

From his youth **Saint Michael of Synnada** longed for the monastic life and was sent by Patriarch Tarasius (784-806) to a monastery on the coast of the Black Sea. Saint Theophylactus, the future Bishop of Nicomedia, also entered the monastery together with him.

At the monastery, both monks engaged in spiritual struggles and were soon glorified by gifts from the Lord. Once, during the harvest, when the people were weakened by thirst, an empty metal vessel was filled with water by the prayer of the monks.

Patriarch Tarasius consecrated Saint Michael as bishop of the city of Synnada. Through his holy life and wisdom, Saint Michael won the love of believers, and the notice of the emperors Nicephorus I (802-811) and Michael I Rangabe (811-813). Saint Michael was present at the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 787.

When the iconoclast heretic Leo the Armenian (813-820) assumed the throne, he began to expel Orthodox hierarchs from their sees, appointing heretics in their place.

Saint Michael defended Orthodoxy, bravely opposing the heretics and denouncing their error. Leo the Armenian brought Saint Michael to trial, but, not fearing torture, he answered resolutely, "I venerate the holy icons of My Saviour Jesus Christ and the All-Pure Virgin, His Mother, and all the saints, and it is to them I bow down. I shall not obey your decrees to remove icons from churches."

Leo then banished the bishop to the city of Eudokiada, where the confessor died about the year 821. The head of Saint Michael is preserved in the Great Lavra of St Athanasius on Mount Athos, and part of the relics is at the Iveron Monastery.

Sunday, June 5

Seventh Sunday of Pascha

Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Commemoration of Venerable Michael the Confessor, Bishop of Synnada (†821),
Uncovering of relics of Holy Hierarch Leonty, Bishop of Rostov (†1164), Venerable
Euphrosinia, Igumenia of Polotsk (†1173)

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Wednesday, June 8

Moleben with Akathist 5:30 P.M.

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Saturday, June 11

All Souls Saturday

Commemoration of the Departed

Divine Liturgy 9:00 A.M.

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Saturday, June 11

Great Vespers 5:30 P.M.

Sunday, June 12

Pentecost

Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Holy Apostles

Feast of the Holy Trinity

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

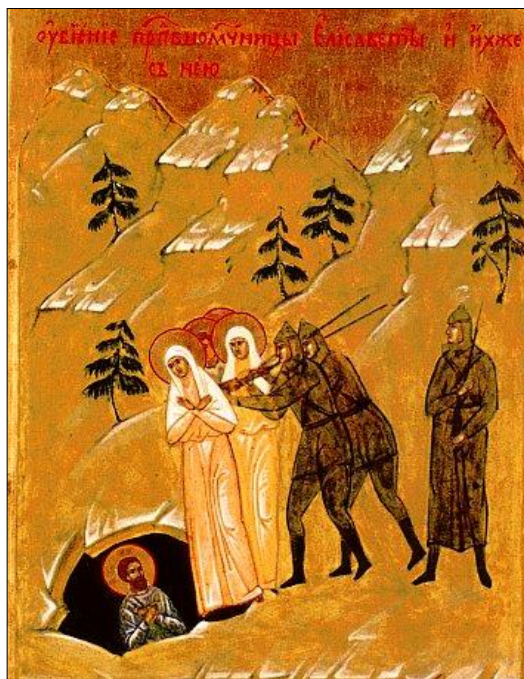
Holy New Venerable Martyrs Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna and Barbara

by Metropolitan Anastasy (†1965)

Conclusion

During the course of the last months of 1917 and the beginning of 1918, the Soviet power to everyone's amazement granted the Martha and Mary Convent and its abbess complete freedom to live as they wished and even supported them by supplying essentials. This made the blow even heavier and unexpected for them when on Pascha the grand duchess was suddenly arrested and transported to Ekaterinburg. His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon attempted with the help of Church organizations to take a part in her liberation, but was unsuccessful. Her exile was at first accompanied by some comforts. She was quartered in a convent where all the sisters were sincerely involved. A special comfort for her was that she was not hampered from attending services. Her position became more difficult after her transfer to Alapaevsk where she was imprisoned in one of the city schools together with her ever-faithful companion, nun Barbara, and several grand dukes who shared her fate.

