

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

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 27, 2017 – 12th Sunday After Pentecost

St. Pøemen the Great

Saint Pimen the Great was born about the year 340 in Egypt. He went to one of the Egyptian monasteries with his two brothers, Anoub and Paisius, and all three received monastic tonsure. The brothers were such strict ascetics that when their mother came to the monastery to see her children, they did not come out to her from their cells. The mother stood there for a long time and wept. Then Saint Pimen said to her through the closed door of the cell, "Do you wish to see us now, or in the future life?" Saint Pimen promised that if she would endure the sorrow of not seeing her children in this life, then surely she would see them in the next. The mother was humbled and returned home.

Fame of Saint Pimen's deeds and virtues spread throughout the land. Once, the governor of the district wanted to see him. Saint Pimen, shunning fame, thought to himself, "If dignitaries start coming to me and show me respect, then many other people will also start coming to me and disturb my quiet, and I shall be deprived of the grace of humility, which I have acquired only with the help of God." So he refused to see the governor, asking him not to come.



For many of the monks, Saint Pimen was a spiritual guide and instructor. They wrote down his answers to serve for the edification of others besides themselves.

Saint Pimen was strict in his fasting and sometimes would not partake of food for a week or more. He advised others to eat every day, but without eating their fill. Abba Pimen heard of a certain monk who went for a week without eating, but had lost his temper. The saint lamented that the monk was able to fast for an entire week, but was unable to abstain from anger for even a single day.

Once, after Saint Pimen and his disciples arrived at the monastery of Scetis, he learned that the Elder living there was annoyed at his arrival and was also jealous of him, because monks were leaving the Elder to see Abba Pimen.

In order to console the hermit, the saint went to him with his brethren, taking food with them as a present. The Elder refused to receive them, however. Then Saint Pimen said, “We shall not depart from here until we are permitted to see the holy Elder.” He remained standing at the door of the cell in the heat. Seeing Saint Pimen’s humility and patience, the Elder received him graciously and said, “Not only is what I have heard about you true, but I see that your works are a hundred times greater.”

He possessed such great humility that he often sighed and said, “I shall be cast down to that place where Satan was cast down!” Once, a monk from another country came to the saint to receive his guidance. He began to speak about sublime matters difficult to grasp. The saint turned away from him and was silent. They explained to the bewildered monk that the saint did not like to speak of lofty matters. Then the monk began to ask him about the struggle with passions of soul. The saint turned to him with a joyful face, “Now you have spoken well, and I will answer.” For a long while he provided instruction on how one ought to struggle with the passions and conquer them.

Saint Pimen died at age 110, about the year 450. Soon after his death, he was acknowledged as a saint pleasing to God. He was called “the Great” as a sign of his great humility, uprightness, ascetic struggles, and self-denying service to God.
(from oca.org)

Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians 15:1-11

Brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the

Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me. Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 19:16-26

At that time, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and *your* mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Amen, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” When His disciples heard *it*, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

A Word From the Holy Fathers

A certain monk asked, “If I see my brother sinning, should I conceal his fault?” The Elder answered, “If we reproach the sins of brothers, then God will reproach our sins. If you see a brother sinning, do not believe your eyes. Know that your own sin is like a beam of wood, but the sin of your brother is like a splinter (Mt. 7:3-5), and then you will not enter into distress or temptation.”

Another monk said to the saint, “I have sinned grievously and I want to spend three years at repentance. Is that enough time?” The Elder replied, “That is a long

time.” The monk continued to ask how long the saint wished him to repent. Perhaps only a year? Saint Pimen said, “That is a long time.” The other brethren asked, “Should he repent for forty days?” The Elder answered, “I think that if a man repents from the depths of his heart and has a firm intention not to return to the sin, then God will accept three days of repentance.”

When asked how to get rid of persistent evil thoughts, the saint replied, “This is like a man who has fire on his left side, and a vessel full of water on his right side. If he starts burning from the fire, he takes water from the vessel and extinguishes the fire. The fire represents the evil thoughts placed in the heart of man by the Enemy of our salvation, which can enkindle sinful desires within man like a spark in a hut. The water is the force of prayer which impels a man toward God.”

