

## The Prologue from Ohrid, Bishop Nikolai Velimirovch (June 17)

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*Detail of a fresco depicting  
St. Sabel*

### 1. THE HOLY MARTYRS MANUEL, SABEL AND ISHMAEL

Manuel, Sabel and Ishmael were brothers born in Persia of a pagan father and a Christian mother. They were educated in the spirit of Christianity and were baptized. As Christians they were high-ranking officials at the court of King Alamundar. They were sent to Emperor Julian the Apostate to conduct negotiations and to confirm peace between the Persian and Graeco-Roman empires. The apostate emperor arranged some sort of blasphemous celebration in honor of the idols in Chalcedon. At this celebration, the emperor, with his noblemen, offered sacrifices to the idols. The Persian emissaries absented themselves from this celebration. The emperor summoned them and ordered that they also take part in the celebration and to offer sacrifices to the gods. They declared that they were foreign citizens and that they came as emissaries of the Persian king for the sake of establishing peace between the two empires and not for anything else; that they are Christians and that they consider it unworthy to worship dead idols and to offer them sacrifices. The emperor became enraged and cast them into prison. The next day, he brought them out and again began to dispute with them about faith, but the holy brothers were adamant and unwavering. They were then bound naked to trees, beaten and scraped with an iron brush. During the entire time of torturing they prayed to God with thanksgiving for their tortures: "O sweet Jesus these torments are sweet for the sake of Your love!" An angel of God appeared to them, comforted them and removed every pain from them. Contrary to all international relations, the wicked Emperor Julian finally pronounced judgment that the three

brothers be beheaded. [\(περισσότερα...\)](#)