be burning (v.35).
- Be like men who wait for their master returning from the wedding (v.36).
- Blessed are those servants whom the master will find watching when He comes (v.37).
- Be ready, for the Son of Man is coming like a thief in the night at an hour you do not expect (v.40).

A similar theme is used for the Gospel lesson for Thekla, a First Century Unmercenary Healer (Table II). Thekla was a convert of the Apostle Paul in Iconium and spent most of her life living in a cave near Seleucia (which is near Antioch). She had been born into a wealthy family, but gave that up to concentrate on the things of God. The Gospel lesson used for her Feast Day is Matthew 25:1-13, and Parable of the Five Wise and Five Foolish Virgins. The theme is, again, preparation as if one is awaiting his Master’s return from the wedding. This parable was used along with the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30) to introduce the Lord’s discussion of the Judgment of Works (Matthew 25:31-46). For more discussion on this, see the Gospel lessons for the 16th Sunday after Pentecost and Meatfare Sunday prior to Lent.

Living Simply and Without Covetousness

A distinguishing characteristic of all the Unmercenary Healers is the simple life they led. Many came from positions of wealth, but they followed the Lord’s instructions and gave it away in order to live more simply. The point of this is not just to be poor, but to avoid covetousness. As Cyril of Alexandria (4th Century) put it, “In teaching His disciples not to be covetous of wealth, He also withdraws them from worldly anxiety, and from vain toils and luxury and

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splendor of attire, and whatsoever evil habits follow upon these things. And He bids them rather courageously to be earnest in the pursuit of this simple life” (Homily 91 on Luke). Compared to the Kingdom of Heaven which “it is the Father’s good pleasure to give us” (Luke 12:32), everything else pales in comparison. For “eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Corinthians 2:9, Isaiah 64:4).

Cyril made an analogy to purchasing a house: “Suppose one of us wanted to sell a very beautifully built house and one of you who had plenty of gold were to conceive the desire of purchasing it. Would you not feel pleasure in buying it, and readily give the money that was laid up in your coffers, and even add to this with other money on loan? The transaction would not expose you to loss, but rather the expectation of your future gains would make you in a flutter of joy.”

“Similar to this, the God of all offers to sell you Paradise. There you will reap eternal life, unending joy and an honorable and glorious habitation. Once there, right blessed will you be, and will reign with Christ. Draw near, therefore, with eagerness and purchase the estate. With these earthly things obtain things eternal; give that which abides not and gain that which is secure; give these earthly things and win that which is in heaven; give that which you must leave, even against your will, that you may not lose things hereafter; lend to God your wealth that you may be really rich.”

“And besides it is a very absurd thing, that while we often entrust men of probity with our earthly wealth, and feel no fear lest any loss should result from our confidence in the uprightness of those who receive it, yet we will not trust it to God, who receives from us these earthly things, as a loan, and promises to give us things eternal, and that with interest. ‘For good measure’ He says, ‘pressed down, shaken together and running over will be put into your bosom’ (Luke 6:38). For the measure to run over is a direct proof of its great abundance. Pleasure-loving wealth chains the human mind in indolence toward all that is good, and stretches out, so to speak, a stiff and haughty neck against God. For it yields not itself to that yoke which would lead it to piety” (Ibid.)

Watchfulness

Watchfulness was compared to having our waist girded and our lamp burning (Luke 12:35). In the First Century, people wore long flowing robes. If one were to take time off and relax, one would unfasten the belt around his waist. But going back to work, he would put the belt back on so that his clothes didn’t hinder his work. Similarly, an oil lamp would be left burning all night while everyone slept, but the wick would be trimmed down to give a dim light, and also burn less fuel. But when one was awake, the lamp would be trimmed bright. This was the problem faced by the five foolish virgins when the bridegroom came: they didn’t have enough oil to allow the lamp to burn brightly (Matthew 25:1-13).

Cyril interpreted the girding of the loins as “the readiness of the mind to labor industriously in every thing praiseworthy. For such as apply themselves to bodily labors, and are engaged in strenuous toil, have their loins girt”. The lamp, Cyril said, represents “the wakefulness of the mind and intellectual cheerfulness. And we say that the human mind is

awake when it repels any tendency to slumber off into that carelessness which often is the means of bringing it into subjection to every kind of wickedness. Being sunk in stupor, the heavenly light within it is liable to be endangered from a violent and impetuous blast of wind” (Homily 92 on Luke).

At the Exodus from Egypt, the nation of Israel was commanded that as they ate the Passover meal, they were to eat “with their loins girded, their sandals on their feet and their staff in their hand” (Exodus 12:11). Normally one ate with his belt off, his sandals by the door and his staff outside. The Passover, however, was a state of watchfulness because the gods of Egypt were to be judged that night (Exodus 12:12).

The Apostle Peter also encourages a state of readiness: “The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the Day of God? Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless (2 Peter 3:10, 11, 14).

The Gospel lesson also referred to different watches: “And if He should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them (watching), blessed are those servants” (Luke 12:38). Why should the Lord omit the first watch? This requires a little insight. Cyril comments on that as follows: “Observe, I pray, the breadth of the divine gentleness, and the bountifulness of His mildness towards us. For He knows our frame and the readiness with which man’s mind wanders into sin. He knows that the power of fleshly lust tyrannizes over us, and that the distractions of this world even, so to speak, against our will drag us on by force, leading the mind into all that is unseemly. But in that He is good, He does not leave us to despair, but on the contrary, pities us, and has given us repentance as the medicine of salvation. For this reason, He says, that whether He come in the second watch, or whether He come in the third watch, and find them so doing, blessed are they. Now the meaning of this you will certainly wish to understand clearly. Men, therefore, divide the night into three or four watches. For the sentinels on city walls, who watch the motions of the enemy, after being on guard three or four hours, deliver over the watch and guard to others. So with us there are three ages: the first, that in which we are still children; the second, in which we are young men; and the third, that in which we come to old age. Now the first of these, in which we are still children, is not called to account by God, but is deemed worthy of pardon, because of the imbecility as yet of the mind, and the weakness of the understanding. But the second and the third, the periods of manhood and old age, owe to God obedience and piety of life, according to His good pleasure. Whosoever, therefore, is found watching, and, so to speak, well girt, whether, if it so chance, he be still a young man, or one who has arrived at old age, blessed shall he be. For he shall be counted worthy of attaining to Christ’s promises (Ibid.)

The Apostle Paul spent a great deal of time in watchfulness, fasting and prayer. Even though it was difficult, he did it for the joy of the kingdom of God. For example, five times he was given 39 lashes, three times he was beaten with rods, once he was stoned and left for dead, three times he was in a ship wreck, spending a night and a day adrift at sea. Not to mention the

intrigue of robbers, bounty hunters and false brethren, he was often up all night watching, hungry, thirsty, cold and poorly clad (2 Corinthians 11:24-27).

