

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

Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

November 26, 2017 – 25th Sunday After Pentecost | Venerable Alypius the Stylite of Adrianopolis

Saint Alypius the Stylite was born in the city of Adrianopolis in Paphlagonia. His mother, a Christian, was widowed early, and she sent her son to be educated by Bishop Theodore. She distributed her substance to the poor, then began to live an ascetic life near the church as a deaconess.

Saint Alypius, from his early years, wanted to devote his life to God and yearned for the solitary life, although Bishop Theodore would not give him permission to do so. Once, when Saint Alypius was accompanying his bishop to Constantinople, the holy Martyr Euphemia (September 16) appeared to him in a vision, summoning Saint Alypius to return to Adrianopolis and found a church in her name. With contributions offered by believers in Adrianopolis, Saint Alypius did build a church in the name of the holy



Martyr Euphemia, on the site of a dilapidated pagan temple infested by legions of devils. Beside the church, under the open sky, the saint erected a pillar over a pagan tomb. For fifty-three years Saint Alypius struggled upon the pillar, praying to God and teaching those who came to him. The demons which infested the pagan cemetery fell upon the ascetic by night and pelted him with stones. Saint Alypius, wanted nothing to stand in the way of the attacks of the spirits of darkness, then even took down the boards that served him as a roof, protecting him from the rain and wind. In the face of the saint's conquering steadfastness, the demons fled the place forever, which had been sanctified by his deed of voluntary martyrdom.

Fourteen years before his death, Saint Alypius was no longer able to stand. He was compelled to lie on his side because of the weakness of his legs, and endured grievous sufferings with humble gratitude. Around the saint's pillar two monasteries sprang up: a men's monastery on the one side, and a women's monastery on the other. Saint Alypius introduced strict monastic rules for both monasteries and he directed both monasteries until his death. Saint Alypius reposed in the year 640, at age 118. The body of the venerable stylite was buried in the church he founded in honor of the holy Martyr Euphemia. The relics of the saint of God healed many of those who came in faith. (*from oca.org*)

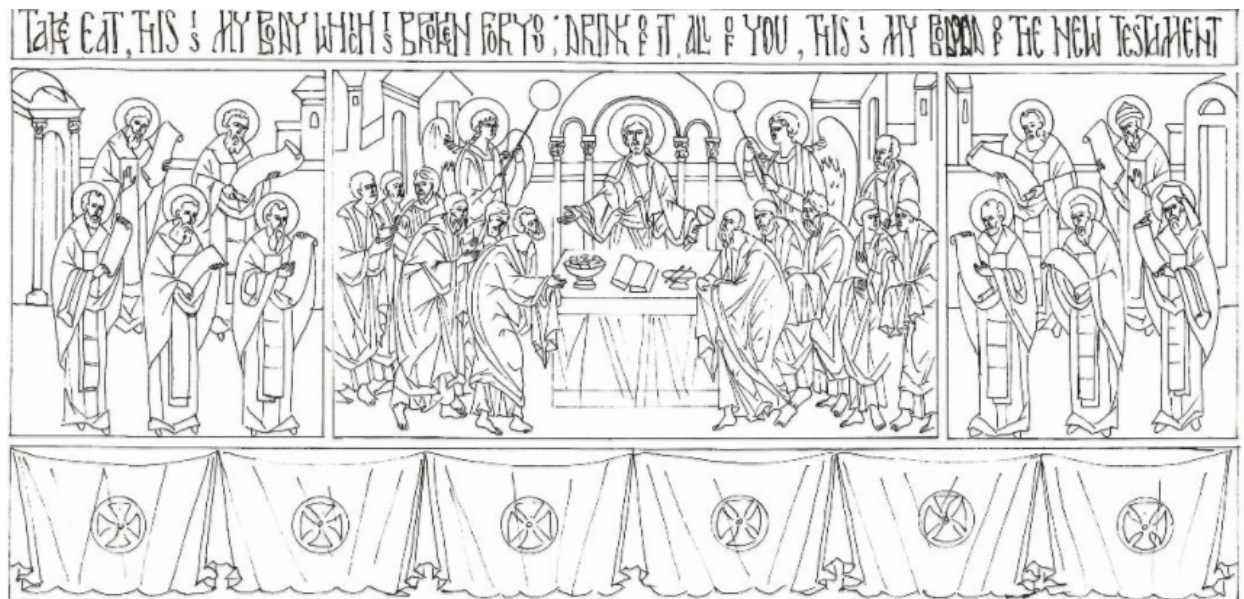
Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:1-6

