

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.

September 24, 2017 – 16th Sunday After Pentecost Synaxis of All Saints of Alaska

On the anniversary of the arrival of the Russian missionaries in Alaska (1794), we remember the New Martyrs Saint Peter the Aleut, Protomartyr of America, and Saint Juvenal.

Saint Peter the Aleut is mentioned in the Life of Saint Herman of Alaska (December 13). Simeon Yanovsky (who ended his life as the schemamonk Sergius in the Saint Tikhon of Kaluga Monastery), has left the following account:

“On another occasion I was relating to him how the Spanish in California had imprisoned fourteen Aleuts, and how the Jesuits (actually Franciscans) were forcing all of them to accept the Catholic Faith. But the Aleuts would not agree under any circumstances, saying, ‘We are Christians.’ The Jesuits argued, ‘That’s not true, you are heretics and schismatics. If you do not agree to accept our faith then we will torture all of you to death.’ Then the Aleuts were placed in prisons two to a cell. That evening, the Jesuits came to the prison with lanterns and lighted candles. Again they tried to persuade two Aleuts in the cell to accept the Catholic Faith. ‘We are Christians,’ the Aleuts replied, ‘and we will not change our Faith.’ Then the Jesuits began to torture



them, at first the one while his companion was a witness. They cut off one of the joints of his feet, and then the other joint. Then they cut the first joint on the fingers of his hands, and then the other joint. Then they cut off his feet, and his hands. The blood flowed, but the martyr endured all and firmly repeated one thing: "I am a Christian." He died in such suffering, due to a loss of blood. The Jesuit also promised to torture his comrade to death the next day.

But that night an order was received from Monterey stating that the imprisoned Aleuts were to be released immediately, and sent there under escort. Therefore, in the morning all were sent to Monterey with the exception of the dead Aleut. This was related to me by a witness, the same Aleut who had escaped torture, and who was the friend of the martyred Aleut. I reported this incident to the authorities in Saint Petersburg. When I finished my story, Father Herman asked, "What was the name of the martyred Aleut?" I answered, "Peter. I do not remember his family name." The Elder stood reverently before an icon, made the Sign of the Cross and said, "Holy New Martyr Peter, pray to God for us!"



We know very little about Saint Peter, except that he was from Kodiak, and was arrested and put to death by the Spaniards in California because he refused to convert to Catholicism. The circumstances of his martyrdom recall the torture of Saint James the Persian (November 27).

Both in his sufferings and in his steadfast confession of the Faith, Saint Peter is the equal of the martyrs of old, and also of the New Martyrs who have shone forth in more recent times. Now he rejoices with them in the heavenly Kingdom, glorifying God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, throughout all ages.

Saint Juvenal, the Protomartyr of America, was born in 1761 in Nerchinsk, Siberia. His secular name was John Feodorovich Hovorukhin, and he was trained as a mining engineer. In a letter to Abbot Nazarius of Valaam (December 13, 1819), Saint Herman says that Saint Juvenal "had been an assistant at our monastery and was a former officer." After his wife died in 1791, John entered a monastery at Saint Petersburg (Saint Herman's Letter of December 13, 1819) and was tonsured with the name Juvenal. Three years later, he went to Alaska as a missionary.

During 1794, the hieromonks Juvenal and Macarius spent two months in the area around Kodiak teaching the inhabitants about Christ and baptizing them. They traveled in small boats of hide in all sorts of weather, dividing up the territory

among themselves. Saint Herman tells of a conversation he heard one day as he walked with the hieromonks to a small hill on the south side of the harbor. They sat down facing the sea, and spoke of various things. Soon they began to discuss where each of them should go to preach. Aflame with zeal and eager to set out on their journey, a friendly argument ensued between Father Macarius and Father Juvenal. Father Macarius said he intended to go north to the Aleutian Islands, and then make his way to the Alaskan mainland, where the inhabitants had invited him to visit. The monks had a map of Captain Cook's which indicated that some Russians were living near a certain river in that particular area, and Father Macarius hoped to find them. Father Juvenal interrupted, saying that he believed that the Alaskan mainland was his territory. "I beg you to yield to me and not offend me in this," he told Father Macarius, "since the ship is leaving for Yakutan. I shall begin preaching in the south, proceeding north along the ocean, cross the Kenai peninsula, then from the port there I shall cross to Alaska." Father Macarius became sorrowful and said, "No, Father. Do not restrict me in this way. You know the Aleutian chain of islands is joined to Alaska, therefore it belongs to me, and also the whole northern shore. As for you, the southern part of America is sufficient for your whole lifetime, if you please." As he listened to their apostolic fervor, Saint Herman says he "went from joy to rapture" (Letter to Abbot Nazarius, May 19, 1795).

