

October 20

Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus

Born Romans, they were Christians and "pious zealots". Occupying important posts at the court, they were favorites of Emperor Maximian. Envious persons informed the Emperor that Sts. Sergius and Bacchus confessed the Christian faith, but the Emperor did not believe this denunciation although he did not refuse to test the allegiance of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus to the pagan gods as required. In the major celebration Maximian appointed in honor of the latter, noticed the absence of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus at this celebration, ordered them by force that they bow before the idols and offer sacrifices to them. But Sts. Sergius and Bacchus bravely and fearlessly confessed themselves followers of Christ, showing the Emperor the impurity and falsity of the pagan gods. The Emperor turned the Holy Confessors over to the ridicule of the people, but then, valuing them as honorable servants, called them before him and for a long time tried to convince them to renounce Christ and to turn to the pagan gods. Sts. Sergius and Bacchus rejected "the noxious to the soul stroking" of the Emperor, entreating him to accept Christianity. Then the Emperor, not wishing to torment his favorite dignitaries, sent them to the Governor of the East Antiochus with an order to convince them to renounce Christ or be turned over to brutal tortures and death. Antiochus himself was obliged by the prominence of Saints Sergius and Bacchus and fervently started to persuade them to worship the gods. But they, as they began to hate the corruptible "transient" glory, remained unshakable. Then Antiochus ordered to beat Bacchus and Sergius without mercy and to imprison them. St. Bacchus died during the tortures (in the city of Barbaliss on the Euphrates River) and his tortured remains were thrown out to wild animals and birds for food, but Christians secretly carried them away and hid them in a cave. On that same night Bacchus appeared to Sergius in a vision and strengthened him for his forthcoming ordeal. On another day Sergius was put in iron boots with long and sharp nails inside and made to accompany Antiochus, who went to various cities on official business. In Rosafa (in Syria) St. Sergius, being subjected to new brutal tortures, courageously underwent them, joyfully singing psalms and prayers and, finally, was beheaded (about the years 290-303). The memory of these holy martyrs from ancient times was honored in the entire East and many traveled to visit their relics.

Troparion, tone 5

**The adornment of passion-bearers of Christ,
And the eyes of the church of Christ,
Eyes to enlighten our souls,
O Long-suffering Sergius and Most Glorious Bacchus:
Pray to the Lord that we flee from the darkness of our sins,
And be revealed partakers of the light without evening,
Through your prayers, O Saints.**

Kontakion, tone 2

**Bravely armed with reason against enemies,
You destroyed all their flattery,
And received the victory from on high,
O All-praised Martyrs,
With one mind we cry out:
Those who are with God are good and beautiful.**

Martyrs Julian, presbyter and Caesarius, deacon, suffered for Christ in the Italian city of Terracina (now Terrazzo) during the reign of Emperor Claudius II. For the violation of sacrifice to idols and preaching Christ, both Holy Martyrs were drowned in the sea. The relics of St. Caesarius repose in the temple of the Cross of the Lord in Rome, and his honorable hand is in the Church of All Saints.

Martyr Polychronius. The son of a farmer, he was present at the First Ecumenical Council in the role of a reader. Then he was ordained a presbyter, and died a martyr, killed by the Arians while serving the Liturgy in the IV Century.

Martyr Pelagia of Tarsus.