Brethren, I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in us all.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 13:10-17

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise *herself* up. But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead *it* away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has

bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.



ARCHANGEL STUDIO - MICHAEL K. BELUCK - 2017

Beauty Will Save the World (Dostoyevsky, The Idiot)

We are moving forward with 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 the altar area). Icons of 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 (either side of the Banquet already in the Holy Place) will cost \$2,000 each. We will also be moving Gorazd of Prague, a Bishop whose icon currently hangs in the Nave, into the Holy Place with an icon of John of Damascus being put in his place, which can be sponsored for \$600. Four new icons will be completed in the nave, for \$750 each. The writing above the icons, as well as the "tablecloth" below will be completed, and costs have been combined with the sponsorship of the Bishops.

The icons will be installed in 2018. The last time we offered this opportunity to glorify God in His church, the response was tremendous. We are ready to collect funds to complete the project, so if you are interested in participating, please contact Josh Moore by phone at (541) 601-8413 or at jgmoore01@gmail.com.

Please see the Church website for up-to-date sponsorship information and pictures of the icon work to be completed. Any donation of \$500 or more is eligible for a memorial plaque in the social hall. **Currently** we have: Pledged/Received Funds: \$10,957 | Remaining Needed: \$15,443.

The Bishops to be placed in the Holy Place are currently planned to be (\$2,000 to sponsor one): Basil the Great, Gregory the Great, John Chrysostom, Cyprian of Carthage, Athanasius the Great, Cyril of Alexandria, Leo the Great, Polycarp, Ignatius of Antioch (sponsored), and Peter Moghila.

2 Seraphim in the Holy Place (\$1,700 to sponsor; 1 sponsored).

John of Damascus in the nave (\$600 to sponsor)

In the Narthex: Pr. Daniel, David, Elijah, and Melchizedek. (\$750 to sponsor).

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Bodily exertion causes the body to protest and complain and react, but it is unable to make the soul lax in prayer. You simply turn the radio up louder, you listen to the music, you enjoy it and you don't hear the complaints. I mean that by intensifying the prayer, the prayer neutralizes the weariness. Before complaining about your bodily exhaustion, start praying, because when you complain grace departs and you are left with your own strength. If you say 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me' three times, you continue joyfully. God sees you and stretches out His hand to help you. From that moment on, true communion with Him commences. When bodily exertion - prostrations, vigils and sacrifices - takes place with love, with passionate eros, the body is not harmed. When this effort is made freely and with love towards the loved one, towards Christ, you show how much you love Him.

No one takes account of exertion and fatigue for the person he loves. For example, a monk climbs up a mountain, he struggles and sweats and tires himself out. 'Why did you do it?' people ask him. 'For the person I love,' he replies. 'Because I knew that I would make him happy.' The person with faith displays his love, his devotion and his adoration of Christ in tangible ways. That's why bodily exertion is made. That's why we make prostrations. Not to gain anything, but because your love for Christ doesn't allow you to do otherwise. Perhaps someone will say, "I have love in my heart." That's all very well, but prostrations and all the other exercises are still required, because, although they are external forms, through those formal actions we are able to penetrate to the substance. If we don't penetrate to the heart of the matter, all is a waste of time. Should I turn somersaults now for God to see and be pleased? God takes no delight in these things. Nor do we add anything to Christ with the worship which we offer Him. It is we who receive the fruits of our efforts; we have need of those things. There are a thousand heresies about and you see the kind of torments they subject the body to. They have gymnastic exercises where you stick your feet up and your head down. They have the most incredible bodily contortions and the attempt in this

way to affect the soul. We are not suggesting anything of that sort. But when prostrations are made for Christ, grace works directly on the soul and brings penitence, serenity, peace and joy. But these things come with divine grace and then the body is benefited also.