In 1795, Father Juvenal baptized over 700 Chugatchi at Nushek, then he crossed Kenai Bay and baptized the local people there. In 1796, according to native oral tradition, Saint Juvenal came to the mouth of the Kuskokwim near the present village of Quinahgak, where he was killed by a hunting party (There is a forged diary attributed to Ivan Petroff which gives a slanderous version of Father Juvenal's death, and alleges that he was martyred at Lake Iliamna).

The precise reason for Saint Juvenal's murder by the natives is not known. However, they later told Saint Innocent something about his death. They said that Saint Juvenal did not try to defend himself when attacked, nor did he make any attempt to escape. After being struck from behind, he turned to face his attackers and begged them to spare the natives he had baptized.

The natives told Saint Innocent that after they had killed Saint Juvenal, he got up and followed them, urging them to repent. They fell upon him again and gave him a savage beating. Once more, he got to his feet and called them to repentance. This happened several times, then finally the natives hacked him to pieces. Thus, the zealous Hieromonk Juvenal became the first Orthodox Christian in America to receive the crown of martyrdom. His unnamed guide, possibly a Tanaina Indian convert, was also martyred at the same time.

It is said that a local shaman removed Saint Juvenal's brass pectoral cross from his body and attempted to cast a spell. Unexpectedly, the shaman was lifted up off the ground. He made three more tries with the same result, then concluded that there was a greater power than his own at work here. Years later, a man showed up at the Nushagak Trading Post wearing a brass pectoral cross exactly like the one worn by Saint Juvenal. A column of light arose from his holy relics and reached up to Heaven. It is not known how long this phenomenon continued. Saint Juvenal, in his tireless evangelization of the native peoples of Alaska, served the Church more than all the other missionaries combined. (from oca.org)



Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-10

Brethren, we then, *as* workers together *with Him* also plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation. We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. But in all *things* we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and *yet* not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 5:1-11

At that time, as the multitude pressed about Jesus to hear the word of God, He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And

they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Also Commemorated Today: Protomartyr Thekla

The Holy Protomartyr and Equal of the Apostles Thekla was born in the city of Iconium. She was the daughter of rich and illustrious parents, and she was distinguished by extraordinary beauty. At eighteen years of age they betrothed her to an eminent youth. But after she heard the preaching of the holy Apostle Paul about the Savior, Saint Thekla with all her heart came to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and she steadfastly resolved not to enter into marriage, but rather to devote all her life to preaching the Gospel.

Saint Thekla's mother was opposed to her daughter's plans and insisted that she marry her betrothed. Saint Thekla's fiancé also complained to the prefect of the city about the Apostle Paul, accusing him of turning his bride against him. The prefect locked up Saint Paul in prison.

During the night Saint Thekla secretly ran away from her house, and she bribed the prison guards, giving them all her gold ornaments, and so made her way into the prison to the prisoner. For three days she sat at the feet of the Apostle Paul, listening to his fatherly precepts. Thekla's disappearance was discovered, and servants were sent out everywhere looking for her. Finally, they found her in the prison and brought her home by force.

At his trial Saint Paul was sentenced to banishment from the city. Again they urged Saint Thekla to consent to the marriage, but she would not change her mind. Neither the tears of her mother, nor her wrath, nor the threats of the prefect could separate Saint Thekla from her love for the Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Her mother in an insane rage demanded from the judges a death sentence against her unyielding daughter, and Saint Thekla was sentenced to be burned. Without flinching, the holy martyr went into the fire and made the Sign of the Cross over herself. At this moment the Savior appeared to her, blessing her present deed, and inexpressible joy filled her holy soul.