Paul described his reasons for doing all this earlier; “For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:11-17). The above passage is used as the Epistle lesson for the feast days of the Unmercenary Healers Menas (Table II), Euthymius and Alypius the Stylite (Appendix I).

Watchfulness requires work and dedication. This is what James, the Lord’s brother, referred to when he said, “Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (James 2:22, 24). The Unmercenary Healers worked hard at their calling. But yet they also remembered the Lord’s words: “Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). The preceding quote from Matthew 11 is used as the Gospel lesson for the Unmercenary Healers. Euthymius (5th Century) and Sergius of Radonezh (14th Century).

**APPENDIX I
OTHER WELL-KNOWN HEALERS**

Name	Doctor	Century	Feast	Died	Gospel	Epistle
Luke	yes	1 st	Oct. 18	martyr	Luke 10:16-21	Col 4:5-18
Cosmas & Damian of Rome	yes	3 rd	July 1	martyr	Matt. 10:1,5-8	1 Cor. 12:27-13:8
Euthymius	no	5 th	Jan. 20	-----	Matt. 11:27-30	2 Cor. 4:6-15
Tryphon	no	3 rd	Feb. 1	martyr	Luke 10:19-21	Rom. 8:28-39
Pachomius	no	4 th	May 15	-----	Matt. 4:23-5:13	Gal. 5:22-6:2
Simeon Stylite I	no	5 th	Sept. 1	-----	John 10:9-16	Col. 3:12-16
Simeon Stylite II	no	6 th	May 24	-----	Matt. 5:14-19	Col. 3:12-16
David of Thessalonica	no	6 th	June 26	-----	Luke 6:17-23	Gal. 5:22-6:2
Laurence	no	3 rd	Aug. 10	martyr	-----	2 Tim. 2:1-10
Sergius of Radonezh	no	14 th	Sept. 25	-----	Matt. 11:27-30	-----
Cyriacus	no	6 th	Sept. 29	-----	-----	Gal. 5:22-6:2
Joannicius	no	9 th	Nov. 4	-----	-----	2 Cor. 9:6-11
Gregory of Agrigentum	no	7 th	Nov. 23	-----	-----	Heb. 13:7-16
Alypius the Stylite	no	7 th	Nov. 26	-----	-----	2 Cor. 4:6-15
Ambrose of Milan	no	4 th	Dec. 7	-----	-----	2 Thess. 2:13-3:5
Patapius	no	7 th	Dec. 8	-----	-----	2 Thess. 2:13-3:5
Daniel the Stylite	no	5 th	Dec. 11	-----	-----	Gal. 5:22-6:2
Sava of Mutalaska	no	6 th	Dec. 5	-----	-----	Gal. 5:22-6:2

APPENDIX II
LIVES OF UNMERCENARY HEALERS
FROM TABLES I AND II

Cyrus and John, January 31 These compassionate and wonderful saints were not blood-brothers, but were brothers in spirit. Cyrus lived at first in Alexandria, and working as a doctor, healed people by the power of Christ together with medicine for the body. Discovering that illness came upon people mainly through sin, he always told them to cleanse their souls from sin by repentance and prayer, that they might be restored and strengthened in body. When Diocletian began his persecution of Christians, Cyrus went off to Arabia, where he received the monastic habit. But, as he had become known in Alexandria, so he became known also in Arabia, and people went to him for help. John, hearing of him and being at that time a Roman officer in Edessa, came to Arabia to see Cyrus. On seeing each other, they loved each other as brothers and remained together to live in asceticism. At that time, a Christian woman called Athanasia was tortured together with her three daughters in the town of Canopus. Cyrus and John heard of this, and came to Canopus to encourage the mother and daughters not to fall back from the Faith. And, grateful indeed for the counsel of these saints, Athanasia endured all the tortures and, with her daughters, was slain for Christ. The daughters were: Theoctista, age 15, Theodota age 13 and Eudocia age 11. Then the torturers took Cyrus and John and, after torture and imprisonment, slew them with the sword in the year 311. These holy martyrs performed innumerable miracles, both during their lives and after their death. Their relics were translated to Rome in the time of the Emperor Arcadius. They are invoked for help especially for the sleepless and for the blessing of water and food.

Cosmas and Damian of Asia, November 1 Unmercenaries and wonderworkers, they were brothers in the flesh and in the spirit, born somewhere in Asia of a pagan father and a Christian mother. After their father's death, their mother Theodota devoted all her time and energy to the bringing-up of her sons as true Christians. God helped her, and her sons grew as two choice fruits and as two holy lamps. They were skilled in medicine and ministered to the sick without payment, and so fulfilled Christ's command: "Freely have ye received; freely give" (Matthew 10:8). They were so strict in their unpaid ministry to men that Cosmas became greatly enraged with his brother Damian when he took three eggs from a woman, Palladia, and gave orders that, after his death, he should not be buried with his brother. In fact, holy Damian had not taken those eggs as a reward for healing Palladia's sickness, but because she had sworn by the Most Holy Trinity that he should have them. However, after their death in Fereman, they were buried together in obedience to a revelation from God. These two holy brothers were great wonderworkers both during their lifetime and after their death. A farm laborer, on lying down to sleep at one time, was attacked by a snake, which entwined itself around his mouth and stomach. This poor man would have breathed his last in the greatest torment had he not at the last moment invoked the help of Cosmas and Damian. Thus the Lord glorified forever by miracles those who glorified Him here on earth by their faith, purity and mercy.

Panteleimon, July 27 Born in Nicomedia of a Christian mother, Eubula, and a pagan father, Eustorgius, he studied medicine as a young man. The priest Hermolaus befriended him, instructed him in the Christian faith and baptized him. Panteleimon miraculously healed a blind man whom other doctors had treated in vain: he healed him by the name of Christ and baptized him. From jealousy, the doctors denounced Panteleimon as a Christian, and he went before the Emperor Maximian for judgment. "He stood before the earthly ruler in the body, but in his mind

he stood before the heavenly King.” He freely declared himself to be a Christian before the Emperor, and, in front of his eyes, healed a paralytic of a long infirmity. This miracle brought many of the pagans to the Christian faith. The Emperor put him to torture, but the Lord appeared to him on several occasions and delivered him whole and uninjured. Then Hermolaus suffered, along with Hermippus and Hermocrates. Condemned to death, Panteleimon knelt in prayer. At that, the executioner gave him a blow on the neck with his sword, and the sword broke as if made of wax. The executioner could not kill him until he had finished his prayer and had himself given the word to behead him. Panteleimon was beheaded under an olive tree, which after that became laden with fruit. “Panteleimon” means “all-merciful”. God the all-merciful received his righteous soul, and glorified him among His greatest saints, his relics remaining incorrupt. This wonderful martyr suffered with honor as a youth for Christ on July 27th, 304. Panteleimon is invoked in the prayers at the blessing of water and the blessing of oil, together with Hermolaus and the other unmercenaries and wonderworkers. The loveliest church dedicated to him is to be found on the Holy Mountain, Athos.