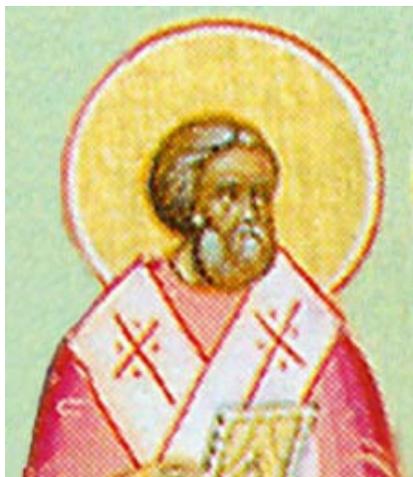
To the question of whether it is better to speak or be silent, the Elder said, “Whoever speaks on account of God, does well, and whoever is silent on account of God, that one also does well.”

He also said, “If man seems to be silent, but his heart condemns others, then he is always speaking. There may be a man who talks all day long, but he is actually silent, because he says nothing unprofitable.”

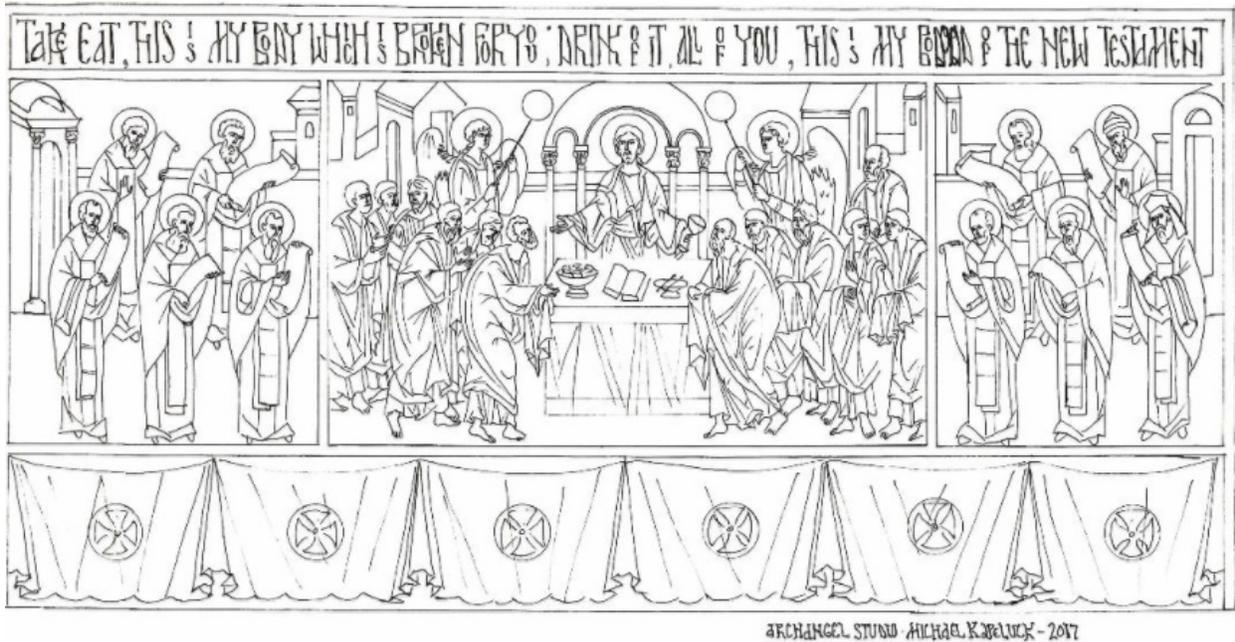
The saint said, “It is useful to observe three things: to fear God, to pray often, and to do good for one’s neighbor.”

