

Date: January 22, 2025

Subject: BURL-Choir After-feast of Epiphany Weekend NOTICE

Dorogiye!

This Saturday/Sunday, the Church celebrates the After-feast of Epiphany and commemorates the Martyrs Hermylus (in Slavonic: Yermil) and Stratonicus (in Slavonic: Stratonik) of Belgrade.

The attached (double-sided) Tropar / Kondak text sheet contains the special prayers that will be sung.

This Friday / Saturday, the Church commemorates the

Today, the Church commemorates the Holy Virgin Martyr Tatiana. Happy Namesday and MNOGAYA LETA to Matushka Tatiana!

Brief summaries about the Martyrs Hermylus and Stratonicus, and Virgin Martyr Tatiana are provided below.

(Note: unless otherwise indicated, all dates are “old style”.)

#### \*\*\*\* THE HOLY MARTYRS HERMYLUS AND STRATONICUS

The Holy Martyrs Hermylus and Stratonicus, Slavs by origin, lived at the beginning of the fourth century during a persecution against Christians by the emperor Licinius (311-324). Saint Hermylus served as deacon in the city of Singidunum (Belgrade). Condemned by Licinius to imprisonment, he was long and cruelly tortured for Christ, but he remained unyielding.

Hermylus mocked the pagan gods, calling them deaf, dumb, and blind idols. In anger Licinius ordered more severe torments for him, saying that he could avoid them if he would offer sacrifice. The holy martyr predicted that Licinius would suffer terrible wounds himself because he worshiped idols instead of the Creator. His words came true, for Licinius was killed in 324.

After three days Hermylus was brought before the tribunal again and asked whether he would avoid more torture by offering sacrifice. The saint replied that he would offer worship and sacrifice only to the true God.

Saint Hermylus prayed that the Lord would give him strength to endure his torments and triumph over the pagans. A voice was heard saying, “Hermylus, you will be delivered from your suffering in three days, and will receive a great reward.” The torturers fell to the ground in fear, and took the saint back to prison.

Saint Stratonicus was one of the prison guards and a secret Christian. Seeing the agonizing torments of his friend, he was unable to keep from weeping, and he revealed that he was a Christian. They also subjected him to punishment.

After the torture, they put both martyrs into a net and threw them into the Danube. On the third day, the bodies of the saints were found by Christians on the bank of the river and buried near Singidunum. Their venerable heads were in the Church of Hagia Sophia, where the Russian pilgrim Anthony saw them in the year 1200.

#### \*\*\*\* THE HOLY VIRGIN MARTYR TATIANA

The Holy Virgin Martyr Tatiana was born into an illustrious Roman family; her father was elected consul three times. He was secretly a Christian and raised his daughter to be devoted to God and the Church. When she reached the age of maturity, Tatiana decided to remain a virgin, betrothing herself to Christ. Disdaining earthly riches, she sought instead the imperishable wealth of Heaven. She was made a deaconess in one of the Roman churches and served God in fasting and prayer, tending the sick and helping the needy.

When Rome was ruled by the sixteen-year-old Alexander Severus (222-235), all power was concentrated in the hands of the regent Ulpian, an evil enemy and persecutor of Christians. Christian blood flowed like water. Tatiana was also arrested, and they brought her into the temple of Apollo to force her to offer sacrifice to the idol. Tatiana began praying, and suddenly there was an earthquake. The idol was smashed into pieces, and part of the temple collapsed and fell down on the pagan priests and many pagans. The demon inhabiting the idol fled screeching from that place. Those present saw its shadow flying through the air.

Tatiana bravely endured horrific torture, praying for her tormentors that the Lord would open their spiritual eyes. And the Lord heard her prayers. The executioners saw four angels encircle Tatiana and beat her tormentors. A voice was heard from the heavens speaking to Tatiana. Eight men believed in Christ and fell on their knees before St Tatiana, begging to be forgiven for their sin against her. For confessing themselves Christians these same converts were tortured and executed, receiving Baptism by blood.

The next day St Tatiana was brought before the wicked judge. Seeing her completely healed of all her wounds, they tortured her again. A wondrous fragrance then filled the air. Then Tatiana was stretched out on the ground and beaten for so long that the servants had to be replaced several times. The torturers became exhausted and said that an invisible power was beating them with iron rods. Indeed, the angels warded off the blows directed at Tatiana and turned them upon the tormentors, causing nine of them to fall dead. Tatiana was then imprisoned, where she prayed all night and sang praises to the Lord with the angels.

A new morning began, and they took St Tatiana to the tribunal once more. The torturers beheld with astonishment that after such terrible torments she appeared completely healthy and even more radiant and beautiful than before. They began to urge Tatiana to offer sacrifice to the goddess Diana. Tatiana seemed agreeable, and they took her to the heathen temple. St Tatiana made the Sign of the Cross and began to pray. Suddenly, there was a crash of deafening thunder, and lightning struck the idol, the sacrificial offerings and the pagan priests.

Once again, the martyr was fiercely tortured. That night, angels appeared to her in prison and healed her wounds as before. On the following day, they took St Tatiana to the circus and loosed a hungry lion on her. The beast did not harm the saint, but meekly licked her feet.

As they were taking the lion back to its cage, it killed one of the torturers. They threw Tatiana into a fire, but the fire did not harm the martyr. The pagans, thinking that she was a sorceress, cut her hair to take away her magical powers, then locked her up in the temple of Zeus.

On the third day, pagan priests came to the temple intending to offer sacrifice to Zeus. They beheld the idol on the floor, shattered to pieces, and the holy martyr Tatiana joyously praising the Lord Jesus Christ.

The judge then condemned the valiant sufferer to be beheaded with a sword. Her father was also executed with her, because he had raised her to love Christ.