

# SOBORNOST

## St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

(301) 638-5035 Church  
4419 Leonardtown Road  
Waldorf, MD 20601

Rev. Father Joseph Edgington, Pastor  
(703) 532-8017

[fredgington@gmail.com](mailto:fredgington@gmail.com)  
[www.apostlethomas.org](http://www.apostlethomas.org)

*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.**

**August 20, 2017 – 11th Sunday After Pentecost**

**Afterfeast of the Dormition | Holy Prophet Samuel**

The Church continues to honor the passage of the Most Holy Theotokos from death to life. Just as Christ once dwelt in the virginal womb of His Mother, now He takes Her “to dwell in His courts.”

The Prophet Samuel was the fifteenth and last of the Judges of Israel, living more than 1146 years before the Birth of Christ. He was descended from the Tribe of Levi, and was the son of Elkanah from Ramathaim-Zophim of Mount Ephraim. He was born, having been besought from the Lord through the prayers of his mother Hannah (therefore he received the name Samuel, which means “besought from God”). Even before birth, he was dedicated to God. Her song, “My heart exults in the Lord,” is the Third Ode of the Old Testament (1 Sam/1 Kings 2:1-10).

When the boy reached the age of three, his mother went with him to Shiloh and in accord with her vow dedicated him to the worship of God. She gave him into the care of the High Priest Eli, who at this time was a judge over Israel. The prophet grew in the fear of God, and at twelve years of age he had a revelation that God would punish the house of the High Priest Eli, because he did not restrain the impiety of his sons. Eli’s whole family was wiped out in a single day.

The prophecy was fulfilled when the Philistines, having slain in battle 30,000 Israelites (among them were also the sons of the High Priest, Hophni and Phineas),



gaining victory and capturing the Ark of the Covenant. Hearing this, the High Priest Eli fell backwards from his seat at the gate, and breaking his back, he died. The wife of Phineas, upon hearing what had happened in this very hour, gave birth to a son (Ichabod) and died with the words: “The glory has departed from Israel, for the Ark of God is taken away” (1 Sam/1 Kgs 4: 22).

Upon the death of Eli, Samuel became the judge of the nation of Israel. The Ark of God was returned by the Philistines on their own initiative. After returning to God, the Israelites returned to all the cities that the Philistines had taken. In his old age, the Prophet Samuel made his sons Joel and Abiah judges over Israel, but they did not follow the integrity and righteous judgment of their father, since they were motivated by greed. Then the elders of Israel, wanting the nation of God to be “like other nations” (1 Sam/1 Kgs 8: 20), demanded of the Prophet Samuel that they have a king. The Prophet Samuel anointed Saul as king, but saw in this a downfall of the people, whom God Himself had governed until this time, announcing His will through His chosen saints.

Resigning the position of judge, the Prophet Samuel asked the people if they consented to his continued governance, but no one stepped forward for him. After denouncing the first king, Saul, for his disobedience to God, the Prophet Samuel anointed David as king. He had offered David asylum, saving him from the pursuit of King Saul. The Prophet Samuel died in extreme old age. His life is recorded in the Bible (1 Sam/1 Kgs; Sirach 46:13-20). In the year 406 A.D. the relics of the Prophet Samuel were transferred from Judea to Constantinople. (*from oca.org*)

### **Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians 9:2-12**

Brethren, if I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or *is it* only Barnabas and I *who* have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? If

others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 18:23-35**

The Lord said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

### *A Word From the Holy Fathers*

Realize, beloved in the Lord, the grace of the feast, and its wondrous solemnity. Its mysteries are not terrible, nor do they inspire awe. Blessed are they who have eyes to see. Blessed are they who see with spiritual eyes. This night shines as the day. What countless angels acclaim the death of the life-giving Mother! How the eloquence of apostles blesses the departure of this body which was the receptacle of God. How the Word of God, who deigned in His mercy to become her Son, ministering with His divine hands to this immaculate and divine being, as His mother, receives her holy soul. O wondrous Law-giver, fulfilling the law which He had Himself laid down, not being bound by it, for it was He who enjoined children to show reverence to their parents. “Honor your father and your mother,” He says. The truth of this is apparent to everyone, calling to mind even dimly the words of holy Scripture. If according to it the souls of the just are in the hands of God, how much more is her soul in the hands of her Son and her God. This is indisputable. – St. John of Damascus, from *Three Sermons on the Assumption*