“Wickedness never eradicates wickedness. If someone does evil to you, do good to them, and your goodness will conquer their wickedness.” – St. Pimen the Great

St. Hosius the Confessor the Bishop of Cordova



Saint Hosius the Confessor was bishop for more than sixty years in the city of Cordova (Spain) during the fourth century. The holy emperor Saint Constantine the Great (306-337) deeply revered him and made him a privy counsellor. The saint advised Saint Constantine to convene the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325, and he was the first to sign the acts of this Council. After the death of Saint Constantine the Great, Saint Hosius defended Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (May 2) against the emperor Constantius (337-361), an advocate of the Arian heresy. Because of this, they sent him to prison in Sirmium. Saint Hosius died in the year 359 after his return to Cordova. (*from oca.org*)



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 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 149:

Joys of Generosity



“What does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” (Mark 8:36 RSV)

St. Gregory of Nazianzen states, “Let everyone bring to God what fruits he can, at all times, at every turn of life and its events, to the measure of his ability according to the gifts he has been given.” There is a joy in being generous and after all is not generosity one of the virtues. And, according to St. Gregory of Nyssa, if you possess one virtue then you possess them all, they are

linked. Likewise possessing one passion will lead to the others.

In Proverbs 11:24, we read, “one man gives, yet grows richer.” When sharing the gifts God has given you in gratitude, God receives those gifts and returns them in greater abundance. That does not mean that you should endeavor to give back for the purpose of receiving more. That is an improper motive and no joy will come of it. The joy in giving is that the riches you were gifted with do not govern your life. An abundant life that is free from greed, that you are not possessed by them, gives you freedom and joy and your life is at peace.

Joy also comes from not being concerned about your future. God has blessed you richly and has taken care of you. You are able to live a virtuous life, thinking of others before yourself, because you know that God will continue to take care of you. He will provide for all your needs and He will do this because you are leading a virtuous life, a life led in gratitude for all that He has given you.

To the contrary, those who do not share the gifts that God has given them, will not only forfeit what He has gifted them, they will live in constant torment and fear of the loss of their possessions, relationship and even their life.

Christ commanded us to “love” our neighbors as He has loved us. Christ is talking about that true kenotic, self-emptying love whereby we would give all we have for the benefit our neighbor as Christ gave to us. That is real joy. It is always good to receive but the joy in giving, in sharing, in participation of the life of another is one of the greatest joys of this world.

Be a good steward and experience the joy of giving and sharing with God and the body of Christ. *(from acrod.org)*

Also Commemorated Today: St. Phanourius



We know nothing for certain about the background of Saint Phanourius, nor exactly when he lived. Tradition says that when the island of Rhodes had been conquered by Moslems, the new ruler of the island wished to rebuild the walls of the city, which had been damaged in previous wars. Several ruined buildings were near the fortress, and stone from these buildings was used to repair the walls at the end of the fifteenth century, or the beginning of the sixteenth. While working on the fortress, the Moslems uncovered the ruins of a beautiful church. Several icons, most of them badly damaged, were found on the floor. One icon, of Saint Phanourius, looked as if it had been painted that very day. The local bishop, whose name was Nilus, was called to

see the icon. It said, “Saint Phanourius.”

The saint is depicted as a young soldier holding a cross in his right hand. On the upper part of the cross is a lighted taper. Twelve scenes from his life are shown around the border of the icon. These scenes show him being questioned by an official, being beaten with stones by soldiers, stretched out on the ground while soldiers whip him, then having his sides raked with iron hooks. He is also shown locked up in prison, standing before the official again, being burned with candles, tied to a rack, thrown to the wild animals, and being crushed by a large rock. The remaining scenes depict him standing before idols holding burning coals in his hands, while a demon stands by lamenting his defeat by the saint, and finally, the saint stands in the midst of a fire with his arms raised in prayer.

These scenes clearly revealed that the saint was a martyr. Bishop Nilus sent representatives to the Moslem ruler, asking that he be permitted to restore the church. Permission was denied, so the bishop went to Constantinople and there he obtained a decree allowing him to rebuild the church.

At that time, there was no Orthodox bishop on the island of Crete. Since Crete was under the control of Venice, there was a Latin bishop. The Venetians refused to allow a successor to be consecrated when an Orthodox bishop died, or for new priests to be ordained, hoping that in time they would be able to convert the Orthodox population to Catholicism. Those seeking ordination were obliged to go to the island of Kythera.

It so happened that three young deacons had traveled from Crete to Kythera to be ordained to the holy priesthood. On their way back, they were captured at sea by Moslems who brought them to Rhodes to be sold as slaves. Lamenting their fate, the three new priests wept day and night. While in Rhodes the priests heard of the miracles performed by the holy Great Martyr Phanourius. They began to pray to him with tears, asking to be freed from their captivity. Each of the three had been sold to a different master, and so remained unaware of what the others were doing.