The flames of the fire shot up high, but the martyr was surrounded by a light and the flames did not touch her. Thunder boomed, and a strong downpour of rain and



hail extinguished the fire. The torturers scattered in fear. Saint Thekla, kept safe by the Lord, left the city and with the help of a certain Christian youth, searched for the Apostle Paul. The holy apostle and his companions, among whom was Saint Barnabas, were hidden in a cave not far from the city, praying fervently, that the Lord would strengthen Saint Thekla in her sufferings.

After this, Saint Thekla went with them preaching the Gospel in Antioch. In this city she was pursued by a certain dignitary named Alexander, who was captivated by her beauty. Saint Thekla refused his offer of marriage, and so she was condemned to death for being a Christian. Twice they set loose hungry wild animals upon her, but they would not touch the holy virgin. Instead, they lay down meekly and licked her feet.

The Providence of God preserved the holy martyr unharmed through all her torments. Finally, they tied her to two oxen and began to chase her with red-hot rods, but the strong cords broke asunder like cobwebs, and the oxen ran off, leaving Saint Thekla unharmed. The people began shouting, “Great is the God of the Christians!” The prefect himself became terrified, realizing that the holy martyr was being kept safe by the Almighty God, Whom she served. He then gave orders to set free the servant of God Thekla.

With the blessing of the Apostle Paul, Saint Thekla then settled in a desolate region of Isaurian Seleucia and dwelt there for many years, constantly preaching the Word of God and healing the sick through her prayer. Saint Thekla converted many pagans to Christ, and the Church appropriately names her as “Equal-to-the-Apostles.” Even a pagan priest, trying to assault her purity and punished for his impudence, was brought by her to holy Baptism. More than once the Enemy of the race of man tried to destroy Saint Thekla through people blinded by sin, but the power of God always preserved this faithful servant of Christ.

When Saint Thekla was already a ninety-year-old woman, pagan sorcerers became incensed at her for treating the sick for free. They were unable to comprehend that the saint was healing the sick by the power of the grace of Christ, and they presumed that the virgin-goddess Artemis was her special helper. Envious of Saint Thekla, they sent their followers to defile her. When they came near her, Saint Thekla cried out for help to Christ the Savior, and a rock split open and hid the holy virgin, the bride of Christ. Thus did Saint Thekla offer up her holy soul to the Lord.

The holy Church glorifies the Protomartyr Thekla as “ the glory of women and guide for the suffering, opening up the way through every torment.” From of old many churches were dedicated to her, one of which was built at Constantinople by the holy Equal of the Apostles Constantine (May 21). The Protomartyr Thekla, a prayerful intercessor for ascetics, is also invoked during the tonsure of women into monasticism. (*from oca.org*)

A Word From the Holy Fathers

I ask you to try something. If someone grieves you, or dishonors you, or takes something of yours, then pray like this: “Lord, we are all your creatures. Pity your servants, and turn them to repentance,” and then you will perceptibly bear grace in your soul. Induce your heart to love your enemies, and the Lord, seeing your good will, shall help you in all things, and will Himself show you experience. But whoever thinks evil of his enemies does not have love for God and has not known God.

– St. Silouan the Athonite



Do you want to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable families around the world? Join our IOCC team at the Baltimore Running Festival on October 21, 2017 and help raise money for those in need in places like Syria, Greece, and

Ethiopia, and the US Gulf Coast. For the past five years at the Baltimore Running Festival, IOCC’s team has included a wide range of participants, from kindergarteners to an Orthodox priest and retired grandmothers! All abilities of walkers and runners are welcome, as there is a range of participation options: a Kids’ Fun Run, 5k, Team Relay, Half Marathon, and Full Marathon. Signing up is easy at www.iocc.org/baltimore.