Nevertheless, she did not lose her abiding firmness of spirit and occasionally would send words of encouragement and comfort to the sisters of her convent who were deeply grieving over her. And so it continued until the fateful night of 5/18 July, 1918. On this night, together with the other royal captives striving with her and her valiant fellow-struggler Barbara in Alapaevsk, she was suddenly taken in an automobile outside the city and apparently buried alive with them in one of the local mine shafts. The results of later excavation there has shown that she strived until the last moment to serve the grand dukes who were severely injured by the fall. Some local peasants reported that for a long time there was heard a mysterious singing from below the earth.



Venerable Martyrs Elizabeth and Barbara, along with their fellow sufferers, are thrown into an old mine

This was the great-passion-bearer, singing funeral hymns to herself and the others until the silver

chain was loosed and the golden bowl was broken (cf. Eccles. 12:6) and until the songs of heaven began to resound for her. Thus, the longed-for martyr's crown was placed on her head and she was united to the hosts of those of whom John, the seer of mysteries, speaks: "after this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; ...And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"" (Rev. 7:9, 14). Like a wondrous vision, she passed over the earth, leaving behind radiant traces. Together with all the other sufferers for Christ, she appeared simultaneously as a redeemer and as a foundation for that Russia of the future which is being raised up on the bones of the new martyrs. Such images have a timeless significance; their memory is eternal on earth and in heaven. Not in vain did the voice of the people declare her a saint during her lifetime. (It is noteworthy that soon after the birth of the grand duchess, her mother, the Princess Alice, a woman with a great and meek spirit, wrote to Queen Victoria about the name given to her daughter. "We liked Elizabeth since St. Elizabeth is an ancestress of the Hessian, as well as of the Saxon House." The late grand duchess had kept this name after being united to the Orthodox Church and chose for her heavenly protectress, Righteous Elizabeth—5/18 September.)

As though in reward for her earthly struggles and special love for the Holy Land, her relics, which according to eyewitnesses were found in the mine shaft completely untouched by corruption, were destined to rest at the same place where the Saviour suffered and rose from the dead. Exhumed on the orders of Admiral Kolchak, together with the bodies of other members of the royal house killed at the same time, their remains and the bodies of the grand duchess and nun Barbara were taken first to Irkutsk and then to Peking where they remained for a long time in the cemetery church of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission. From there, through the concern of her sister, Princess Victoria, the Marchioness of Milford-Haven, to whom she was closely bound during life, her coffin and nun Barbara's were transferred from Shanghai and sent to Palestine.

On the 15th of January, 1920, the bodies of both sufferers were triumphantly met in Jerusalem by the English authorities, the Greek and Russian clergy, as well as crowds of the large Russian colony and local inhabitants. Their burial took place the next day and was served by the head of the Church of Jerusalem, the Blessed Patriarch Damianos, together with a host of clergy.



Saint Mary Magdalene Church in the Holy Land that houses the relics of the venerable martyrs

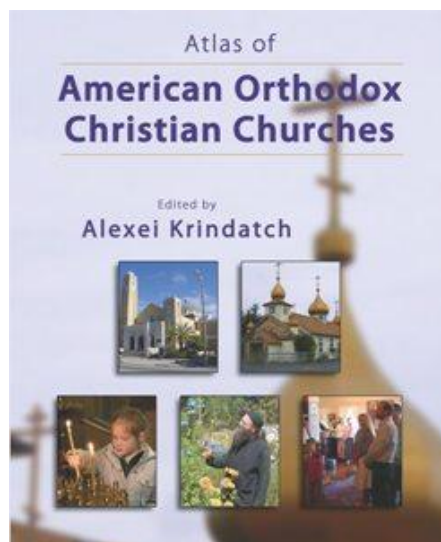
As if destined for the purpose, the crypt of the Russian church of St. Mary Magdalene was adapted as a sepulchre for the grand duchess. This church, built in memory of the Empress Maria Alexandrovna by her august children, was not strange to the deceased, for together with the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich she had been present at its consecration in 1888. Located on a picturesque slope of the Mount of Olives, it is the best-styled and most graceful of all the churches one finds in Palestine, attracting one's gaze even from a distance. The martyr herself could not have chosen a better resting place even if, having foreseen that she would have to repose for a time outside her convent, she had earlier prepared a grave for herself.