There used to be rulers and slaves. In order to demonstrate their subjection and respect towards their rulers, the slaves would bow down before their masters. Thus with our prostrations we demonstrate that we are humble servants of God. We acknowledge our lowliness and display our respect in a tangible way. With prostrations the Christian is humbled, and this helps for the grace of God to come upon him. When grace comes, his heart is set on fire. The fire of love makes sacrifices. Prostrations are a sacrifice and offering - an offering of love and worship. And the whole person participates in the worship, body and soul.

Don't take pity on your body. Chastise it. You can't understand what the fire of love is. You need to make sacrifice, exercise - spiritual and bodily exercise. Without exercise nothing is achieved. Subject yourself to a spiritual program, for example, a rule of prayer, a cycle of church services, and so on, and do not diverge from it. Don't put off for tomorrow. Don't abandon it even on account of illness, only for mortal illness.... Body and soul participate in the worship of God. Mind and heart are with Christ and the body too is with Christ. Make the prostrations with piety and love and don't count them. It's better to make ten good prostrations rather than a large number without zeal, without worship and without divine eros. Make as many as you can, but not pseudo-prostrations and pseudo-prayers. Don't offer external forms to God. God demands that what we do for Him be done 'with all the soul and all the heart.' Luke 10:27.

Prayer should be said all day with love - prayer, hymns and prostrations in turn. And the prostrations which we make to our Holy Lady (the Theotokos) are directed to Christ, because Our Lady carries Christ within her. Christ is the Savior of our souls and our Holy Lady is our mother, our great intercessor. Prostrations are also gymnastics. And - even though we shouldn't think of this at all - there is no better gymnastics for the abdomen, the bowels, the chest, the heart and the spinal column. It is highly beneficial, so why shouldn't we do it? When this exercise is done for the worship of God and the soul achieves this worship, it is filled with joy and becomes calm and peaceful. This is everything. At the same time, of course, it also benefits the body. The body follows and is benefited in turn. Do you see? Peace and calm come to the soul and good functioning is ensured for all our bodily systems - circulatory, digestive, respiratory and endocrine - all of which have a direct relation with our soul.

– St. Porphyrios, *Wounded by Love*

**ALSO COMMEMORATED TODAY:
HOLY NEW MARTYR GEORGE OF CHIOS**

George was born in Chios to Paraskeva and Agerou. When he was 18 months old his mother died, and he was brought up by his stepmother. At ten years old, George was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker named Vessetzes, with whom he traveled to the island of Psara to build an iconostasis for the Church of Saint Nicholas. While in Psara, George became acquainted with some other young boys and left the island without notifying his master. The boys ended up in the city of Kavala where they attempted to steal some fruit from a garden, but were caught and handed over to the judge of the city. Frightened, young George embraced Islam, was circumcised and named Ahmed.

Meanwhile his parents and family lost all trace of him until one day a ship arrived in Chios carrying watermelons and George, now an apprenticed seaman, was seen getting off the ship by a relative who heard him addressed as Ahmed. When the relative questioned George about this, he remained silent. On another occasion George went to his father's house but did not find anyone home. On a third attempt, dressed as an Orthodox Christian, George met his father who burst into tears when he saw him and said, "It is better to see him dead than in such a miserable state."

