

Iconography

Adult Spiritual Enrichment

September 20, 2020

CLASS 2

THE FOUR EVANGELISTS ON THE “PENDENTIVES” HOLDING UP THE DOME:

1. MATTHEW.
2. JOHN.
3. MARK.
4. LUKE.

ARCH OVER THE ALTAR:

1. CHRIST AND THE 12 APOSTLES.

THE FOUR EVANGELISTS

Location: at the “Pendentives” – architectural term meaning: “a curved (“spherical”) triangle of vaulting formed by the intersection of a dome with its supporting arches”.

WHO ARE THEY?

All, except John, are shown either writing their Gospel, or holding it and looking at it. John is depicted with his head turned to the right, listening attentively to the voice of the Angel who is said to have spoken to him. In Revelation we read, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia....and I turned to see the voice that spake with me.....” (Rev 1:10-12).

Matthew (November 16) – depicted in the NE pendentive, who was also called, Levi, was one of Jesus’ 12 disciples. A publican (tax collector), he was called by Jesus as a disciple and immediately followed him. He was the first to write the Gospel. It was initially written by him in Hebrew and then in Greek.

Matthew, son of Alphaeus, was a tax collector when the Lord saw him in Capernaum and said: “Follow me. And he arose, and followed Him.” (MAT 9:9) After that, Matthew prepared a reception for the Lord in his home and thus provided the occasion for the Lord to express several great truths about His coming to earth. After receiving the Holy Spirit, Matthew preached the Gospel to the Parthians, Medes, and Ethiopians. In Ethiopia he appointed his follower Plato as bishop, and withdrew to prayerful solitude on a mountain, where the Lord appeared to him. Matthew baptized the wife and the son of the prince of Ethiopia, at which the prince became greatly enraged and dispatched a guard to bring Matthew to him for trial. The soldiers returned to the prince saying that they had heard Matthew’s voice, but could not see him with their eyes. The prince then sent a second guard. When this guard approached the apostle, he shone with a heavenly light so powerful that the soldiers could not look at him; filled with fear, they threw down their weapons and returned. The prince then went himself. Matthew radiated such light that the prince was instantly blinded.

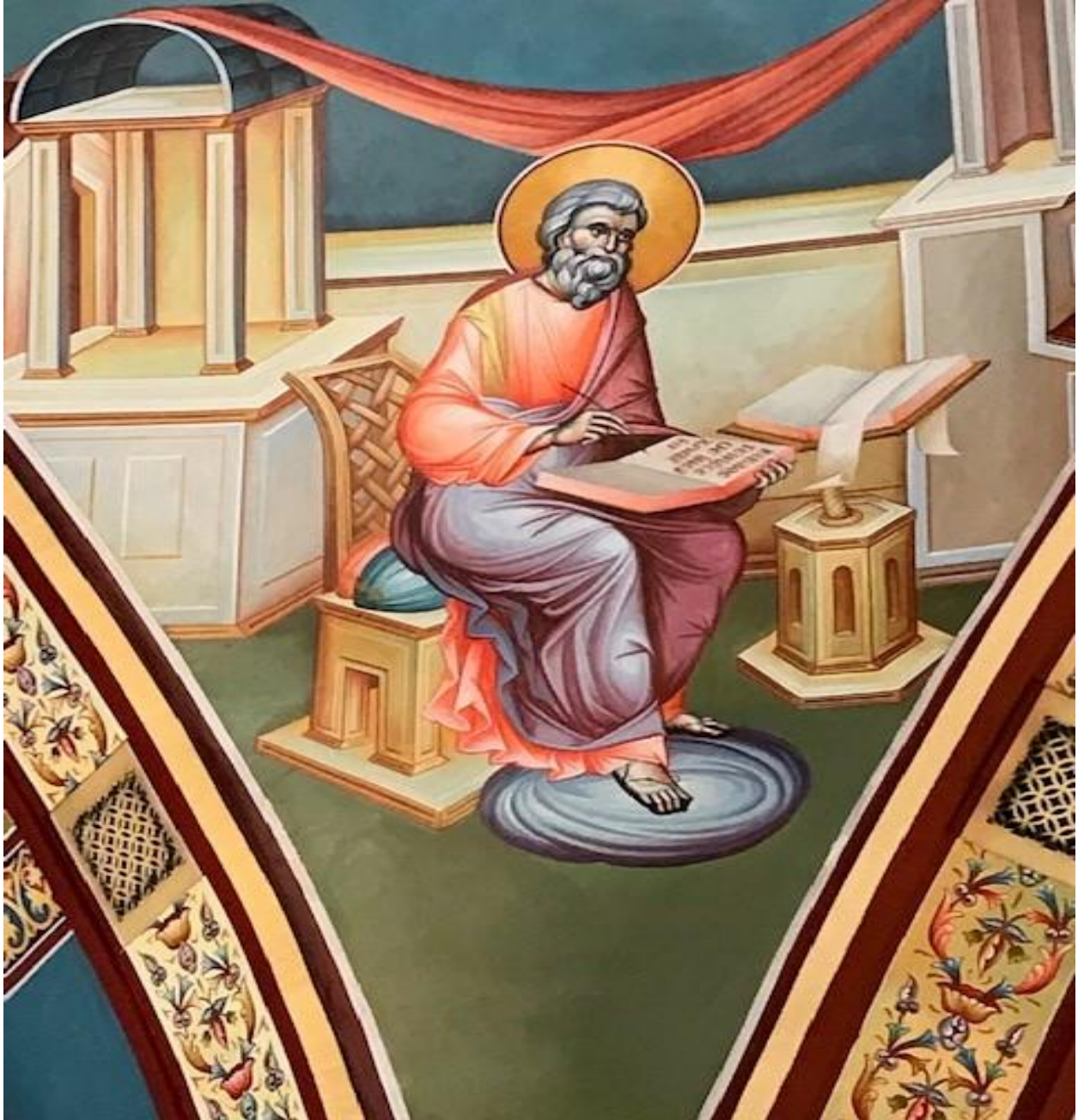
However, the holy apostle had a compassionate heart; he prayed to God, and the prince was given back his sight. Unfortunately, he saw only with physical eyes and not spiritual eyes. He arrested Matthew and subjected him to cruel tortures. Twice, a large fire was lighted on his chest, but the power of God

