August 18

Philoxenus of Mabbug (d. 523) pastor

In 523 in Philippopolis, Thrace, Philoxenus ended his earthly parable. He was metropolitan of the city of Mabbug in Syria.

Aksenaya, as he was called in Syriac, was born around the middle of the fifth century in Tahal, Persia. He attended the school of Edessa in an era of bitter christological controversies and extreme political instability. As a young scholar, he was unusually articulate, and it soon became clear that he would be an effective pastor aware of his society's needs.
Stirred by a powerful desire to protect the heart of Christianity, which for him consisted in the fact that God had become man so that humanity could become God, Philoxenus embarked on what would be his lifelong activity: writing exegetical, dogmatic and spiritual texts in defense of his vision. In 485 he became bishop of Edessa. With his writings, he also hoped to persuade the faithful of Edessa, as well as everyone who looked to him as a teacher, to lead a life of love and progressive identification with Christ in his suffering and humiliation. For Philoxenus, this was the only way a Christian could take part in the "exchange" between humanity and God, offered by Christ the Savior.
Frequently persecuted by anti-monophysite emperors and patriarchs, Philoxenus ended his life in exile. He is considered one of the greatest doctors of the West Syrian Church.

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (12 misra/nahasse):
Michael, archangel
Constantine's ascent to the imperial throne (Coptic Church)
Mar Matra, martyr (Ethiopian Church)

LUTHERANS:
Erdmann Neumeister (d. 1756), poet at Hamburg

MARONITES:
Commemoration of the Letter of Abgar

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Florus, Laurus and companions (2nd cent.), martyrs of Illyricum

WEST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:
Martyrdom of Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbug