

## The Martyrology

From earliest times Christians have remembered and given thanks for the lives and examples of the Saints, and have asked for their intercessions. The Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of that "cloud of witnesses" and the Revelation of John tells of "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" worshiping before the throne of God. St. John also speaks of the prayers of the saints rising with the incense before the throne. In many diverse ways the Saints show us, by word and deed, how to live Christ-like lives.

Each early Christian community kept its own list of the Saints, remembering the dates of their deaths or heavenly "birthdays." At first these were lists of Martyrs, those who had been killed for their witness to Christ and who had been faithful, even unto death, during times of persecution. In time other holy people were added to the lists of witnesses: holy Confessors, Bishops, Monastics, Wonder-workers, Teachers, even saintly Kings and Queens. A well-known Martyrology was attributed to St. Jerome. St. Gregory the Great wrote of the list in Rome in the 6th century as "a codex containing the names of almost all the martyrs from various lands and from different provinces according to their days, together with the date and place of their martyrdom." St. Bede the Venerable in England, Rabanus Maurus in Germany and Usard in France all compiled Martyrologies. The Roman Martyrology was first published in 1583, drawing heavily on these older works, together with the Dialogues of St. Gregory and the Greek Menologion of Sirletus. It was subsequently revised and expanded many times.

In the Monastic Office a passage of the Martyrology is read in the Office of Prime on the preceding day, hence the reading for January 2nd is offered on the morning of January 1st, and so forth. This permitted the monastic community to prepare for the services of the following day. The traditional form was to announce the day, in the old Roman form (the "calends"), followed by the phase of the moon, followed by the reading of the day. The reading always concludes with "And elsewhere many other holy martyrs, confessors, and virgins. *R.* Thanks be to God." In seminaries and other institutions the reading was often offered after the main meal of the day. In parishes, where it is desired to read from the Martyrology, the passage might be offered before or after Lauds (in the Benedictine Office) or Matins (in The English Office).

The preparation of this edition began in Ashley, Canterbury, New Zealand and was completed near Washington, DC. It was one of many liturgical projects of Fr. Jack Witbrock, the first Dean of the Antiochian Orthodox parishes of New Zealand, who served in both the Eastern and Western Rites. Fr. Jack, out of necessity and love for the liturgical heritage of the Orthodox West, prepared printed versions of *The English Breviary* and the *Liturgy of St. Gregory*. Over the four decades that he worked on this project he gradually refined his texts, translating from the Latin original, carefully comparing his work with the earliest Latin texts he could obtain. He prepared the first editions of the Martyrology, Breviary and Missal using a typewriter and photocopier. He stated his intent to provide the "Roman Martyrology edited to include Saints before 1054, suitable for use with the English Breviary or Monastic Breviary." Regrettably Fr. Jack was not able to complete this work to his satisfaction before he departed this life on November 3rd, 2012 (*May his memory be eternal!*), and much of his liturgical work was left in forms difficult to use apart from his software and printer. This edition completes Fr. Jack's work on the Martyrology, adding Orthodox Saints, both Eastern and Western, found in a Calendar prepared

by a committee of the Western Rite Vicariate of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. Added commemorations are marked in italics.

**T**he Martyrology recalls our "heroes in the Faith." In our own day, as we continue to hear of Christians being put to death in the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere for their faith in Christ, often in no less brutal ways than the saints of old, may we be strengthened by their prayers and their examples. All ye holy Saints of God. Intercede for us!

*St. Gregory the Great Orthodox Church  
Washington, DC  
March 12, 2015 - The Feast of St. Gregory*

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## JANUARY

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### **The First Day of January**

**T**HE Octave-Day of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. At Rome, the passion of St. Martina, Virgin and Martyr, who, under the Emperor Alexander, was tortured by different kinds of torments, and at length obtained the palm of martyrdom by the sword: her feast is kept on January 30. At Cæsarea in Cappadocia, the death of St. Basil, surnamed the Great, Bishop, Confessor and Doctor of the Church; who, distinguished by learning and wisdom and adorned with every virtue, in the time of the Emperor Valens, shone forth with remarkable glory, and with invincible constancy defended the Church against the Arians and Macedonians. But his feast is fittingly kept on June 14, on which day he was consecrated bishop. At Rome, St. Almachius, Martyr, who, because he said: "Today is the Octave-Day of the Lord; give up the superstitions of idols and unclean sacrifices," was slain by gladiators at the command of Alipius, prefect of the City. Also at Rome, on the Appian Way, thirty holy soldiers, who, under the Emperor Diocletian obtained the crown of martyrdom. At Spoleto, St. Concordius, Priest and Martyr, who in the time of the Emperor Antoninus, was first beaten with rods, then stretched on the rack, and afterwards afflicted in prison; there he was consoled by the visit of an angel, and at length he ended his life by the sword. On the same day, St. Magnus the Martyr. In Africa, blessed Fulgentius, bishop of the Church of Ruspe, who in the time of the Vandal persecution was greatly harassed by the Arians by reason of his Catholic faith and eminent learning, and exiled to Sardinia. At length he was allowed to return to his own church, and he died a holy death, renowned for his life and preaching. At Chieti in the Abruzzi, the birthday of St. Justin, bishop of that city, renowned for the holiness of his life and for his miracles. In the diocese of Lyons, in the monastery of Jura, St. Eugendus, Abbot, whose life shone resplendent with miracles and virtues. At Alexandria, death of St. Euphrosyne, Virgin, who was renowned in her monastery for the virtue of abstinence and for her miracles.

And elsewhere many other holy martyrs, confessors and virgins.  
*R.* Thanks be to God.