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preserved him alive and unharmed. Then the apostle prayed to God and gave up his spirit. The prince commanded that the martyr's body be placed in a lead coffin and thrown into the sea. *The saint appeared to Bishop Plato and told him where the coffin bearing his body could be found. The bishop retrieved the coffin with Matthew's body from the sea. Witnessing this new miracle, the prince was baptized and received the name Matthew.* After that, the prince left all the vanity of the world and became a presbyter and served the Church in a God pleasing way. When Plato died, the Apostle Matthew appeared to the presbyter Matthew and counseled him to accept the episcopacy.

He accepted the bishopric, and for many years, was a good shepherd until the Lord called him to His Immortal Kingdom. *St. Matthew the Apostle wrote his Gospel in the Aramaic language. It was soon translated into Greek and the Greek text has come down to us, while the Aramaic text has been lost.* It is said of this evangelist that he never ate meat, but only vegetables and fruit.

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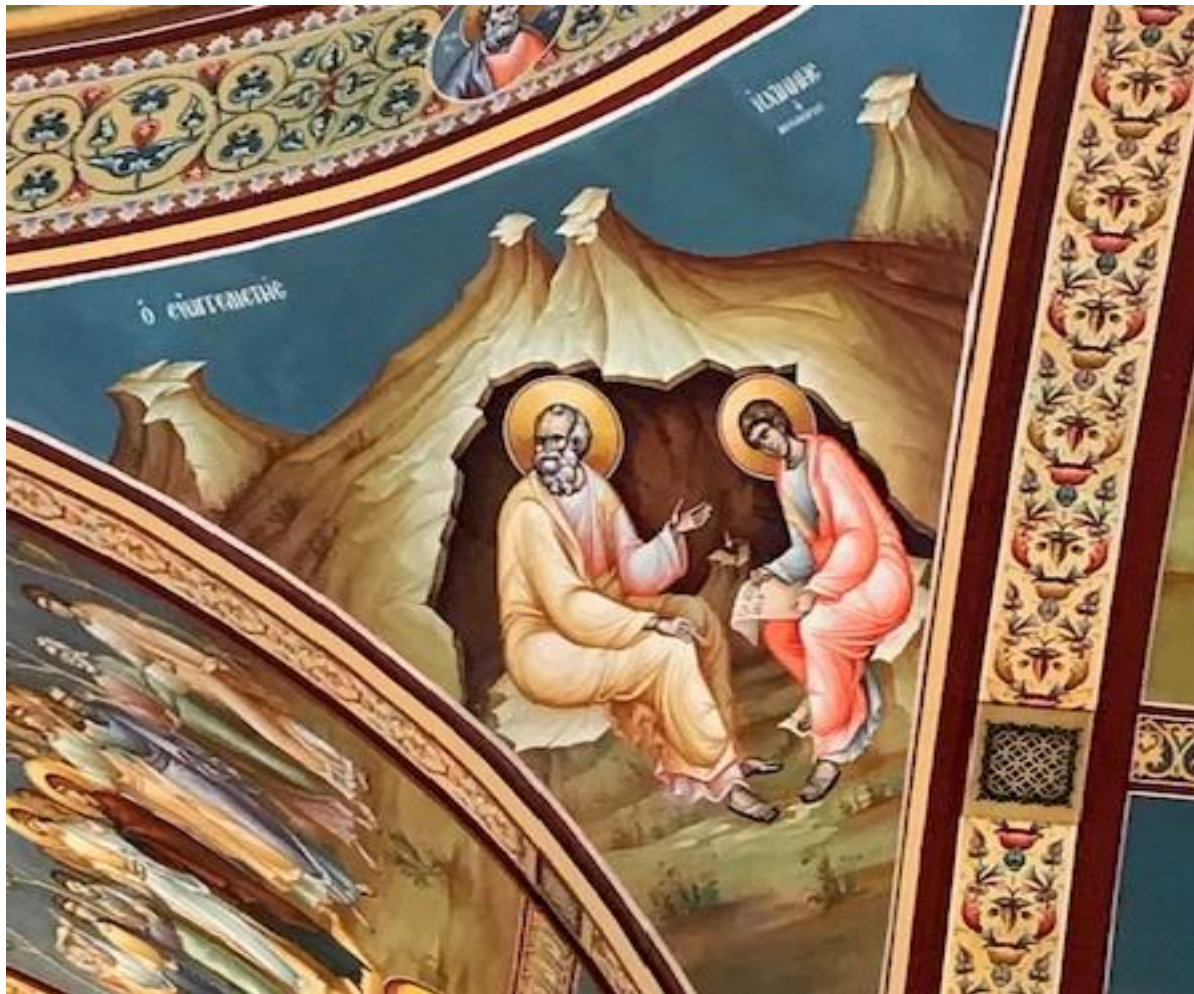