Hermolaus, July 26 He was a priest in Nicomedia in the time of the Emperor Maximian, and was with the twenty thousand martyrs condemned by the Emperor to be burned in their church (see December 28th). Hermolaus somehow escaped death on that occasion, together with two other priests, Hermippus and Hermocrates. Hermolaus baptized Panteleimon, with whom he was brought to trial, tortured and finally beheaded. Hermippus and Hermocrates suffered with them, and they were all crowned with wreaths of victory and glory in the Kingdom of Christ. They suffered with honor in about 304.

Sampson the Hospitable, June 27 This saint was born of rich and eminent parents in ancient Rome, where he studied all the secular wisdom of that time, devoting himself in particular to the study of medicine. Sampson was a compassionate and liberal physician, and gave the sick medicine for both soul and body, counseling each man to fulfill the requirements of the Christian faith. He moved to Constantinople, where he lived in a tiny house from which he distributed alms, comfort, advice, hope, medicine and all possible aid to those suffering in spirit and in body. The Patriarch heard of Sampson’s great virtue and ordained him priest. At that time the Emperor Justinian the Great became ill with what his doctors believed to be an incurable disease. The Emperor prayed with great fervor, and God revealed to him in his sleep that Sampson would heal him. When the Emperor summoned Sampson to court, the old man had only to put his hand on the diseased place and the Emperor was healed. When Justinian offered him an immense sum of money, Sampson thanked him but would accept nothing, saying to the Emperor: “O Emperor, I had silver and gold and other riches, but I left it all for the sake of Christ, that I might gain heavenly and eternal wealth.” When the Emperor insisted on doing something for him, Sampson asked him to build a home for the poor. In that home, Sampson cared for the poor as a father cares for his children. His compassion for the poor and weak was second nature to him. This holy man, filled with heavenly power and goodness, entered peacefully into rest on June 27th, 530. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Martyr Mocius, his kinsman.

Diomedes, August 16 A doctor from Tarsus of eminent parents, he taught the people the Christian faith as he healed them. The Emperor Diocletian ordered that he be beheaded in Nicaea in 298. Those who beheaded him and took his head to the Emperor were blinded, and when they restored the head to his body, with prayer, they were healed.

Anicetas and Photius, August 12 The Emperor Diocletian at one time visited the city of Nicomedia with the evil intention of utterly exterminating the Christians there. But, when he began his merciless torture of the Christians, Anicetas, one of the governors of the city, presented himself before him and courageously confessed before the Emperor his faith in Christ the Lord, God incarnate in the flesh for our salvation. Anicetas also denounced the worship of idols as that of deaf and dumb stones, unworthily worshipped by ignorant men. The furious Emperor commanded that his tongue be cut out, but Anicetas, by the power of God, continued to speak. Then a lion was let loose on him, which fawned about him. At that moment, the Temple of Hercules fell down. Photius, a kinsman of Anicetas', seeing the wonders and his kinsman's endurance, embraced him, confessed that he himself was a Christian and cried out to the Emperor: "You should be ashamed, you idolater; your gods are nothing!" The Emperor ordered that he be beheaded immediately, but the executioner, lifting up his hand against Photius, gave himself a blow with his sword and died. After harsh torture, the two of them were thrown into prison, where they remained for three years. They were then taken out and thrown into an enormous burning furnace. Many other Christians, men, women and children, went into the flames voluntarily after them, and the prayers of the Christians were heard rising from the flames, thanking God for their death by martyrdom. They all suffered in about 305. Anicetas and Photius are invoked in the prayers at the blessing of oil and water.

Spiridon, Bishop of Tremithus, December 12 The island of Cyprus was both the birthplace of this famous saint, and the place in which he spent his life in the service of the Church. He was of simple farming stock, and remained simple and humble to the end of his days. He married young and had children, but, when his wife died, he devoted himself entirely to the service of God. He was chosen for his devotion as Bishop of Tremithus, and even as a bishop did not change his simple style of life, taking charge of his cattle himself and tilling his own land. He consumed very little of his own produce, giving the greater part to the poor. He performed great wonders by God's power, making rain fall in a drought, stopping the course of a river, raising several of the dead, healing the Emperor Constans of a grave sickness, seeing and hearing angels, foreseeing future events and penetrating the secrets of the human heart. He turned many to the true Faith, and did much else. He was present at the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 325, and, by his simple and clear expositions of the Faith, as well as by convincing miracles, brought back many heretics to Orthodoxy. He dressed so simply that once, when he was invited by the Emperor to the imperial court, a soldier took him for a beggar and struck him a blow. The meek and guileless Spiridon turned him the other cheek. He glorified God with many miracles, and was of great aid both to individuals and the whole Church of God. He entered into rest in the Lord in 348.

Charalampus, February 10 This great saint was bishop in Magnesia, and suffered for Christ at the age of 113. When a violent persecution broke out under the Emperor Septimus Severus, the aged Charalampus did not hide from his persecutors, but freely and openly preached the Christian faith. He endured all tortures as though not in the body, and when they flayed the living flesh from him, the godly saint said to the Emperor's soldiers: "Thank you, my brethren, for scraping off the old body and renewing my soul for new and eternal life." He performed many wonders and brought many to the Faith. Even the Emperor's daughter, Gallina, repudiated the paganism of her father and became a Christian. Condemned to death and led to the place of execution, Charalampus raised his arms to heaven and prayed for all men, that God would give them bodily health and salvation of soul, and that He would grant them the fruits of the earth in abundance: "Lord, Thou knowest that men are flesh and blood; forgive them their sins and pour

out Thy blessing on all.” After praying thus, the saintly elder gave his soul to God before the executioner had laid his sword to his neck. He suffered in 202. Gallina took his body and buried it.

Menas, November 11 An Egyptian by birth and a soldier by profession, Menas, as a true Christian, could not bear to look upon the foul offering of sacrifice to idols, so he left the army and the town, the society of men and everything else, and went to a deserted mountain. It was easier for Menas to live with the wild beasts than with pagans. One day, Menas looked from afar in spirit as a pagan festival in the town of Cotyaeus, then went to the town and, before them all, confessed his faith in Christ the living God, denouncing idolatry and paganism as falsehood and darkness. The governor of that town, one Pyrrhus, asked who and what he was. The saint replied: “My fatherland is Egypt; my name is Menas. I was an officer, but, seeing the worship of idols, I rejected your honors. I have come now to proclaim my Christ before you all as the living God, that He may reveal me as His servant in the Kingdom of God.” Hearing this, Pyrrhus put holy Menas to harsh torture. He was flogged, flayed with iron flails, burned with torches and tortured in many other ways, finally being beheaded. His body was burned to prevent Christians taking it, but they did succeed in rescuing some bits from the flames. They buried these remains with care, and they were later taken to Alexandria and buried there, a church being built over them. Means suffered in about 304, and entered into the Kingdom of Christ.