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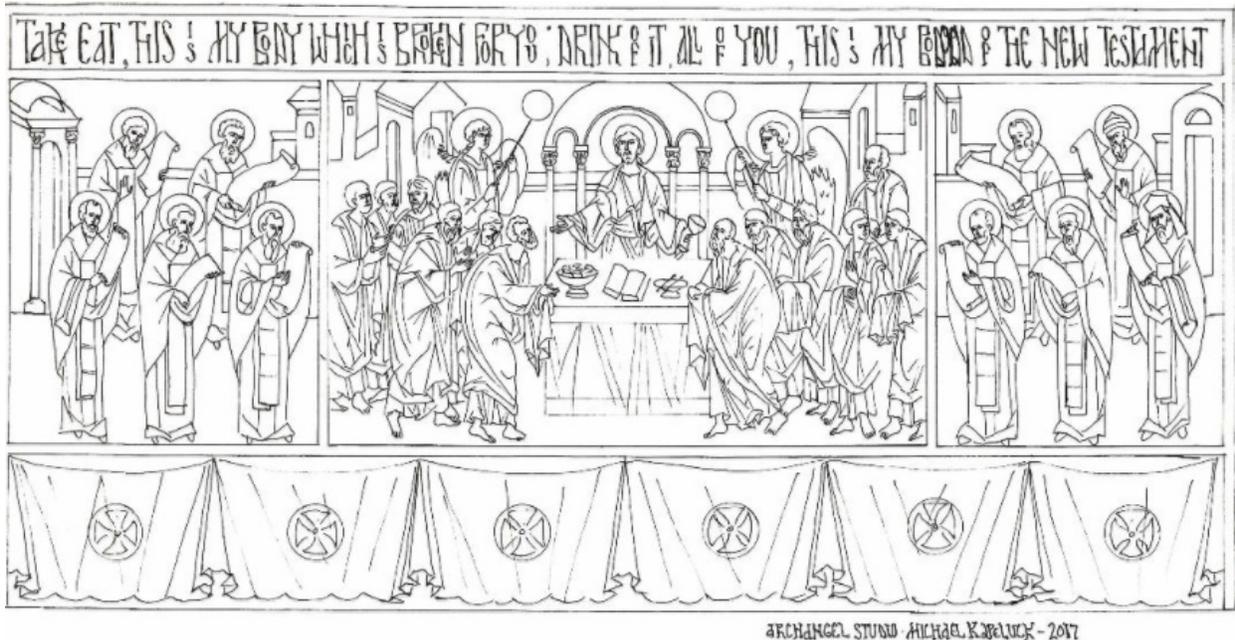
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ARCHANGEL STUDIO MICHAEL KARLICK - 2017

### Beauty Will Save the World (Dostoyevsky, The Idiot)



Our church officers have unanimously approved the next phase of iconography at St. Thomas, which will complete work in the Narthex (the entry of the church) and in the Holy Place (the curved wall in altar area).

Icons of the two Seraphim on the ends of the curved walls will cost \$1,700 each. Icons of the ten Bishops flanking the icon of the Heavenly Banquet in front of the altar will cost \$2,000 each (see diagram above). Due to a small in opening in our iconographer's schedule, we might have these icons installed sometime in late 2018.

The last time we offered this opportunity to glorify God in His church, the response was tremendous. So, if you are interested in participating, please contact Josh Moore at [joshandkelseyjoint@gmail.com](mailto:joshandkelseyjoint@gmail.com) or by phone at (541) 601-8413. At this point, we aren't collecting money, only assessing interest in the project.