John (September 26) – depicted with his disciple, Prochoros, in the SE pendentive, was originally a fisherman, became a disciple of Christ. He was the son of Zebedee the fisherman and Salome the daughter of Joseph, the betrothed of the Holy Theotokos. John was called by the Lord Jesus and immediately left his father and his fisherman's nets and, with his brother James, followed Christ. He was present for the Transfiguration of Christ and also at the raising of Jairus's daughter with Peter and his brother James. He wrote in Greek the fourth Gospel, three Epistles, and the Revelation, all of which are included in the New Testament. St John with assistance from Prochoros, wrote the Gospel of John in Ephesus and he served as the leading authority of Ephesus. He was almost 100 years old when he died, circa AD 96-100.

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St. John The Theologian, also known as John the Evangelist, or John The Divine or John of Patmos, was *the youngest of the 12 Apostles*, and especially close to the Lord. St. John was exiled to the island of Patmos by the Emperor Domitian around 90-95 AD and it was there that he received and wrote the Book of Revelation.

Note: Matthew and John are depicted on the East since they were older than Mark and Luke with greater respect shown for older persons; also, they were not only Evangelists, but also among the 12 disciples who were chosen by Christ and followed Him as He went about teaching and healing.



Mark (April 25) – depicted in the SW pendentive, was originally a pagan, was converted to Christianity by the Apostle Peter, at whose request and that of other Christians he wrote the Gospel, in Greek. He was second to write the Gospel.

Mark was a traveling companion and assistant to the Apostle Peter, who, in his first Epistle, calls him his son – not a son according to the flesh but a son according to the spirit (1 PET 5:13). While Mark was in Rome with Peter, the faithful begged him to write down the saving teaching of the Lord Jesus, His miracles and His Life for them. Thus, Mark wrote his Holy Gospel, which the Apostle Peter himself saw and bore witness to as true. Mark was appointed a bishop by the Apostle Peter and was sent to Egypt to preach. Egypt was entirely oppressed by the thick darkness of paganism, idolatry, soothsaying, and

