

**Monday June 29, 2020**

**The Holy, Glorious, and All-Praised Leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul**

Troparion:

First-enthroned of the apostles, teachers of the universe: Entreat the Master of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy!

Kontakion:

O Lord, You have taken up to eternal rest and to the enjoyment of Your blessings the two divinely-inspired preachers, the leaders of the Apostles, for You have accepted their labors and deaths as a sweet-smelling sacrifice, for You alone know what lies in the hearts of men.

Steadfast Protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator, despise not the entreating cry of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, For you always ever protect those who honor you!

Prokeimenon in the 8<sup>th</sup> Tone:

Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the universe!  
(Vs.) The heavens are telling the Glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork!

Epistle:

The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians. (2 Cor. 11:21-12:9)

Brethren, to my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever any one dares to boast of - I am speaking as a fool - I also dare to boast of that. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one - I am talking like a madman - with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed for ever, knows that I do not lie. At Damascus, the governor under King Ar'etas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped his hands. I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise - whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows - and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. Though if I wish to boast, I shall not be a fool, for I shall be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Alleluia Verses:

The heavens shall confess Thy wonders, O Lord, and Thy truth in the congregation of the saints!  
(Vs.) God is glorified in the council of the saints!

Gospel:

The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew. (Chapter 16:13-19)

At that time when Jesus had come into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He began to ask His disciples, saying, "Who do men say the Son of Man is?" And they answered, "Some say, John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus answered and said, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I say to you, you are Peter (the Rock), and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.