By the mercy of God, each of the priests was allowed by his master to pray at the restored church of Saint Phanourius. All three arrived at the same time and prostrated themselves before the icon of the saint, asking to be delivered from the hands of the Hagarenes (Moslems, descendants of Hagar). Somewhat consoled, the priests left the church and returned to their masters.

That night Saint Phanourius appeared to the three masters and ordered them to set the priests free so that they could serve the Church, or he would punish them. The Moslems ignored the saint's warning, believing the vision to be the result of sorcery. The cruel masters bound the priests with chains and treated them even worse than before.

Then Saint Phanourius went to the priests and freed them from their shackles, promising that they would be freed the next day. Appearing once more to the Moslems, the holy martyr told them severely, "If you do not release your slaves by tomorrow, you shall witness the power of God!"

The next morning, all the inhabitants of the homes where the priests were held awoke to find themselves blind, paralyzed, and in great pain. They considered what they were to do, and so decided to send for the priests. When the three priests arrived, they asked them whether they could heal them. The priests replied, "We will pray to God. May His will be done!"

Once more Saint Phanourius appeared to the Hagarenes, ordering them to send to the church a document granting the priests their freedom. He told them that if they refused to do this, they would never recover their sight or health. All three masters wrote letters releasing the priests, and sent the documents to the church, where they were placed before the icon of Saint Phanourius.

Before the messengers returned from the church, all those who had been blind and paralyzed were healed. The priests joyfully returned to Crete, carrying with them a copy of the icon of Saint Phanourius. Every year they celebrated the Feast of Saint Phanourius with deep gratitude for their miraculous deliverance.

The saint's name sounds similar to the Greek verb "phanerono," which means "to reveal" or "to disclose." For this reason, people pray to Saint Phanourius to help

them find lost objects. When the object is recovered, they bake a sweet bread and share it with the poor, offering prayers for the salvation of saint's mother. Her name is not known, but according to tradition, she was a sinful woman during her life. Saint Phanourius has promised to help those who pray for his mother in this way. www.orthodox.net/recipes/st-phanourios-story-prayer-to-bread-recipes.html contains some recipes for St. Phanourius bread. (from *oca.org*)

Assembly of Bishops News

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America – Response to Racist Violence in Charlottesville, VA

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America stands with all people of good will in condemning the hateful violence and lamenting the loss of life that resulted from the shameful efforts to promote racial bigotry and white supremacist ideology in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The Orthodox Church emphatically declares that it does not promote, protect or sanction participation in such reprehensible acts of hatred, racism, and discrimination, and proclaims that such beliefs and behaviors have no place in any community based in respect for the law and faith in a loving God.

The essence of the Christian Gospel and the spirit of the Orthodox Tradition are entirely and self-evidently incompatible with ideologies that declare the superiority of any race over another. Our God shows no partiality or favoritism (Deuteronomy 10:17, Romans 2:11). Our Lord Jesus Christ *broke down the dividing wall of hostility that had separated God from humans and humans from each other* (Ephesians 2:14). In Christ Jesus, the Church proclaims, there can be *neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, but all are one* (Galatians 3:28). Furthermore, we call on one another *to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to expose them* (Ephesians 5:11). And what is darkness if not hatred? *The one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness* (1 John 2:11)!

Furthermore, in 1872, Hierarchs from around the world assembled in Constantinople and denounced all forms of xenophobia and chauvinism (*phyletism*). They agreed that the promotion of racial or national supremacy and ethnic bias or dissension in the Church of Christ is to be censured as contrary to the sacred teachings of the Christian Gospel and the holy canons of the Church. It is formally condemned as heresy, the strongest category of false teaching.

Finally, such actions as we have witnessed in recent days, by self-proclaimed white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and various racists and fascists, betray the core human values of love and solidarity. In this, we pray wholeheartedly for the families of

those who lost their lives or suffered in these tragic events. In like manner, we cannot condone any form of revenge or retaliation by any group or individual. Therefore, we fervently appeal to every person of good will, and especially the leaders of our great nation, to consider and adopt ways of reconciling differences in order to rise above any and all discrimination in our history, our present, and our future.

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>

Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

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, Mary Diane David, 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.)