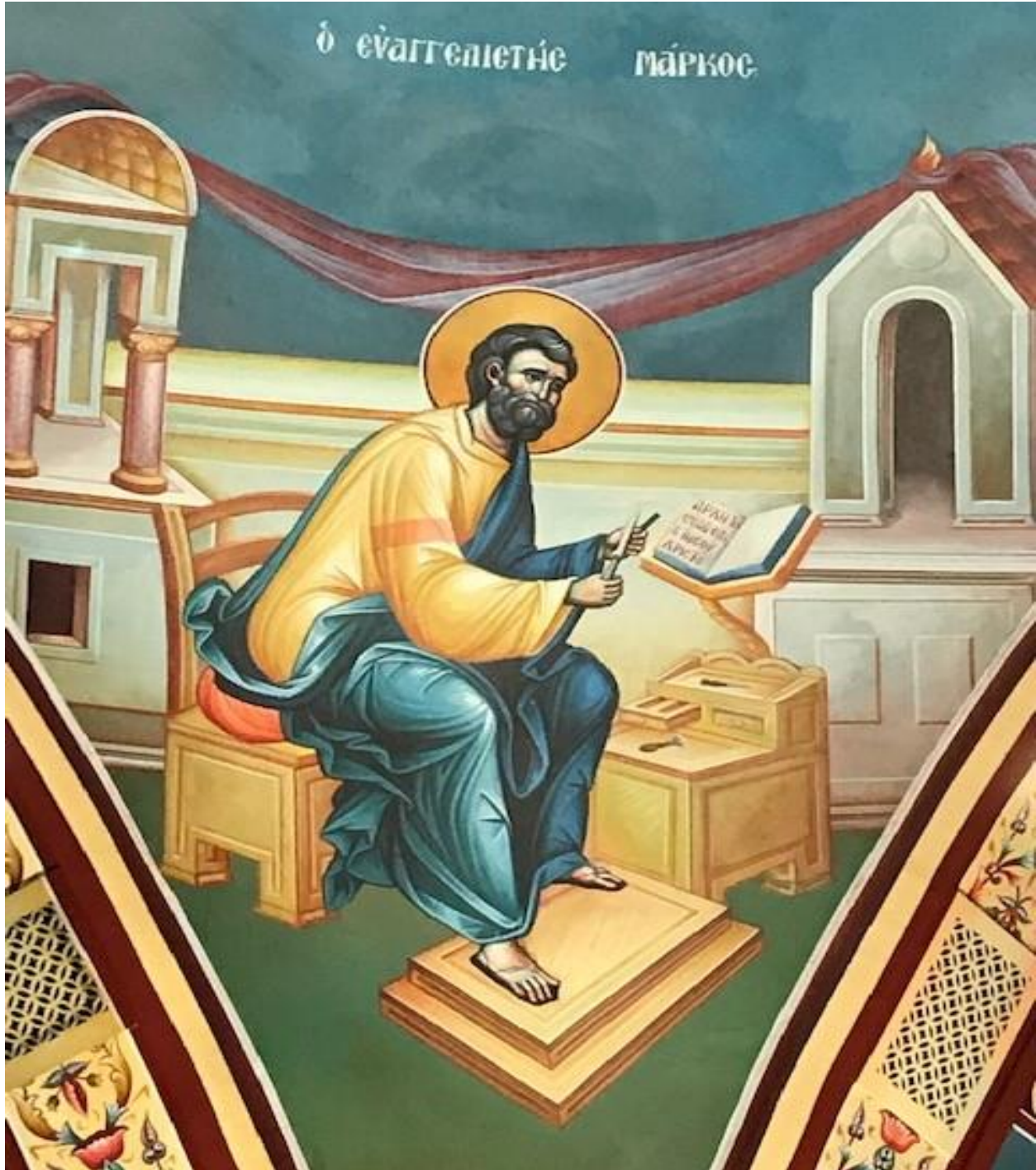
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malice. With the help of God, St. Mark succeeded in sowing the seed of the teaching of Christ throughout Libya, Ammonia, and Pentapolis. From Pentapolis St. Mark came to Alexandria, where the Spirit of God led him.

In Alexandria he succeeded in establishing the Church of God. In ordaining bishops, priests, and deacons, and in firmly strengthening them all in the honorable faith. Mark confirmed his preaching through many great miracles. When the heathens raised accusations against Mark as a destroyer of their idolatrous faith, and when the governor of the city began searching for Mark, he again fled to Pentapolis, where he continued to strengthen his earlier work. After two years, Mark returned to Alexandria, to the great joy of all the faithful, whose number had greatly multiplied. On this occasion, the pagans seized Mark, bound him, and began to drag him over the cobble stone pavement, crying out: "Let us drag the ox to the pen."

Wounded and bloodied, Mark was cast into prison, where at first a heavenly angel appeared to him, encouraging and strengthening him. Then the Lord Jesus Himself appeared to him and said: "Peace be to thee, Mark, my evangelist!" To this Mark replied: "Peace be to Thee also, my Lord Jesus Christ!" The next day the vicious men brought Mark out of prison and again dragged him through the streets with the same cry: "Let us drag the ox to the pen." Completely exhausted and worn out, Mark uttered: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." Mark expired and his soul went to the better world. His holy relics were honorably buried by Christians and through the centuries, have given people healing from all afflictions, pains, and diseases.

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Luke (October 18) – painted in the NW pendentive, a physician who became a disciple of Paul the Apostle, was the third to write the Gospel. He too, wrote it in Greek. He then wrote the Acts of the Apostles.

Luke was born in Antioch. In his youth, he excelled in his studies of Greek philosophy, medicine, and art. During the ministry of Jesus, Luke came to Jerusalem, where he saw Christ face to face, heard his saving teaching and was witness to His miraculous works. Coming to belief in Jesus, he was numbered among the 70 Apostles and was sent out to preach. With Cleopas, Luke saw the resurrected Lord on the road to

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Emmaus (Luke 24). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Luke returned to Antioch and there became a fellow worker of the Apostle Paul and traveled to Rome with him, converting Jews and pagans.

“Luke, the beloved physician... greets you” writes the Apostle Paul to the Colossians (COL 4:14). At the request of Christians, he wrote his Gospel in about the year 60. Following the martyrdom of the Apostle Paul, St Luke preached the Gospel throughout Italy, Dalmatia, Macedonia, and other regions. He painted icons of the Most Holy Theotokos – not just one, but three – and icons of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. Hence, St. Luke is considered to be the founder of Christian iconography.

In old age, he visited Libya and Upper Egypt. From Egypt he returned to Greece, where he continued to preach and convert many with great zeal! In addition to his Gospel, St. Luke wrote the Acts and dedicated both works to Theophilus, the governor of Achaia. Luke was 84 years old when the wicked idolaters tortured him for the sake of Christ and hanged him from an olive tree in the town of Thebes, in Boethia. The miracle-working relics of this wonderful saint were transported to Constantinople in the reign of Emperor Constantius, the son of Constantine.



