February 29

John Cassian (ca. 360-ca. 435) monk

Today the Orthodox churches commemorate John Cassian, a monk who shared his experience of monastic life in the Egyptian desert with the Christian West.
Born around the year 360, probably near the delta of the Danube, John received a classical education. He then travelled to the Christian East with his friend Germanus, wishing to learn about monastic life there. After a stay in Bethlehem, he made two journeys through the Egyptian desert of the Thebaid, spending a number of years in that region. His memories of these travels, and his conversations with desert fathers on monastic life, became the sources for his Spiritual Conferences and Cenobitic Institutions, works which had an enormous impact on the history of spirituality. In his Rule, St. Benedict recommends them to those who wish to progress in the monastic journey.
Around the year 399, Cassian visited John Chrysostom in Constantinople, and in 404, after Chrystostom's exile, he travelled to Rome and then to Gaul. In 415, he founded the Monastery of St. Victor in Marseilles. He stayed there until his death around the year 435, guiding his monks and writing works of monastic spirituality.

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (21 amsir/yakkatit):
Onesimus, disciple of Paul the apostle (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Suitbert (d. 713), missionary in South Rhineland

MARONITES:
Cassian, monk

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Cassian the Confessor, monk
Germanus of Dobrogea (d. ca. 405), monk (Rumanian Church)