Saint Silouan the Athonite

Saint Silouan was born Simeon Ivanovich Antonov in 1866 to pious Orthodox parents in the Tambov region of Russia. His youth was much like other village young people of his day and much like the lives of many youth today. While he was attracted at times to the spiritual life and seeking God, he was more attracted by the pleasures of village life. He worked as a carpenter on the estate of a nearby noble and spent his free time drinking vodka with his friends, playing his concertina and socializing with the village girls. It was said that he could drink three bottles of vodka without feeling any effects. Young, strong and handsome he

was popular with these girls and one evening fell into the sin of fornication. On one occasion a young man who had too much to drink and wanting to show off for the girls, threatened Simeon and tried to take his concertina. In Simeon's own words:

At first I thought of giving in to the fellow but then I was ashamed of how the girls would laugh at me, so I hit him a great blow to the chest. His body shot away and he fell backwards with a heavy thud in the middle of the road. Froth and blood trickled from his mouth. All the onlookers were horrified. So was I. "I've killed him," I thought, and stood rooted to the spot... It was over half an hour before he could rise to his feet.

One day, shortly before he began his required military service, he dozed off to a light sleep and dreamt that a snake crawled down his throat. He woke up to hear a voice saying: "Just as you found it loathsome to swallow a snake in your dream, so I find your ways ugly to look upon". Simeon later reported he saw no one but was convinced that it was the beautiful voice of the Mother of God coming to rescue him from the evil pit his life had become. This vision/dream would alter the rest of his life, he began to be ashamed of how he was living his life. As an example of the change in him, one evening, while serving his military service, he and a few of his friends went to a tavern where there was much loud music, dancing and carousing. Simeon sat quietly and hardly spoke which led his companions to inquire why he was so quiet. Simeon said:

I'm thinking that here we sit in a tavern, eating, drinking vodka, listening to music and enjoying ourselves, while at this very hour on Mount Athos they are in church for vespers and will be at prayer all night. And I'm wondering which of us will put up the best defense before God's Judgment Seat – them or us?

At the age of twenty-seven in 1892 he left his native Russia and came to [Mount Athos](#), where he became a [monk](#) at the [Monastery of St. Panteleimon](#) and was given the name *Silouan*, the Russian version of the [Biblical](#) name Silvanus. He was given the obedience (work duty) at the monastery mill, sleeping little, fasting severely and praying continually. He struggled against sinful memories from his past life and practiced the Jesus Prayer. Though barely literate, he received the grace of unceasing [prayer](#) and saw [Christ](#) in a vision. After long years of spiritual trial, he acquired great [humility](#) and inner stillness. He prayed and wept for the whole world as for himself, and he put the highest value on love for enemies. He was never ordained to the diaconate or priesthood but continued his ministry as a monk in which he devoted himself to praying for all people.

A monk is a man who prays for the whole world..... I tell you that when we have no more men of prayer the world will come to an end and great disaster will befall – as, indeed, is happening already.

Having repented and received God’s mercy for his past life, Father Silouan felt great compassion for all people. He wrote: “*But when a man sees in himself the light of deliverance from sin there awakens in his soul a mighty compassion for all who ‘fall short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:23) and prayer for the ‘whole Adam’ fills his being.*”

After a period of time, Father Silouan was appointed one of the stewards of St. Panteleimon’s monastery, helping in the administration of a monastery with over 1,000 monks and overseeing 200 laymen who worked in the monastery’s many workshops. After assigning the work tasks for the day, Father Silouan would return to his room to pray and weep for the men who had left their families in their villages to seek employment in far off Mount Athos. He wrote:

He who has the Holy Spirit in him, however slight a degree, sorrows day and night for all mankind. His heart is filled with pity for all God’s creatures, more especially for those who do not know God, or who resist Him, and therefore are bound for the fire of torment. For them, more than for himself, he prays day and night, that all may repent and know the Lord.

Father Silouan died in the monastery after an illness on [September 24](#), 1938. He was [glorified](#) by the [Ecumenical Patriarchate](#) in 1987 and his relics are enshrined in the St. Panteleimon’s Monastery on Mount Athos. His writings were edited by his disciple and pupil, [Archimandrite Sophrony](#) who later established a monastery in England and became known as a staretz himself. (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, 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, 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. Nectaros 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.)