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THE TWELVE APOSTLES (ON THE ARCH WITH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OVER THE ALTAR)

We will start from the right (bottom up):

Philip (November 14) – he was born in Bethsaida beside the Sea of Galilee, as were Peter and Andrew. Instructed in the Holy Scriptures from his youth, Philip immediately responded to the call of the Lord Jesus and followed Him (John 1:43). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Philip zealously preached the Gospel throughout many regions in Asia and Greece. In Greece, the Jews wanted to kill him, but the Lord saved him by His mighty miracles. Thus, a Jewish high priest that rushed at Philip to beat him was suddenly blinded and turned completely black. Then there was a great earthquake, and the earth opened up and swallowed Philip's wicked persecutor. Many other miracles were manifested, especially the healing of the sick, by which many pagans believed in Christ. In the Phrygian town of Hieropolis, St. Philip found himself in common evangelical work with his sister Mariamna, St. John the Theologian, and the Apostle Bartholomew.

In this town there was a dangerous snake that the pagans diligently fed and worshiped as a god. God's apostle killed the snake through prayer as though with a spear, but he also incurred the wrath of the unenlightened people. The wicked pagans seized Philip and crucified him upside down on a tree, and then Bartholomew as well. At that, the earth opened up and swallowed the judge and many other pagans with him. In great fear, the people rushed to rescue the crucified apostles, but only Bartholomew was still alive. Philip had already breathed his last. Bartholomew ordained Stachys as bishop for those whom he and Philip had baptized. Stachys had been blind for forty years, and Bartholomew and Philip had healed and baptized him. The relics of St. Philip were later translated to Rome. This wonderful apostle suffered in the year 86 in the time of Emperor Dometian.



James son of Alphaeus (October 9) – was one of the 12 Apostles. He was the blood brother of the Apostle and Evangelist Matthew. He was a witness of the true words and miracles of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and a witness of His suffering, Resurrection, and Ascension. After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the lot fell to James to preach the Gospel of Christ in Eleutheropolis and the surrounding areas, and then in Egypt, where he suffered for his Savior. With great power in word and in deed, James disseminated the saving news of the incarnate Word of God, destroying idolatry, driving demons out of men, and healing every infirmity and disease in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His labor and zeal were crowned with great success. Many pagans came to believe in Christ, churches were built and organized, and priests and bishops were ordained. James suffered in the Egyptian town of Ostracina, being crucified by the pagans. Thus, this great and wonderful apostle of Christ took up his abode in the Heavenly Kingdom to reign eternally with the King of Glory.

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Bartholomew (June 11) - From all appearances, Bartholomew and Nathaniel are one and the same. Together with the Apostle Philip and Philip's sister, the virgin Marianna – and for a time with St. John the Theologian – Bartholomew preached the Gospel first throughout Asia, then in India, and finally in Armenia, where he died a martyr's death. In Hierapolis, these holy apostles, by prayer, caused the death of a large serpent that the heathens kept in their temple and worshiped. In this same city, by prayer, they restored sight to Stachius, who had been blind for 40 years. It was here that a mob rose up against them and crucified Philip and Bartholomew. (Note: Bartholomew was crucified upside down).

At this time, there occurred an earthquake in which the evil judges and many people perished. Believing that this was a punishment from God, many ran to remove the apostles from the crosses, but Philip was already dead, although Bartholomew was still alive. After this, Bartholomew went to India, where he preached and translated the Gospel of St. Matthew into the Indian language. Then he entered Armenia, where he cured the king's daughter of insanity. But the envious brother of King Astyages seized God's apostle, crucified him on a cross, skinned him, and finally beheaded him in Armenian Albanopolis.

Christians honorably buried his body in a lead coffin. Because many miracles occurred over his relics, the pagans took the coffin and cast it into the sea. But the water carried the coffin to the island of Lipara, where Bishop Agathon, through a revelation in a dream, met it and buried it in the church. St. Bartholomew, attired in a white garment, appeared in church to the Venerable Joseph the Hymnographer and blessed him with the Gospel, that he might be able to sing spiritual hymns, saying: "Let heavenly waters of wisdom flow from your tongue!" He also appeared to Emperor Anastasius (491-518) and told him that he would protect the newly established town of Dara. Later, the relics of this great apostle were translated to Benevento and then to Rome. Great and awesome miracles have occurred over these relics.

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Andrew (November 30) – the son of Jonah and the brother of Peter, was born in Bethsaida and was a fisherman by trade. At first, he was a disciple of St. John the Baptist, but when St. John pointed to the Lord Jesus, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God!* (John 1:36), Andrew left his first teacher and followed Christ. Then, Andrew brought his brother Peter to the Lord. Following the descent of the Holy Spirit, it fell by lot to the first apostle of Christ, St. Andrew, to preach the Gospel in Byzantium and Thrace, then in the lands along the Danube and in Russia around the Black Sea, and finally in Epirus, Greece, and the Peloponnese, where he suffered.