## On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 148:

### Why Should I be a Good Steward?



*“One man gives freely, yet grows all the richer: another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.” (Proverbs 11:24 RSV)*

I hear this question all the time, “Why should I be a good steward?” My answer usually is, “Why shouldn’t you be a good steward?” It is about this time that I receive a stern and sarcastic look! Each week this blog is written to help you understand just how important stewardship is to your salvation.

There have to date been 147 blogs giving you and at least 147 reasons to be a good steward. Let me approach this a little differently this time using three quotes from the scripture.

1. John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”
2. John 13:34, “A new commandment I give you ‘that you are to love one another as I have loved you. By this all will know that you are my disciples.’”
3. Matthew 25:14, the parable of the Talents.

So there it is, your salvation wrapped up in three quotes from scripture. Let’s look again at what these say and how to apply them.

In John 3:16, we learn that we shall live forever. You cannot say that you don’t want to live forever, it has been decided by Christ. You will live forever. Two points to bear in mind here, the first is that forever is a long, long time. We have lived a very short life here on earth compared to the relatively long time we will live after the second coming of Christ. The second point is that God has given you free choice as to whether or not you want to enjoy eternity, smoking or non-smoking!

In Matthew 25:14, we hear the parable of the talents (gifts). God gives us gifts much like the talents the Master (God) gave his three stewards. Two of the stewards took the gifts that the Master had given them using them in such a way as to bring increase to the Master. These two were reward with stewardship over even more (Kingdom of Heaven). The thirds steward did nothing with his talent and received his reward of being placed as a slave (Gehenna). The point being that God intends you to use the gifts He has given you to aid you in reaching Theosis as well as helping others in their journey, thereby returning to God with increase.

John 13:34 tells you that you should be “in communion” with God and with each other. As images of God you are to know yourself as a person in communion with God and with others. The Trinity knows themselves as persons in communion and you being in the image of God must know yourself as a person in communion. The Trinity shares a kenotic, self-emptying, love that is unlike the love that we know. We are to obtain that kenotic love on our journey to Theosis by developing and maturing into the “likeness of God.” Without stewardship, without the sharing of the gifts God has given us, we will never experience the kenotic love necessary to be “in communion.” Thus our salvation will be in jeopardy.

It is never too late to start. Start today and return in proportion to what God has given you! *(from acrod.org)*

**Saints Peter and Paul Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church**  
**34<sup>th</sup> Annual**

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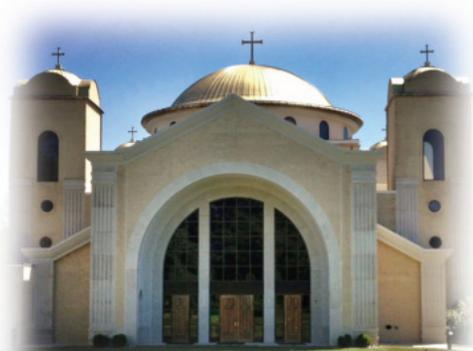
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**DIRECTIONS:**

From (495) Beltway, take Exit 39 towards POTOMAC; Church is 4.2 miles on left.

<b>FRIDAY</b>	Sept. 22	4 pm – 9 pm
<b>SATURDAY</b>	Sept. 23	11 am – 9 pm
<b>SUNDAY</b>	Sept. 24	Noon – 4 pm

**Metro Area Vendors**

**Live Arabic Music & Entertainment**  
 Saturday until 10:30 pm

**Fun for Kids**  
 Moon Bounce  
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## *Save the Date*

It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honors the bishop has been honored by God. – St. Ignatius of Antioch

Our Diocese will celebrate the 5th anniversary of Bishop Gregory's ordination to the Episcopate. We'll celebrate Monday evening November 27th in Johnstown so mark your calendars! Stay tuned for further information.

### **Follow Our Diocese On-Line**

**Diocesan Website:** <http://www.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, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)