Eleutherius, December 15 A good fruit of a good tree, this wonderful saint had noble and eminent parents. He was born in Rome, where his father was in imperial service. His mother, Anthea, heard the Gospel from the great Apostle Paul himself, and was baptized by him. Being early left a widow, she entrusted her only son to the education and service of the Bishop of Rome, Anacletus. Seeing how greatly Eleutherius was gifted and illumined by the grace of God, the bishop ordained him deacon at the age of fifteen, priest at eighteen and bishop at twenty. Endowed by God with wisdom, he made up for what he lacked in years. This godly man was made bishop in Illyria, with his seat at Valona in Albania. He kept his flock like a good shepherd, adding to their number from day to day. The Emperor Hadrian, a persecutor of Christians, sent a commander, Felix, with soldiers, to seize Eleutherius and take him to Rome. When the furious Felix arrived in Valona and went into the church, and heard and saw God’s holy hierarch, his heart was suddenly changed and he became a Christian. Eleutherius baptized him and set off with him for Rome, as merrily as though he were going to a feast, not to trail and torture. The Emperor put the gently-born Eleutherius to harsh torture, flogging him, burning him on an iron grid, boiling him in pitch and burning him in a fiery furnace. But, by God’s power, Eleutherius was delivered from all these deadly torments. Seeing all this, Choribus the governor proclaimed that he himself was a Christian. Choribus was tortured and then beheaded, and so also blessed Felix. Finally, the imperial executioners cut off the honored head of Eleutherius. When his mother, holy Anthea, came and stood over the dead body of her son, she was also beheaded. Their bodies were taken to Valona, where Eleutherius glorifies the name of Christ to this day.

Catharine, November 24_ The daughter of King Constus, she lived with her mother in Alexandria after her father’s death. Her mother was secretly a Christian and, through her spiritual father, brought Catharine to the Christian faith. In a vision, Catharine received a ring from the Lord Jesus Himself as a sign of her betrothal to Him. This ring remains on her finger to this day. Catharine was greatly gifted by God, exceptionally well-educated in Greek philosophy,

medicine, rhetoric and logic, and added great physical beauty to this. When the wicked Emperor Maxentius offered sacrifice to idols and ordered everyone to do the same, Catharine came with daring before him and denounced his idolatrous errors. The Emperor, seeing that she surpassed him in wisdom and learning, summoned fifty of the wisest men, to dispute with her about faith and put her to shame, but Catharine was wiser than they, and put them to shame. The furious Emperor commanded that all fifty wise men be burned. These wise men, at Catharine's prayers, all confessed the name of Christ at the moment of death, and proclaimed themselves Christians. When the martyr was in prison, she brought Porphyrius the general, with two hundred of his soldiers, to the Faith, and also the Empress, Augusta-Vasilissa. They all suffered for Christ. At Catharine's martyrdom, an angel of God appeared to her, stopping and breaking the wheel on which she was being tortured, and after that the Lord Christ Himself appeared to her, strengthening her. After many tortures, Catharine was beheaded with the sword at the age of eighteen, on November 24th, 310.

Thecla, Equal to the Apostles, September 24 Thecla was born in Iconium of eminent pagan parents. She was betrothed at the age of eighteen to a young man, at the time that the Apostle Paul came to Iconium with Barnabas to preach the Gospel. Listening to Paul for three days and nights, Thecla turned utterly to the Christian faith and vowed to live in virginity. Her mother, seeing that she shunned her betrothed and thought no more of marriage, first talked to her and then beat her and starved her. Finally, she gave her over to the judges and demanded, wicked mother that she was, that Thecla be burned. The judge threw her into the flames, but God preserved her unharmed. Thecla then became a follower of the Apostle Paul, and went with him to Antioch. Attracted by Thecla's beauty, an elder of the city attempted to take her by force, but Thecla tore herself out of his grasp. The elder denounced her to the governor as a Christian who was averse to marriage. The governor condemned her to death and threw her to the wild beasts, but the animals would not touch the body of this holy virgin. Amazed at this, the governor asked: "Who are you, and what is the power that you have in you, that nothing can do you harm?" Thecla replied: "I am a servant of the living God." Then the governor let her go free, and she began to preach the Gospel and succeeded in bringing many to the true Faith, among whom was an eminent and honored widow, Tryphena. After this, Thecla, with the blessing of the Apostle Paul, withdrew to a solitary place near Seleucia. She lived a long time there in asceticism, healing the sick with miraculous power and in this way bringing many to Christianity. The doctors in Seleucia were jealous of her and sent some young men to assault her, hoping that, in losing her virginity, she would lose also her miraculous power. Thecla fled from these insolent young men and, when she saw that they would catch her, prayed to God for help in front of a rock, and the rock opened and hid the holy maiden and bride of Christ. This rock was her hiding-place and her tomb. Chrysostom says of this wonderful Christian heroine and saint: "I seem to see this blessed virgin going to Christ with virginity in one hand and martyrdom in the other."

Paraskeva, July 26 Born in Rome of Christian parents, she was brought up from her earliest youth in the Christian faith and gave herself wholeheartedly to the fulfilling of God's commandments in her life. She brought others to the Way by means of her true and deep faith and devout life. When her parents died, Paraskeva gave all her goods away to the poor and received the monastic habit. As a nun, she preached the truth of Christ with ever more burning zeal, not hiding from anyone, even though the Christian faith was at that time subject to bloody persecution by the Roman authorities. Wicked Jews denounced Paraskeva for preaching a forbidden faith, and she was brought to trial before the Emperor Antoninus. All the Emperor's

flattery was unavailing in shaking the faith of this servant of God. She was then put to torture by fire, and a white-hot helmet was placed on her head, but God saved her miraculously and she escaped and left Rome. She again began to go from city to city, there to bring the pagan people to the true Faith. In two more cities she was brought before princes and judges, and tortured for her Lord, performing on these occasions great miracles by the power of God and quickly recovering from her wounds. The pagans, as ever, called her miracles magic, and ascribed her recovery to the power and mercy of their gods. Paraskeva once said to a prince who was torturing her: "It is not your god, O Prince, who heals me, but my Christ, the true God." She was finally beheaded by a Prince Tarasius. Thus gloriously ended the fruitful life of this holy woman. Her relics were later taken to Constantinople. She suffered for Christ in the second century.