In Byzantium, he appointed St. Stachys as its first bishop; in Kiev, he planted a Cross on a high place and prophesied a bright Christian future for the Russian people; throughout Thrace, Epirus, Greece, and the Peloponnese, he converted multitudes of people to the Faith and ordained bishops and priests for them. In the city of Patras (Greece's third largest city, regional capital of Western Greece, in north Peloponnese) he performed many miracles in the name of Christ, and won many over to the Lord. Among the new faithful were the brother and wife of the Proconsul Aegeates. Angered at this, Aegeates subjected St. Andrew to torture and then crucified him. While the apostle of Christ was still alive on the cross, he gave beneficial instructions to the Christians who had gathered around. The people wanted to take him down from the cross but he refused to let them.

Then the apostle prayed to God and an extraordinary light encompassed him. This brilliant illumination lasted for half an hour, and when it disappeared, the apostle gave up his holy soul to God. Thus, the first-called Apostle, the first of the 12 Great Apostles to know the Lord and follow Him, finished his earthly course. St. Andrew suffered for his Lord in the year 62. His relics were taken to Constantinople; his head was taken to Rome, and one hand was taken to Moscow.

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John – see the comments under the four “Evangelists”.

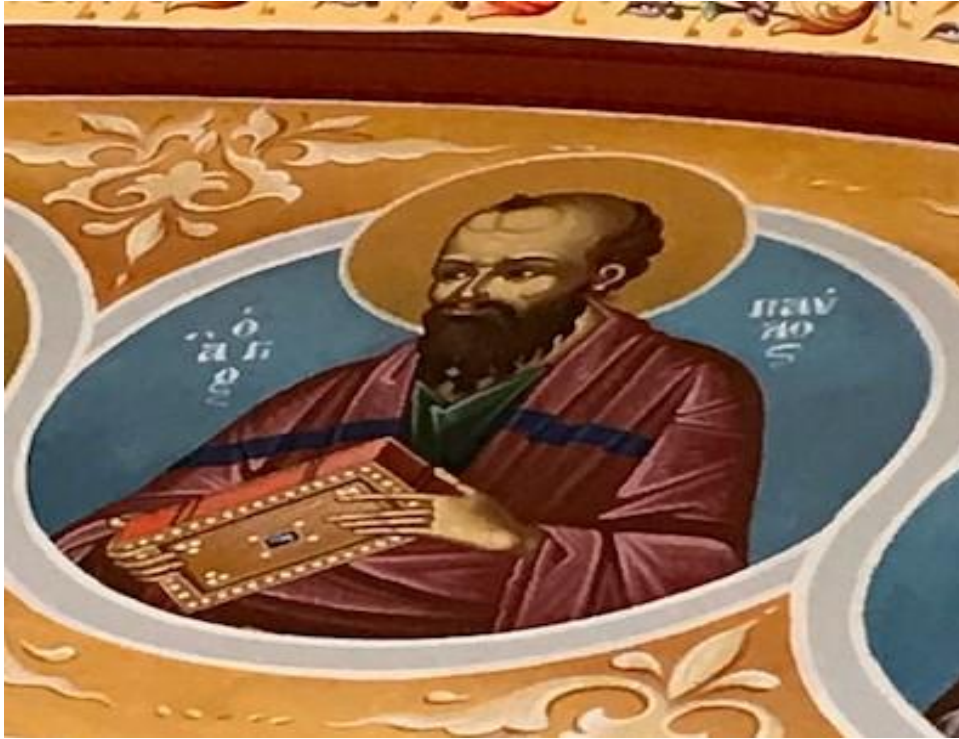


Paul (June 29) - was born in Tarsus and was of the tribe of Benjamin. At first, he was called Saul. He studied under Gamaliel, and was a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christianity. He was miraculously converted to the Christian faith by the Lord Himself, who appeared to him on the road to Damascus. He was baptized by the Apostle Ananias, named Paul, and numbered in the service of the Great Apostles. With fiery zeal

Paul preached the Gospel everywhere, from the borders of Arabia to Spain, among the Jews and among the Gentiles, and received the title “the Apostle of the Gentiles.” As horrible as his sufferings were, so much greater was his superhuman patience. Throughout all the years of his preaching, Paul hung from day to day as on a weak thread between life and death. Having filled all his days and nights with labor and suffering for Christ, having organized the Church in many places, and having attained such degree of

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perfection, he was able to say: *not I, but Christ liveth in me* (Gal 2:20). Paul was beheaded in Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero, at the same time as the martyrdom of the Apostle Peter.



We will continue from the left (bottom up):

Thomas (October 6) – Through his doubt in the Resurrection of Christ the Lord, a new proof was given of that wonderful and saving event. The resurrected Lord appeared to His disciples a second time, in order to convince Thomas. The Lord said to Thomas: *Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.* And Thomas replied: *My Lord and my God* (John 20:27-28).

