

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM | Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

July 23, 2017 – 7th Sunday After Pentecost

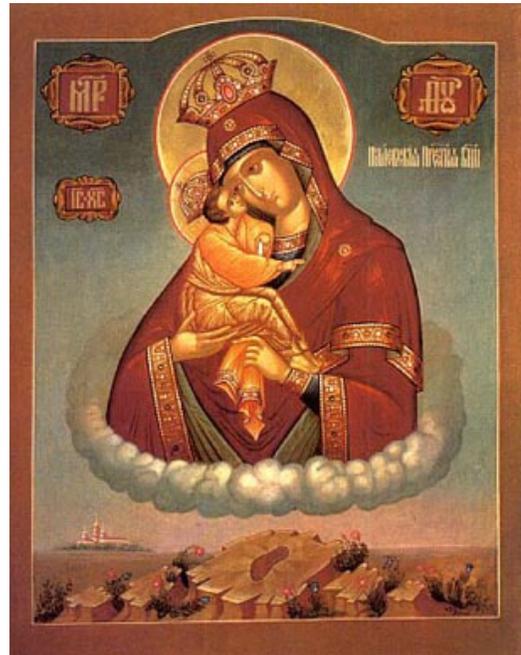
Martyrs Trophimus, Theophilus and Companions in Lycia

The Holy Martyrs Trophimus, Theophilus, and thirteen martyrs with them, suffered during the persecution against Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Brought to trial, they bravely confessed themselves Christians and refused to offer sacrifice to idols. After fierce tortures, they broke the legs of the holy martyrs and threw them into a fire. Strengthened by the Lord, they came out of the fire completely unharmed, and they glorified Christ all the more. Unable to break the will of the holy confessors, the torturers beheaded them.

Also Commemorated Today: Miraculous Appearance of the Mother of God at Pochaev

The celebration in honor of the Pochaev Icon of the Mother of God on July 23 was established in memory of the deliverance of the Dormition Lavra monastery from a Turkish siege on July 20-23, 1675.

In the summer of 1675 during the Zbarazhsk War with the Turks, in the reign of the Polish King Jan Sobesski (1674-1696), regiments composed of Tatars under the command of Khan Nurredin via Vishnevets fell upon the Pochaev monastery, surrounding it on three sides. The weak monastery walls and its stone buildings did not offer much defense against a siege. The igumen Joseph Dobromirsky urged the



brethren and laypeople to pray to their heavenly intercessors: the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Job of Pochaev (October 28).

The monks and the laypeople prayed fervently, prostrating themselves before the wonderworking icon of the Mother of God and the reliquary with the relics of Saint Job. At sunrise on the morning of July 23, as the Tatars were planning an assault on the monastery, the igumen ordered an Akathist to the Theotokos to be sung. At the opening words, “O Queen of the Heavenly Hosts,” the Most Holy Theotokos suddenly appeared over the church, in “an unfurled gleaming-white maphorion,” with angels holding unsheathed swords. Saint Job stood beside the Mother of God, bowing to Her and beseeching Her to defend the monastery.

The Tatars believed the heavenly army was a vision, and in confusion they began to shoot arrows at the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Job, but the arrows fell backwards and wounded those who shot them. Terror seized the enemy. In a flight of panic and without looking, they trampled upon and killed each other. The defenders of the monastery attempted pursuit and took many prisoners. Some of the prisoners afterwards accepted the Christian Faith and remained at the monastery thereafter. (*from oca.org*)

Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans 15:1-7

Brethren, we who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.” For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received you, to the glory of God.

Today’s Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 9:27-35

At that time, two blind men followed Jesus, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.” And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See *that* no one knows *it*.” But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the

mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth." "Indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors. For their deeds follow them!" (Rev. 14:13). The heavenly voice does not bless all of the dead, but those who die in the Lord, having been put to death in the world, and who *bear in the body the death of Jesus* (2 Cor. 4:10) and *suffer with Christ* (Rom. 8:17). For those, actually, the exodus from the body is rest from toils, the occasion of *unfading crowns* (1 Pet. 5:4) and rewards of glory, the prizes of those prevailing much greater in measure than the contests, which the athletes of Christ our God achieved against the invisible powers. *For the sufferings of the present time cannot be compared to the future glory to be revealed* (Rom. 8:18) to those who are well-pleasing to God, as the Apostle Paul says, which we must also desire to pray unceasingly to God, saying, *Incline our ears, Lord, to your testimonies, and turn our eyes away from all vanity* (Ps. 118:36-7), *and enter not into judgment with your servants for no one living is justified before you* (Ps. 142:2), but visit us in your rich mercies, for yours is the dominion and the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

– Andrew of Caesarea, *Commentary on the Apocalypse*

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – 144: Gratitude



"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed; always carrying in the body of the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies."
(2 Corinthians 4:5 RSV)

We are all intoxicated with opportunities and commitments, usually **self-imposed**, that fill up our life with distractions that keep us from the one true purpose in our life: to know God. We are bombarded daily with advertisements, commercials, newspaper articles and radio spots that tell us we should go here/do this/we owe ourselves/you

can't do without this/you must attend this/you must buy this. We become distracted; our attention is focused not on our true purpose but ephemeral desires.

Once our attention is distracted from God, we forget that we are made in His image. We forget about seeking His likeness and turn more to worldly pursuits using our God-given talents and gifts for our self-centered desires. Fr. Barnabas Powell, GOA, once wrote, **“When I forget that my life is a gift, my abilities are gifts, and my world is a gift, I start forgetting my dependence on God for my very breath.”**

Forgetfulness makes us **ungrateful**. When we become ungrateful for the gifts God has given us, we begin to think we can rely on ourselves. We begin to think that we are enough, we need no help. I might ask at this point, “How is that working out for you?” Some may say that it is working just fine, I have new cars, big house, boats, belong to the country club and move in the top social circles. Throughout the ages, people believe that you are in “good graces” if God has bestowed upon you wealth and luxury. I have even heard people say in those situations, “I am blessed”. I am happy for you if you enjoy that circumstance, but what about eternity?

God has given you that wealth and luxury but what have you done to show your gratitude to God for being so gifted? Those talents that God gave you that you might use to accumulate wealth and luxury, how are you using them to help the Church, the needy, the homeless, the naked, the thirsty (Matthew 25: 31-46). Christ destroyed “death by death” so all of our excuses, distractions, forgetfulness are powerless to hold us. They do so only because we allow them to. The choice remains yours!

Show your gratitude to God for all He has gifted you that you hear Him say, *“Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the worlds; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me... ..Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.”* (from acrod.org)

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Grace Bishop GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbyteria Katie Baker and family, Santiago Alzugaray, Alicia Barosio and family, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Deanna Jarrett, Tucker Karl and family, Robert Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, Josh Moore, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectarios and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the newly departed handmaiden of God Caroline Schmuck, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)