Irene, May 5 She lived in the Balkans in apostolic times, in the town of Magedon where her father Licinius was a governor of a small region. Some think that she was a Slav. She was born a pagan of pagan parents. Penelope - for that was her pagan name - learned the Christian faith from her teacher, Appelianus. St. Timothy, the disciple of the Apostle Paul, baptized her and her lady-in-waiting, and brought her a letter from the Apostle Paul to read. She infuriated her father by her refusal to marry, and he intended to torture her, but she brought him to Christianity in a miraculous way. She was tortured in different ways by four kings, other than her father, but God saved her through His angels. King Sedechias buried her up to the neck in a pit full of snakes and scorpions, but an angel of God neutralized the poison of the reptiles and preserved the holy maiden untouched. Then the same king attempted to saw her in two, but the saw broke against her body as against stone. This same king once again bound her to the wheel of a water-mill, then let the water in to drown her, but the water would not flow, but stood still, and the maiden remained whole and alive. King Sapor, Sedechias's son, shod her with nails, loaded a sack of sand onto her, put a bridle on her and commanded that she be led like an animal far outside the city. "Truly I am as a beast before Thee, O Lord!" said the holy martyr as she ran bridled behind her torturers. But an angel of God caused an earthquake, and the earth opened and swallowed up her tormentors. Surviving all these tortures, by which an enormous number of pagans were brought to Christianity, Irene went to the city of Kallinikos, where she preached the Christian faith. The local king, Numerian, tried to kill her, throwing her into three burning metal oxen one after the other. But the maiden was preserved and remained alive, and many saw and believed. The Eparch, Vaudon, took her to the city of Constantina, where he thought to kill her by putting her onto a burning grid. But this did not harm Irene, and many were brought to the true Faith. Finally, Irene came to the city of Mesembria, where the king killed her but God restored her to life. And the king, seeing this, together with many of the people, believed in Christ and was baptized. And thus Irene, by her sufferings and miracles, brought over 100,000 pagans to faith in Christ. At last she laid herself in a grave and commanded Appelianus to close it. After four days, when the grave was opened, her body was not in it. Thus God glorified forever the maiden and martyr Irene, who had sacrificed all and endured all, that God should be the more greatly glorified among men.

THE APOSTLE JOHN

The Beloved Apostle

Perfecting the Love of God in Us

The Apostle John
May 8, 2015

GOSPEL: John 19:25-27, 21:24-25

EPISTLE: 1 John 4:12-19

BACKGROUND: THE LIFE OF JOHN

John's Family

John, son of Zebedee, and his brother, James were the grandsons of Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin Mary. John's mother, Salome, was one of the myrrh-bearing women. She was also Jesus' stepsister and was a very close confidante of the Virgin Mary. It was quite natural for the Lord to entrust the care of His mother to John at the cross (John 19:25-27) since Mary and Salome were such close friends. Throughout John's Gospel, he refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20) and this is the subject of the Gospel lesson. John was probably the youngest of the 12. Being Jesus' relative (either step-nephew or second cousin, once removed), he was treated very tenderly by the Lord (John 13:23-25).

John was one of a number of the Twelve Apostles who were fishermen by trade. This included his brother James, Thomas, Nathanael, Peter and Andrew, plus others (John 21:2). His father, Zebedee, ran the fishing business, and there were a number of hired servants who helped with the day-to-day tasks (Mark 1:19-20). Most of the fish caught were taken to the city of Magdala for salting to preserve freshness, but some fish were sold fresh locally. Fish was a major part of the diet of 1st Century Palestine, and fresh fish commanded a very good price. Recent studies of the operations of the 1st Century fishing industry indicate that the owner of a fishing business had a good income, equivalent to upper middle class today. For more details about the 1st Century fishing industry see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "Fishers of Fish, Fishers of Men", Bible Review, June 1999, pp. 22-27, 48. John's mother, Salome, was not mentioned by name as one of the chief supporters of Jesus' public ministry (Luke 8:2-3). However, she was very closely connected to Jesus' ministry (Matthew 20:20-22), and was present at the foot of the Cross and at the Tomb (Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:56). From this we can conclude with reasonable certainty that she was one of the lesser supporters of Jesus' ministry, and that she was not as wealthy as Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna (Luke 8:2-3).

John's family owned property in Jerusalem, and John had his own home (John 19:27) which was located on Mt. Zion according to tradition (Holy Apostles Convent, The Life of the Virgin Mary, p. 417). During Jesus' crucifixion, John was known to the high priest, Caiaphas, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. It is uncertain whether Caiaphas knew John because he was of priestly descent or because of his family wealth. John then went out and spoke to the doorkeeper to let Peter in also (John 18:13-16). John, however, was spared the inquisition that Peter received (John 18:17-27).

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The Jewish rulers, elders and Scribes described the fishermen-turned-Apostles as uneducated and untrained men. This group of Jewish leaders included Annas and Caiaphas (Acts 4:5-13), where the priests and the high priest were from among the Sadducees, who did not believe in a bodily resurrection (Luke 20:27). “Uneducated and untrained” does not mean unintelligent, but only refers to formal training in the Mosaic Law, philosophy and oratory. As a result, these Sadducees marveled that Peter and John, who had no training in oratory, were very eloquent in proclaiming the resurrection of Christ (Acts 4:13).

Accompanying the Lord

John was among Jesus’ “inner circle”, with Peter and James (John’s brother). He was prominent at a number of events during Jesus’ public ministry:

- At the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31).
- As an Apostle at the ordination of the Twelve (Mark 3:17).
- At the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:35-37).
- At the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28).
- Rebuking someone who cast out demons, but who did not follow Christ (Luke 9:49).
- With his brother James, seeking to call down fire from heaven just like Elijah (2 Kings 1:10-12) on a Samaritan village that wouldn’t receive them (Luke 9:54).
- With James and Salome, asking for the highest place in the Kingdom. This caused the other ten Apostles to be greatly displeased with John and James (Matthew 20:20-24, Mark 10:35-41).
- Asking for private clarification of future events (Mark 13:3).
- Sent ahead by Jesus to prepare the Passover and Last Supper (Luke 22:8).
- Asking Jesus who would betray Him at Peter’s request (John 13:23-26).
- With Peter and James in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-33).
- As the only one of the Twelve at the Cross, where Jesus assigned to him the care of His mother as a son would normally do (John 19:26-27).
- With Peter, following Jesus after His arrest, and gaining entrance to Annas’ house (John 18:15-16).

Jesus nicknamed John and his brother James “the Sons of Thunder” (Mark 3:17) due to their desire to call down fire from heaven on a Samaritan village that would not receive Jesus (Luke 9:51-56). On the other hand, his Epistles portray him as a gentle old man who emphasized love among the brethren. This is the subject of the Epistle lesson.

John certainly had a desire to understand the depths of the Kingdom of God, and this was reflected in his life. Besides asking for the highest place in the Kingdom (Matthew 20:20-24, Mark 10:35-41), he was very intimate with Christ and recognized some things quicker than the other Apostles. For example, at the tomb, John recognized that the Lord had risen even though they did not understand yet that this is what the Scriptures said (John 20:2-9). He was also first to recognize the Risen Christ at the Sea of Galilee while they were fishing (John 21:6-7). Because of this intimacy, John became known as “the disciple that Jesus loved” (John 21:7, 20). This is not to say that Jesus loved no one else, but that Jesus loved John in a special manner. As part of this intimacy, the Lord showed John many things about the goings-on in heaven and about what will happen in the future. John was even caught up to heaven to see some of these things himself (Revelation 1:10-11, 4:1-11).