George too was in tears, for he had repented of his conversion to Islam and confessed his faith in Jesus Christ. After staying home for a few days George was taken by his father to the city of Kydonies in Asia Minor and placed with a good Orthodox Christian farmer outside the city, out of fear of the Turks for renouncing Islam. George was still ten years old at this time. In Kydonies George felt safe and content for ten years. Despite the passage of time his father still feared for George and wanted him to leave Kydonies on a Russian ship, but George refused to leave believing he was perfectly safe. Rather, he moved to the city of Kydonies to live with an elderly Christian lady who became like a mother to him, and he told her everything that happened to him. Two years later George became engaged to be married. The parents of George's fiancée asked his new "mother" about George's background. Unwisely, she told them George's entire story. This story spread to the entire family. One day George quarreled with his fiancée's brother over some money matters, so he reported George to the authorities as an apostate from Islam. When friends of George heard of this they urged George to hide and save himself. George refused.

Soon men arrived and took George into custody and brought him before the judge. When asked why he abandoned Islam and returned to the faith he previously denied, George replied: "I neither denied my faith nor did I accept yours, but when



I was a child I was forced to accept it. However I never changed my mind. I was always an Orthodox Christian and lived as an Orthodox Christian. And I always hated your religion as I do now. Moreover, I despise it and in no way will I accept it." When the judge asked for his name, he expected George to say Ahmed, but understanding it was a trap, he replied it was "George" and that with this name he wanted to die. After flattering him and giving him offers to deny his faith, the judge warned also that if he wished to die it would be a very cruel death. George replied, "Kill me. I accept my death with joy." George was then placed in prison from November 8th until November 25th. Christians meanwhile prayed for

George to receive strength to endure till the end. This comforted George while in prison. On November 24th George was sentenced to die on November 26th. George thanked God and requested a priest to come to him. George confessed his sins to the priest and received Holy Communion.

On the evening of November 25th, 1807, an all-night vigil took place on behalf of George by fellow Orthodox Christians, and the next day a large crowd of Orthodox gathered outside the prison, which made the Turks nervous and frightened. Soldiers with swords went out to scatter them, but they did not go far. On his way to execution, George asked all the Orthodox he happened to meet along the way for forgiveness. One of them, who served the Turkish aga, offered George his arms to wear and become a servant of the aga, in order to take his place and die for Christ. George refused this offer, saying, "I denied Christ and I die for His name."

Saying this, he ran ahead of the executioner, repeating over and over again the prayer of Jesus, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me the sinner." Muslims urged George to repent and remain a Muslim, but George shouted, "No! No! I am an Orthodox Christian and I wish to die an Orthodox Christian." Hearing this, the executioner shot George in the back with his rifle, causing much blood to pour out of the wound. The executioner then ordered George to bend his head whereupon he struck his neck with the sword. George did not fall from this, so after a number of strikes George's head finally came off. Until his final breath George repeated the prayer of Jesus. He was only twenty-two years old. Faithful Christians had him buried on the deserted island of Nisopoula, near Aivali. Years later his relics were translated to a church built in his honor over the place of his martyrdom in Kydonies. Today he is greatly honored in Lesvos and Chios, where there are churches built in his honor, as well as in Santorini and Syros. (from johnsanidopoulos.com)

Parish Council Meeting

All parish members are encouraged to attend the next Parish Council meeting today, from 12:30-1:30 pm. Topics will cover the following:

- the potential for one of our parishioners to reside at the Brick House and be the parish caretaker
- details for the Sunday that St Nicholas will visit the parish children
- recent updates to the parish website
- review the revised emergency response plan
- continuation of the discussion of our church music from the 28 Oct meeting

The council and all who are able to participate will meet in the Parish Hall at 12:30.



December Anniversaries and Birthdays

Anniversaries:

Ramius & Anna Connour 1st

Birthdays:

Katrina Robinson 2 nd	Ronnie Robinson 2 nd	Luke Cooper 5 th
Kara David 9 th	Andrew Dewey 11 th	Jocelyn Gray 12 th
William Howl 14 th	Gabriela Howl 14 th	Andrew (AJ) McNeil 16 th
Barbara Maston 23 rd	Tina Harris 26 th	James Stiver 27 th



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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, Presbytera 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 Domieniecki, 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. 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.)