After the descent of the Holy Spirit, when the apostles cast lots to see where they would each go to preach, the lot fell to Thomas to go to India. He was a little saddened that he had to go so far away, but the Lord appeared to him and encouraged him. In India, St. Thomas converted many, both aristocrats and poor; to the Christian faith, and established the Church there, appointing priests and bishops. Among others, Thomas converted two sisters to the faith – Tertiana and Migdonia – both wives of Indian princes. Because of their faith, both sisters were ill-treated by their husbands, with whom they no longer wanted to live after their baptism. Eventually, they were allowed to go. Being freed of marriage, they lived God-pleasing lives until their repose.

Dionysius and Pelagia were betrothed, but when they heard the apostolic preaching they did not marry, but devoted themselves to the ascetic life. Pelagia ended her life as a martyr for the Faith, and Dionysius was ordained a bishop by the apostle. Prince Mazdai, Tertiana's husband, whose son, Azan,

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was also baptized by Thomas, condemned the apostle to death. Mazdai sent five soldiers to kill Thomas. They ran him through with their five spears, and thus the Holy Apostle Thomas rendered his soul into the hands of Christ. Before his death, he and the other apostles were miraculously brought to Jerusalem for the burial of the Most-holy Theotokos. Arriving too late, he wept bitterly, and the tomb of the Holy Most-pure One was opened at his request. The Theotokos' body was not found in the tomb: the Lord had taken His Mother to His heavenly habitation. Thus, in his tardiness St. Thomas revealed to us the wondrous glorification of the Mother of God, just as he had once confirmed faith in the Resurrection of the Lord by his unbelief.



St. Jude (June 19; Thaddeus, Levi) – He was the son of Joseph and Salome and the brother of James, the brother of the Lord. Joseph the carpenter had four sons with Salome: James, Hosea, Simon, and Jude. This Jude is sometimes called “Jude, the brother of James” due to his brother being better known (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13). St. Jude begins his epistle in this manner: Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James (Jude 1:1). Even though he could call himself the brother of the Lord as much as James, he did not do this, out of humility and shame, for he did not at first believe in Christ the Lord.

When the elderly Joseph, before his death, wanted to leave a portion of his estate to Jesus, as well as to his other children, all of them protested, even Jude. Only James voluntarily set aside a share of his portion and intended it for Jesus. Jude is also called Levi and Thaddeus. There is another Thaddeus of the Seventy Apostles (August 21), but this Thaddeus or Jude was one of the Great Apostles. Jude preached the Gospel throughout Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Idumea (region south of Judea), Syria, Arabia,

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Mesopotamia, and Armenia. In Edessa (central Macedonia region of Greece), the town of Abgar, he augmented the preaching of the other Thaddeus. When Jude was preaching in the regions around Ararat, he was captured by pagans, crucified on a cross and killed by being shot with arrows, that he might reign eternally in the Kingdom of Christ.



Simon the Zealot (May 10) – he was born in Cana of Galilee. The Lord Jesus, with His Mother and His disciples, came to his marriage feast. When wine ran out, the Lord changed water into wine (John 2:1-11). Witnessing this miracle, Simon the groom left his home, parents and bride and followed after Christ. Simon was called the Zealot because of his great and fiery zeal for the Savior and His Gospel. After receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, Simon went to preach the Gospel in Mauritania in Africa. Because he succeeded in converting many to the Christian faith, Simon was tortured and finally crucified, as had been his Lord, who prepared for him a wreath of glory in the immortal Kingdom.