John came to be known in later centuries by the name, John the Theologian. This was due to widespread circulation of his Gospel, with an accompanying understanding of the depth of the mystery of God revealed in his writings, which include a Gospel, three Epistles and Revelation.

John lived his entire life in celibacy, as did a number of the Apostles and the Virgin Mary. In doing this, their concentration was on fasting, prayer, overcoming the passions of the flesh and on understanding the Will of God every moment of their lives.

At the end of John's Gospel, he dispelled the rumor that was spreading about hinting that he (John) would never die. This rumor grew out of a misunderstanding of Christ's words to Peter. Jesus had just spoken to Peter, signifying by what death he would glorify God. Peter replied by asking what about John. Jesus said, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?" John pointed out that Jesus did not say that he would not die, but merely, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?" (John 21:19-23).

John's Care of the Virgin Mary After Pentecost

At the foot of the Cross, Jesus assigned the care of His mother to the Apostle John. This was necessary in 1st Century Jewish culture. The oldest son in the family had the "birthright" and was expected to care for his mother for the rest of her life in the event of his father's death. He was given an extra share of the birthright to do this with. Out of this extra share, he was also expected to provide for any unmarried sisters, including their dowry upon marriage (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). Therefore the Virgin Mary lived in John's house along with John's mother, Salome, until her death. This implies that Salome's husband, Zebedee, died shortly after Pentecost.

John was very prominent in the early Church. This was very noticeable to Paul when he came to Jerusalem in c. 48 AD for the Council in Jerusalem regarding the issue of circumcision of the Gentiles (Acts 15). At that time, Paul perceived that James, Peter and John were the pillars of the Jerusalem Church (Galatians 2:9). This James was James the Lord's brother (Galatians 1:19), and not John's brother James. John's brother had already been martyred in 44 AD (Acts 12:1-3).

This prominence can also be seen in the accounts of the miracles performed by the Twelve in Jerusalem in the year following Pentecost. As Peter and John went up to the Temple for 9th Hour Prayers, they healed a man who was lame from birth (Acts 3:1-10). As the Twelve taught in the Temple, it was Peter and John who were arrested for preaching the Resurrection of Christ. In defending themselves before Annas, the high priest, Caiaphas, and the family of the high priest, everyone marveled at the boldness of the speaking of Peter and John (Acts 4:1-19). Later, after the death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), the high priest (and the Sadducees) arrested all of the Twelve Apostles. In their defense, it was Peter and the other Apostles who spoke and not just Peter and John (Acts 5:17-29).

One year to the day after Pentecost, Stephen was stoned (Acts 7:54-60). According to tradition, John and the Virgin Mary watched from a distance, praying for Stephen during his execution. Also from tradition, Deacon Nicanor (Acts 6:5) and 200 others were stoned the

same day. These events began a great persecution of the Church at Jerusalem, largely by the hand of the future Apostle Paul (Acts 8:1-3, 22:4-5, 26:10-11, 1 Corinthians 15:9). It was at this time of persecution that most of the Apostles began their various missionary journeys abroad, and the Twelve Apostles are not mentioned as being together at any time after this. However, John and the Virgin Mary remained in Jerusalem during this persecution.

In about 44 AD, Herod (i.e. Agrippa) began to persecute the Church, killing James, John's brother, with the sword (Acts 12:1). James, like John, had been very eloquent in proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ following his return from Spain. Herod also arrested Peter since he saw it pleased the Jews; but an angel let Peter out of prison at night (Acts 12:3, 7). Peter stopped by at the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where everyone was praying for him. There he told them he was okay; but that he was leaving town, and they should be sure to tell James, the Bishop of Jerusalem (Acts 12:17). From there Peter made his way first to Caesarea and eventually to Antioch. Barnabas brought Paul to Antioch c. 46 AD while Peter was still there (Galatians 2:11-15, Acts 11:25-26).

John and the Virgin Mary left Jerusalem also at the time of Herod's persecution. Since John's lot in the evangelization of the world was Asia Minor, they sailed for Ephesus. There they stayed until the death of Herod (Acts 12:20-23). To put this in context, the Apostle Andrew had already been to Ephesus briefly, but the Apostle Paul would not arrive until 52 AD, at the end of his Second Missionary Journey. Since Herod died not too long after he killed James, John and the Virgin Mary most likely stayed in Ephesus less than two years. As was her custom, the Virgin Mary spent her time in prayer, fasting and meditation on the Scriptures.

John and Mary returned to Jerusalem following the death of Herod, and remained there until the early 50's. About that time, Mary heard that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha desired to see her very much. Lazarus had been ordained Bishop of Cyprus by the Apostle Barnabas, but did not dare enter Jerusalem for fear of the Jews. It had been over 20 years since the Jewish leaders had tried to kill him; but they still sought to do so (John 12:9-11).

To solve this dilemma, Mary wrote to Bishop Lazarus asking him to send a ship for her so that she might visit him on Cyprus. This he did and the Apostle John with the Virgin Mary and some others set sail for Cyprus. Out at sea, however, they encountered a violent storm that took them far off course and up to the northern part of the Aegean Sea near Macedonia. There, they put in to the port of Clemes on Athos at the tip of the 50-mile long peninsula. At this location today, there are a number of famous monasteries that trace their origin to the visit of John and the Virgin Mary in the early 50's, and most of the information we have concerning the Virgin Mary's voyage comes from these monasteries.

At that time, the population of Athos consisted of young virgins dedicated to the goddess Diana who were expected to become priestesses to serve in the Greek temples. Also on Athos was a large gold and ivory statue of Jupiter on top of the 6,600-foot peak of Mt. Athos. This statue was mentioned in ancient history accounts of Plutarch and Anaximander as having large gems for eyes; it was used for navigation by seamen. Also present on the peninsula was a huge temple of Apollo where fortune telling, divining and witchcraft took place.

When John and Mary arrived at the port of Clemes, the huge statue of Jupiter fell and shattered to pieces with a thunderous noise. At the same time, the ground shook and idols and pagan statues in the temple and in all the shrines fell prostrate and broke in pieces. During the chaos of this collapse, a voice was heard saying, “Men of Apollo, all of you, go to Clemes Harbor and welcome Mary, the mother of the Great God Jesus”. Thus the demons inhabiting the idols were forced against their will to proclaim the truth.

Seeing the destruction around them, all the inhabitants of Athos hurried to Clemes Harbor to meet the Virgin Mary. They received her, the Apostle John and the others with great honor and brought them to a large meeting hall. There they asked her to explain who was the God that she bore and they inquired diligently into the mystery of the Incarnation. They also wondered at how Mary, a Hebrew woman, could explain everything to them in Greek. This was due to the gift of languages that Mary received along with the 120 at Pentecost (Acts 1:14, 2:1-3).

All this resulted in the entire group of the residents of Athos accepting the Christian Faith. They were all then catechized and baptized into the Faith. During their stay on Athos, Mary and the Apostle John performed many miracles among the new converts. Before leaving, they appointed a leader and teacher for the newly illumined residents of Athos from among their traveling party. In addition, Mary prayed for the blessing of Athos, that the Lord would have mercy on it and keep it free from harm until the end of the world along with its inhabitants.

