September 25

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Ketevan of Georgia (d. 1624) martyr

On today's date, which corresponds to September 12 in the Julian calendar, the Georgian church commemorates one of its most popular saints, the martyr Ketevan.
Ketevan was the wife of King David of Kakezia and the mother of Teimuraz, the king's successor. She was persecuted because of her Orthodox faith by the king of Persia, the Muslim Shah Abbas I, and spent almost ten years in prison in the city of Shiraz. There she met several Augustinian missionaries from Portugal, who were so impressed by her faithful witness to Christianity that after her death they presented her to the Pope of Rome as a candidate for canonization.
After the Shah had kept her in custody for years without succeeding in making her or her fellow prisoners deny their faith, he decided to give Ketevan the alternative of converting to Islam or giving up her life. Without hesitation, Ketevan serenely handed herself over to her jailers, who subjected her to various forms of torture before inflicting the final blow.
Ketevan died on September 12, 1624, and her fame spread well beyond the Church of Georgia. Part of her mortal remains were taken to the West Indies by Catholic missionaries, and it is said that some of her relics reached the Belgian town of Namur.
Ketevan's unusual story has made her a symbol of the Church unity that already exists when men and women give up everything in witness to their faithfulness to the Gospel.

BIBLICAL READINGS
2 Cor 6:1-10; Lk 7:36-50

Lancelot Andrews (1555-1626) pastor and hymn writer

In 1626 the Anglican bishop of Winchester Lancelot Andrewes died at the age of seventy-one, in prayerful peace.
Andrewes was born in London in 1555, and was the oldest child in a wealthy family of merchants. He was a promising student and had such a propensity for the inner life that his parents allowed him to continue his studies, and he became a professor at Cambridge and Oxford.
He was ordained a deacon and then a priest, and as the years went by he became increasingly active in his ministry. The Church gave him numerous responsibilities, and the King of England made Andrewes his personal confessor.
Andrewes helped prepare the new English translation of the Bible, and he also became involved against his will in the theological debates between Rome and Canterbury. But he showed no hesitation in opposing every interpretation of the Church's canons that did not respect the individuals called into judgment by the Church.
Elected bishop of Chichester in 1605 and later transferred to the see of Winchester, Andrewes became a member of the English Parliament by right. In this office, he cooperated with the government when there were Church-related issues to discuss, but he steadfastly refused to interfere in matters that were not strictly related to the Christian faith.
After his death in 1626, the depth of his spiritual life came to light when his sermons and Preces Privatae were published posthumously. His life of prayer, though hidden, was one of the most remarkable in the history of the Church.

BIBLICAL READINGS
Isa 6:1-8; 1 Pet 5:1-4; Mt 13:44-46.52

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:
Lancelot Andrews, bishop of Winchester, spiritual writer
Serge of Radonez: (d. 1392), Russian monastic reformer, teacher of the faith

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Anatalo (2nd-3rd cent.) and all the holy bishops of Milan (Ambrosian calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (15 tut/maskaram):
Removal of the relics of Stephen to Jerusalem (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Paul Rabaut (d. 1794), witness to the faith in France

MARONITES:
Paphnutius (4th cent.), monk

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Euphrosyne of Alexandria (5th cent.), nun
Ketevan, martyr
Dositheus of Tbilisi (18th cent.), martyr (Georgian Church)

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:
Tahmazgerd (d. 445), martyr (Assyrian Church)