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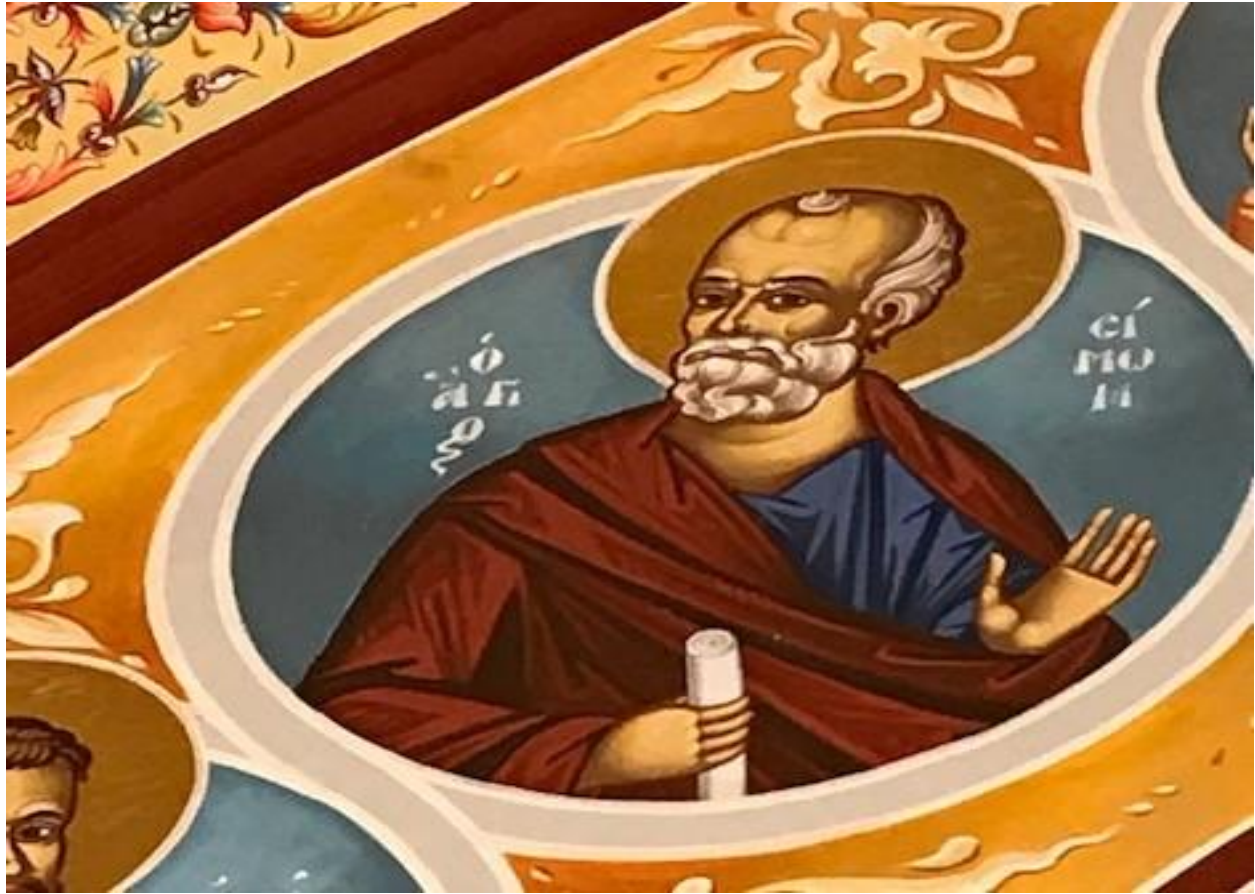


James (April 30; son of Zebedee) – *the brother of John* and one of the Twelve Apostles. At the invitation of the Lord, James left his fisherman's net and his father and, together with John, immediately followed after the Lord. He belonged to that trinity of apostles to whom the Lord revealed the greatest mysteries, before whom He was transfigured on Tabor, and before whom He was in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane preceding His passion.

After receiving the Holy Spirit, he preached the Gospel in various places and traveled to Spain. Upon his return from Spain, the Jews began to quarrel with him concerning Holy Scripture, but no one was able to withstand him, not even a certain magician, Hermogenes. Hermogenes and his disciple Philip were defeated by the power of the truth which James preached, and both of them were baptized. Then the Jews accused James before Herod and persuaded a certain Josias to slander the apostle. Josias, seeing the brave conduct of James and listening to his clear explanation of the truth, repented and believed in Christ.

When James was condemned to death, this same Josias was also condemned to death. En route to the place of execution, Josias implored James to forgive him the sin of slander: James embraced and kissed him and said: "Peace and forgiveness be to you!" Both of them bowed their heads under the sword and were beheaded for the Lord. Whom they loved and Whom they served. St. James suffered in Jerusalem in the year 45. His body was translated to Spain, where miraculous healings occur over his grave even to this day.

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Peter (June 29) – *was the son of Jonah and the brother of Andrew the first-called.* He was of the tribe of Simeon, from the town of Bethsaida. Peter was a fisherman and was at first called Simon, but the Lord was pleased to call him Cephas, or Peter (John 1:42). He was the first of the disciples to clearly express faith in the Lord Jesus, saying: *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God”* (Matt 16:16).

His love for the Lord was great, and his faith in the Lord became gradually stronger. When the Lord was brought to trial, Peter denied Him three times; but after only one glance into the face of the Lord, Peter’s soul was filled with shame and repentance. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, *Peter showed himself to be a fearless and powerful preacher of the Gospel. Following one of his sermons in Jerusalem, three thousand souls were converted to the Faith.*

He preached the Gospel in Palestine, Asia Minor, Illyria, and Italy. Peter worked many powerful miracles: he healed the sick and resurrected the dead, and the sick healed even from his shadow. *He had a great struggle with Simon the Magician, who proclaimed himself to be a god, but who in reality was a servant of Satan. Peter finally shamed and defeated him. By order of Simon’s friend, the evil Emperor Nero, Peter was condemned to death.* Having consecrated Linus Bishop of Rome, and having counseled and comforted the flock of Christ, Peter proceeded joyfully to his death. Seeing the cross before him, *he begged his executioners to crucify him upside down, for he considered himself unworthy to die as his Lord.* Thus, this great servant of the Lord reposed and received a wreath of eternal glory.

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THE TWELVE APOSTLES AND CHRIST – ARCH OVER THE ALTAR

JESUS

PETER

PAUL

MATTHEW

JOHN

JAMES (OF
ZEBEDEE)

ANDREW

SIMON

BARTHOLOMEW

JUDE THADDEUS

JAMES (OF
ALPHAЕUS)

THOMAS

PHILIP