Having blessed Athos, Mary, John and the others set sail for Cyprus. Meanwhile, Lazarus had grown very concerned about Mary’s delay, assuming it was because of a storm, and not knowing that all was well. When the ship arrived, there was great rejoicing and thanksgiving. Mary presented Bishop Lazarus with an ornophorion and spimanikia (part of a bishop’s vestments) that she had made. And John and Mary shared the good news of all that happened on Athos.

After staying on Cyprus for a short time, Mary blessed the Christians there and returned to Jerusalem with John and the others.

Shortly after Mary and John returned from Cyprus, Mary Magdalene also returned to Jerusalem from her evangelism in Rome and elsewhere. Since she had been very close to the Virgin Mary during Jesus’ three-year ministry, she stayed with the Apostle John for several years until the Virgin Mary’s death. At this time, the Virgin Mary was in her early 70’s and Mary Magdalene was in her late 60’s.

The Missionary Journeys of John

After Pentecost, John was at first downcast when he drew the lot of Asia Minor as his mission field due to the danger that lay before him. He repented of this sin of doubt, however, when he remembered the words of the Lord, "There shall not a hair of your head perish" (Luke 21:17-18). After the Virgin Mary died (in the mid-50's AD), John moved to Ephesus permanently. We can see this from Revelation 2 and 3, where John addressed seven churches in Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. These seven churches John knew quite well and he helped to establish them in the 60's and 70's AD, prior to his exile on Patmos. All these Churches are within a 70-mile radius in what is now Western Turkey.

An illustration of John's work in this area can be seen from an account from tradition of events in Hierapolis of Phrygia, a few miles from Laodicea. John worked for a short time there with Nathanael, Philip and Philip's sister Mariamne. There they killed a huge snake-god by their prayers. Following this, John moved on leaving Nathanael, Philip and Mariamne to evangelize the city.

In the late 60's AD, John returned to Jerusalem where Prochorus who had been bishop of Nicomedia joined him. Together, they left for Joppa and stayed three days with Tabitha; then left by ship for Ephesus. They were shipwrecked and all hands were cast ashore at Seleucia except John. Prochorus was arrested under suspicion of sorcery since John didn't come ashore. (They thought John made off with the ship's cargo). Finally, he was released and made his way overland to Mareotis (upon John's prior instruction), walking for 40 days toward Ephesus. Upon Prochorus' arrival, a great wave washed John ashore. After embracing and talking about their experiences, they headed for Ephesus. This was the beginning of a long series of experiences that Jesus had predicted for John, where John would "drink the cup that He drank" (Mark 10:35-39).

In Ephesus they stayed near the house of Dioscorides, the city chief, and went to work for a woman named Romana who ran a bathhouse. John worked at stoking the fire; Prochorus worked at fetching water. After four days, she came by and saw John standing around trying to figure out what to do. She punched him in the face, knocking him to the ground, and called him a lazy, good-for-nothing. [She was a stout woman who used to serve in the army.] John remembered how Jesus was struck, spat upon, lashed, etc. And he told Prochorus that this was an encouragement for them to always bear good will. This happened repeatedly as John began learning the trade. He never gave a word of back talk and Romana thought he was an uneducated peasant. She then had forged legal papers drawn up saying that John and Prochorus were her slaves.

Three months later, Domnus, the 18-year-old son of Dioscorides (who owned the bathhouse) came in and was strangled by a demon that dwelt there. (Prochorus and Domnus' servants watched helplessly.) Romana was in profound grief over how to explain this to her boss. She prayed to Artemis (or Diana) and pulled out her hair and tore her clothes.

John paused in his work to come ask what happened. Before Prochorus could explain, Romana grabbed John, accused him of being a warlock, punched him in the face and demanded

he raise Domnus from the dead. John stayed calm, withdrew to pray, then raised Domnus and brought him to Romana. Romana was so ashamed of how she had treated John she couldn't even look him in the face but cried bitterly at his feet. John then explained whom he was and forgave her and she believed.

Meanwhile, Dioscorides had died of a heart attack on learning that his only son was dead. John, Prochorus, Romana and a crowd of others went there and John raised him also. Dioscorides, Domnus and Romana were then baptized.

Later at a festival of Artemis (Diana), John stood on the high place near the statue of Artemis in his sooty work clothes. This angered the crowd and they hurled a number of stones at John; all these missed John and hit the statue. The "son of thunder" then spoke to them of their delusion and challenged them to have their broken statue punish him. They threw more stones, which only turned back and hit the ones throwing them.

John prayed that the Lord would show these people who's Lord. An earthquake and sudden heat wave struck and 200 people died; the rest begged John for mercy. John prayed again, raised up the 200 and they all believed, were catechized and baptized.

Following this, John performed many other signs similar to those he and Peter did back in Jerusalem in the early 30's AD. The demon that dwelt in the temple of Artemis, however, began to fear that John would cast him out and destroy the temple. So the demon assumed the appearance of a magistrate and persuaded some citizens that he was escorting two sorcerers, John and Prochorus, to prison when they escaped. He offered a large bounty for their capture, dead or alive.

At first, Romana and Dioscorides rescued John and Prochorus. But then the demon aroused a whole mob against them while they were in Dioscorides' house. John voluntarily surrendered to the mob and they took him to the temple of Artemis. By his prayers, the "son of thunder" caused the statue of Artemis to topple and the temple to collapse. John then forced the demon to confess to his plot and directed him to leave the area. "Numberless crowds came to believe and disdained the worship of idols."

However, certain Jews brought news of this to Emperor Domitian in about 81 AD. Domitian began a great prosecution of Christians and had John arrested. After many beatings, John was forced to drink a cup of strong poison, then was boiled in oil. Neither had any effect. Domitian thought John was immortal and had him exiled to the island of Patmos, a penal colony.

On the way to Patmos, one of the sailors fell overboard, drowned and was lost at sea. Everyone on board was grief-stricken except John. John asked each sailor in turn which deity they worshipped. After inquiring of everyone on the ship, John exclaimed how many gods, yet none could save one drowned man. John prayed and a large wave broke over the ship depositing the drowned man alive on the deck.

Later on in the voyage, a storm arose and the ship was in danger of breaking up. The crew asked John to pray again, which he did and calmed the sea. Still later, when they ran out of water, John turned seawater into fresh water. Near the end of the voyage, John healed one of the sailors of dysentery. At this, the entire crew wanted to become John's disciples and go wherever he wanted. John replied that this was not proper; they still needed to take him to Patmos lest the emperor punish them. When they arrived on Patmos, John catechized and baptized the entire crew.

John first stayed in the home of Myron the governor's father-in-law. After John cast a demon out of Myron's eldest son, the entire family believed. The governor, Lawrence, sent his wife and son to be baptized also. The wife wished to remain celibate in her father's house, but John would not agree to this. John sent her back to her husband saying that he too would come to believe soon. This happened two years later when his term of office expired.