Here, everything reflects her spirit: the golden domes of the church, sparkling in the sun amidst green olive trees and cypresses; the artistic interior furnishings and the very character of the holy images, pierced through by the rays of Christ's Resurrection. Even closer and dearer to her heart is the fragrance of the holy places, which breathes upon her sepulchre from all sides. Below, beneath the tomb, stretches out a unique view of the Holy City with the great cupola of the Life-Giving Tomb rising on high; at the foot of her tomb, the Garden of Gethsemane where in agony the Divine Sufferer prayed until drops of blood appeared. Further on, Gethsemane itself, the place of the Mother of God's burial and to the left one can discern half-concealed by the folds of mountains, Bethany, that true Convent of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, whom the Lord called forth from the grave; and above, the Church of St. Mary Magdalene joyously crowns Mt. Olivet, whence the risen Saviour rose gloriously to heaven, in order to crown from there all those who amid temptations remained faithful to Him until death (see Rev. 111:5, 21).

As Metropolitan Anastasy's account concentrates on the life of New Venerable Martyr Grand Duchess Elizabeth, it is fitting to write a few words about St Elizabeth's fellow-ascetic and co-sufferer nun Barbara.

Venerable Martyr nun Barbara was one of the first sisters of Saint Martha and Mary Monastery in Moscow. She did not boast nor took pride in being the grand duchess' cell-attendant, but she was kind, gentle and courteous with everyone and everybody loved her. When the future martyrs were brought to Ekaterinburg, nun Barbara was released, but she, together with another sister — nun Catherine — asked to be allowed to join their Abbess in Alapaevsk. When threatened, Barbara said that she was ready to share the lot of her Mother Abbess. As Barbara was older than Catherine, she was allowed to go to Alapaevsk. Nun Barbara was 35 years old when she died as martyr.

..... News From All The Ends Of The Earth



Brookline, MA: The premier researcher of American Orthodoxy, Alexei Krindatch, has released a comprehensive volume which includes data on all Orthodox Churches in the United States. Supplemented with numerous maps, current and historical facts, the Atlas of American Orthodox Christian Churches is published by Holy Cross Orthodox Press and was co-sponsored by SCOBA and the Virginia Farah Foundation. In addition to full coverage of all American jurisdictions, the Atlas includes an additional chapter which profiles all American monastic communities. The Atlas provides a "snapshot" of the Orthodox Christian Churches in the United States. Simultaneously, this book is an atlas, a reference book and a thematic monograph: it contains numerous maps to show the historical development and present territorial patterns of Orthodox Church life in America; it furnishes comprehensive information and statistical data on all American Orthodox Christian Churches; and the essays in this book tell the story of the Orthodox Christian past and present in the United States.

New York, NY: After 33 years of debate, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has voted to change its constitution and allow sodomites to be ordained as ministers, elders, etc. This is a reversal from only two years ago, when a majority of the church's regions voted against ordaining openly sodomite candidates. This time, 19 of the church's 173 presbyteries switched their votes from no to yes in recent months. The Twin Cities presbytery, which covers Minneapolis and St. Paul, cast the deciding vote at its meeting on Tuesday. The vote was 205 to 56, with 3 abstentions. "All of us are surprised," said the Rev. Parsons, the church's stated clerk, its highest elected official. He attributed the turnabout in the votes to both the growing acceptance of the sinful lifestyle in the larger culture, and to church members simply wearying of the conflict, reports the *New York Times*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. June bulletin covers' sponsor is Jenny Yacko — health of family and friends.
2. At the last Parish Board meeting on Tuesday, May 31st, a suggestion was made to have a bake/soup sale for our parishioners every fourth Sunday of the month, till we begin our usual Soup Sales starting in October. We are asked to bring to church the same products we would bring to the soup sales and cookie walks, that is absolutely anything we can cook or bake. On the fourth Sunday of each month, we would bring our creations to church and deposit them on the table in the narthex. When leaving the church after the Divine Liturgy, we will have a chance to look at the offered selection and pick up what we want. It is not a secret that our parishioners look forward to the soup sales and cookie walks no less than the outside public. These end-of-the-month bake sales are going to meet our demands in this regard.
3. Also at the Parish Board meeting a proposal was approved to continue with the Coffee Hour in the summer. The new Coffee Hour schedule is in the narthex.
4. It was suggested at the Church Board meeting that we begin thinking about putting new carpeting in the church; indeed, it is one of our long-overdue projects, next to the need to have a cupola crowning the church.