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6th Sunday of Pascha —Tone 5. Blind Man. Ven Simeon the Stylite of Wonderful Mountain (596). Martyrs Meletius Stratelates, Stephen, John, and 1,218 soldiers, with women and children, Serapion, Callinicus, Theodore, Faustus, women: Marciana, Susanna, and Palladia, two children: Cyriacus and Christian, and Faustus, Festus, Marcellus and Didymus (138-161)

Divine Liturgy of St. John:

Acts 16:16-34 John 9:1-38

Announcements

Liturgical Schedule:

Divine Liturgy Sundays 9:30 am

May 27 – Wednesday: Leave taking of Pascha – Forefeast of Ascension Great Vespers 5:00 pm

May 28 – Thursday: The Ascension of Our Lord – Divine Liturgy 9:00 am

Venerable Simeon Stylites the Younger of Wonderful Mountain

Saint Simeon the Stylite was born in the year 521 in Antioch, Syria of pious parents John and Martha. From her youth Saint Martha (July 4) prepared herself for a life of virginity and longed for monasticism, but her parents insisted that she marry John. After ardent prayer in a church dedicated to Saint John the Forerunner, the future nun was directed in a vision to submit to the will of her parents and enter into marriage.

As a married woman, Saint Martha strove to please God and her husband in everything. She often prayed for a baby and promised to dedicate him to the service of God. Saint John the Forerunner revealed to Martha that she would have a son who would serve God. When the infant was born, he was named Simeon and baptized at two years of age.

When Simeon was six years old, an earthquake occurred in the city of Antioch, in which his father perished. Simeon was in church at the time of the earthquake. Leaving the church, he became lost and spent seven days sheltered by a pious woman. Saint John the Baptist again appeared to Saint Martha, and indicated where to find the lost boy. The saint's mother found her lost son, and moved to the outskirts of Antioch after the earthquake. Already during his childhood the Lord Jesus Christ appeared several times to Saint Simeon, foretelling his future exploits and the reward for them.

The six-year-old child Simeon went into the wilderness, where he lived in complete isolation. During this time a light-bearing angel guarded and fed him. Finally, he arrived at a monastery, headed by the igumen Abba John, who lived in asceticism upon a pillar. He accepted the boy with love.

After a time, Saint Simeon asked the Elder John to permit him also to struggle upon a pillar. A new pillar was raised by the brethren of the monastery with the blessing of the igumen, near his pillar. Having completed the initiation of the seven-year-old boy into monasticism, Abba John placed him upon this pillar. The young ascetic, strengthened by the Lord, quickly grew spiritually, in his efforts surpassing even his experienced instructor. For his efforts, Saint Simeon received from God the gift of healing.

The fame of the young monk's deeds began to spread beyond the bounds of the monastery. Monks and laypeople began to come to him from various places, desiring to hear his counsel and receive healing from their infirmities. The humble ascetic continued to pursue asceticism with instructions from his spiritual mentor Abba John.

When he was eleven, Simeon decided to pursue asceticism upon a higher pillar, the top of which was forty feet from the ground. The bishops of Antioch and Seleukia came to the place of the monk's endeavors, and ordained him as a deacon. Then they permitted him to ascend the new pillar, on which Saint Simeon labored for eight years.

Saint Simeon prayed ardently for the Holy Spirit to descend upon him, and the holy prayer of the ascetic was heard. The Holy Spirit came upon him in the form of a blazing light, filling the ascetic with divine wisdom. Along with oral instructions, Saint Simeon wrote letters about repentance, monasticism, about the Incarnation of Christ, and about the future Judgment.

After the death of his Elder, Saint Simeon's life followed a certain pattern. From the rising of the sun until mid-afternoon he read books and copied Holy Scripture. Then he rose and prayed all night. When the new day began, he rested somewhat, then began his usual Rule of prayer.

Saint Simeon concluded his efforts on the second column, and by God's dispensation, settled upon the Wonderful Mountain, having become an experienced Elder to the monks in his monastery. The ascent to Wonderful Mountain was marked by a vision of the Lord, standing atop a column. Saint Simeon continued his efforts at this place where he saw the Lord, at first upon a stone, and then upon a pillar.

Future events were revealed to Saint Simeon, and so he foretold the death of Archbishop Ephraim of Antioch, and the illness of Bishop Domnus, which overtook him as punishment for his lack of pity. Finally, Saint Simeon predicted an earthquake for the city of Antioch and urged all the inhabitants to repent of their sins.

Saint Simeon established a monastery on Wonderful Mountain, where the sick people he healed built a church in gratitude for the mercy shown them. The saint prayed for a spring of water for the needs of the monastery, and once during a shortage of grain, the granaries of the monastery were filled with wheat by his prayers.

In the year 560 the holy ascetic was ordained to the priesthood by Dionysius, Bishop of Seleukia. At age seventy-five Saint Simeon was warned by the Lord of his impending end. He summoned the brethren of the monastery, instructed them in a farewell talk, and peacefully fell asleep in the Lord in the year 596, having toiled as a stylite for sixty-eight years.

After death, the saint worked miracles just as he had when alive. He healed the blind, the lame and the leprous, saving many from wild beasts, casting out devils and raising the dead.