Many of people in the city came to Myron's home to be catechized, healed and baptized by John. Those who were rich wanted to offer John large amounts of money. John instructed them to give it to the poor with their own hand in order that they might have treasure in heaven.

Three years after arriving on Patmos, John and Prochorus were in the market place near the temple of Apollo. Some of the priests of Apollo began to sneer at John and ridicule what he taught. The "son of thunder" prayed, and the temple of Apollo collapsed. The priests immediately grabbed John and inflicted many stripes on him; then they had him thrown into the deepest dungeon. When Myron and his family heard, they got John out -- since they were very influential.

A magician named Coenops, a master of illusion, lived in the wilderness of Patmos. The priests of Apollo went to him to get him to take revenge on John and kill him. This began a battle between the "son of thunder" and the son of perdition. First Coenops sent demons three times to kill John; but John sent them to torment in the abyss. Finally Coenops was so mad he came to the city to challenge John face to face with his illusions.

Several times, Coenops appeared to raise the dead relatives of grieving bystanders by having demons take the form of the loved ones. Coenops challenged John to do the same, but John calmly and humbly said that the Lord did not send him to do that but to teach deluded people. Then John said that Coenops' signs would soon come to nothing. Hearing this, the people jumped on John and beat him until they thought he was dead.

The next day, Coenops returned with his demons in the form of the "resurrected" loved ones and announced to John how he planned to disgrace and shame John further. At the shore of the Aegean, Coenops clapped his hands together and plunged into the sea out of sight, saying he would return in glory. Then the "son of thunder" prayed that the same fate might befall Coenops as befell Pharaoh. At this, there was a peal of thunder and a "boiling" or stirring of the waters where Coenops went under; then nothing. The people waited for three days for Coenops to return -- all to no avail. As for the demons that served Coenops, John ordered them to depart from the island.

Sometime later, a Jew named Philo met John in the market place and debated John on the Scriptures for two days. As John was debating, a young man brought a sick man for John to heal, which John did. Philo replied, "Teacher, what is love?" John responded, "God is love and he who has love has God." Philo replied, "Therefore show the love of God and come home with me." John did so and healed Philo's wife of leprosy while he stayed there. Philo and his wife believed and were baptized.

After John left Philo's house, he came across two of the priests of Apollo who had urged Coenops against John. One priest asked John to heal his lame son that he too may believe. John said, "First believe, then God will heal your son." The priest replied, "First heal my son, then I'll believe." The "son of thunder" raised his voice, "Do not tempt God that your lack of faith become blasphemy. In the Name of Jesus Christ, you shall have your son's crippled feet." Then, John sent the other priest with Prochorus to the first priest's house to bring back the son. When Prochorus got there the child was healed. When the crippled priest saw his son, he cried out with tears in a loud voice, "Have mercy on me, disciple of the Compassionate God." John then healed him and baptized his entire household.

All this happened in the city of Flora on Patmos. After three years, John and Prochorus went to Myrimousa where they observed a young man in chains about to be sacrificed to a wolf-god, that was actually a demon. John commanded the demon to depart; bystanders were very amazed and listened intently as John taught them.

The priests of Zeus, who worshipped the wolf-god, were angry with John. One day, one of the priests' sons was strangled in a bathhouse by the same demon that John had cast out of Romana's bathhouse six years earlier. The priest confessed to John that he, too, had come to believe and asked if John would raise his son. John did so, then cast out the demon and baptized the priest, his son and many others.

After this John and Prochorus left for the suburb of Phlogeon where John cast a demon out of a widow's only son, then catechized and baptized them. On the fourth day they were there, John stood near the temple of Dionysus (Bacchus) as the pagans were starting an orgy. To keep John from hindering the festival, the priests bound John, took him away and beat him until he was half-dead. John prayed that He would do to this temple as He did to the Philistines' temple by Samson. The temple then collapsed, crushing the twelve priests inside who were preparing the orgy.

A renowned sorcerer, Noetian, was furious at John for leveling the temple of Dionysus. He conjured up twelve demons to pose as the resurrected twelve priests, pretending that he had raised them. Knowing Noetian's intent, John sent Prochorus around the other side of the collapsed temple before Noetian could introduce the demons and had Prochorus send the demons to a waterless place. When Noetian tried to "raise" the 12 priests, nothing happened and he was embarrassed. The townsfolk would have killed him if John hadn't prevented them.

The next day, as John was baptizing 220 people, Noetian turned the water John was using as a baptismal font into blood. John turned it back and also struck Noetian with

blindness. At this, Noetian begged John's mercy, repented, and was baptized also along with his household.

After this, John and Prochorus went to the city of Karo, three miles distant. One young man in the crowd, Sosipater, who was listening to John, wanted to follow Christ, but was being hounded by his mother into incest with her. He invited John to his house to help him resist his mother. The mother, in turn, denounced John and her son to the governor and the governor ordered John and Sosipater sown into leather bags full of poisonous snakes. Before they could do so, John caused the right hands of the governor and the mother to wither.

The judge, who was secretly a Christian, then confessed his faith and begged John's forgiveness. John restored the judge's and the mother's hands and the judge invited John, Prochorus and Sosipater to his house for two days. During this time, the judge and his family were catechized and baptized. Meanwhile, the mother had come to profound repentance. When John and Sosipater came to her house, they found her weeping bitterly. John comforted her, then catechized and baptized her and her son. She lived the rest of her life in fasting and prayer and in distributing her wealth to the poor.

Toward the end of John's exile on Patmos, he wrote the book of Revelation by dictating it to Prochorus who then copied it onto good parchment.

In about 96 AD, Emperor Domitian was assassinated and his successor, Nerva, did not persecute the Christians. John was free to return to Ephesus. By then, nearly all the inhabitants of Patmos had come to believe, and they wanted John to stay. When he told them that the Lord had instructed him to return to Ephesus, they asked him to draft a written document that they could use to remain steadfast in the faith. This John did later by dictating his Gospel to Prochorus who had Sosipater copy it onto good parchment. After bidding farewell (with many tears) to the residents of Patmos where John had spent 15 years, John and Prochorus sailed to Ephesus where they were received with great joy and stayed in the house of Domnus [Dioscorides had died during John's absence.]

John spent the rest of his life in Ephesus in strict fasting and prayer, living as a Nazarite. Because of his age, he didn't have the strength to preach anymore but taught just the bishops privately. Jerome stated that the faithful carried him to Church where he would say over and over "Little children, love one another." When his disciples asked him why he just said this, he replied, "This is the Lord's commandment; and if you keep it, it is enough."

John died in the third year of Trajan (about 101 AD) at the age of nearly 100. Most accounts state that John instructed seven of his disciples to go outside the city with him and dig his grave. John then climbed in and died as he lay in the grave. The seven then buried him. Later the faithful dug up the grave to give John a more prominent resting-place, but the grave was empty.