

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.**



October 2, 2016 – 15th Sunday After Pentecost Hieromartyr Cyprian & Virgin-martyr Justina

Hieromartyr Cyprian, Virgin Martyr Justina and Martyr Theoctistus suffered for Christ at Nicomedia in the year 304. St Cyprian was a pagan and a native of Antioch. From his early childhood his misguided parents dedicated him to the service of the pagan gods. From age seven until thirty, Cyprian studied at the most outstanding centers of paganism: on Mount Olympus, in the cities of Argos and Tauropolis, in the Egyptian city of Memphis, and at Babylon. Once he attained eminent wisdom in pagan philosophy and the sorcerer's craft, he was consecrated into the pagan priesthood on Mount Olympus. Having discovered great power by summoning unclean spirits, he beheld the Prince of Darkness himself, and spoke with him and received from him a host of demons in attendance.

After returning to Antioch, Cyprian was revered by the pagans as a prominent pagan priest, amazing people by his ability to cast spells, to summon pestilence and plagues, and to conjure up the dead. He brought many people to ruin, teaching them to serve demons and how to cast magic spells.

The holy virgin Justina lived in Antioch. After turning her own father and mother away from pagan error and leading them to the true faith in Christ, she dedicated

herself to the Heavenly Bridegroom and spent her time in fasting and prayer. When the youth Aglaides proposed marriage to her, the saint refused, for she wished to remain a virgin. Aglaides sought Cyprian's help and asked for a magic spell to charm Justina into marriage. But no matter what Cyprian tried, he could accomplish nothing, since the saint overcame all the wiles of the devil through her prayers and fasting.

Cyprian sent demons to attack the holy virgin, trying to arouse fleshly passions in her, but she dispelled them by the power of the Sign of the Cross and by fervent prayer to the Lord. Even though one of the demonic princes and Cyprian himself, assumed various guises by the power of sorcery, they were not able to sway St Justina, who was guarded by her firm faith in Christ. All the spells dissipated, and the demons fled at the mere mention of the saint's name.

Cyprian, in a rage, sent down pestilence and plague upon Justina's family and upon all the city, but this was thwarted by her prayer. Cyprian's soul, corrupted by its domination over people and by his incantations, was shown in all the depth of his downfall, and also the abyss of nothingness of the evil that he served. "If you take fright at even the mere shadow of the Cross and the Name of Christ makes you tremble," said Cyprian to Satan, "then what will you do when Christ Himself stands before you?" The devil then flung himself upon the pagan priest who had begun to repudiate him, and attempted to beat and strangle him.

St Cyprian then first tested for himself the power of the Sign of the Cross and the Name of Christ, guarding himself from the fury of the enemy. Afterwards, with deep repentance he went to the local bishop Anthimus and threw all of his books into the flames. The very next day, he went into the church, and did not want to leave it, though he had not yet been baptized.

By his efforts to follow a righteous manner of life, St Cyprian discerned the great power of fervent faith in Christ, and made up for more than thirty years of service to Satan. Seven days after Baptism he was ordained reader, on the twelfth day, sub-deacon, on the thirtieth, deacon. After a year, he was ordained priest. In a short time St Cyprian was elevated to the rank of bishop.

The Hieromartyr Cyprian converted so many pagans to Christ that in his diocese there was no one left to offer sacrifice to idols, and the pagan temples fell into disuse. St Justina withdrew to a monastery and there was chosen Abbess.

During the persecution against Christians under the emperor Diocletian, Bishop Cyprian and Abbess Justina were arrested and brought to Nicomedia, where after fierce tortures they were beheaded with the sword. St Cyprian, fearful that the holy virgin's courage might falter if she saw him put to death, asked for time to pray. St Justina joyfully inclined her neck and was beheaded first.

The soldier Theoctistus, seeing the guiltless sufferings of St Justina, fell at Cyprian's feet and declared himself a Christian, and was beheaded with them.
(from oca.org)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 4:6-15

BRETHREN, it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. *We are* hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present *us* with you. For all things *are* for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 6:31-36

The Lord said, "Just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

How are we 'God's offspring' (Acts 17:29)? In what way are we 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet 1:4)? We do not limit our boast merely to the fact that Christ wished to take us into an intimate relationship with Him. No, the truth of the matter is evident to us all. For 'the divine nature' is God the Word together with the flesh. And we are His 'offspring' even though He is God by nature, on account of His taking the same flesh as ourselves. Therefore the mode of the relationship rests on likeness. For just as He is intimately related to the Father, and the Father through the identity of nature is intimately related to Him, so we too are intimately

related to Him – in that He became man – and He to us. We are united to the Father through Him as through a mediator. For Christ is, so to speak, a frontier between supreme divinity and humanity, since both are present within Him. And containing within Himself, as it were, these two vastly discrete things, He is united on the one hand to God the Father, since He is God by nature, and on the other to human beings, since He is truly human.

– St Cyril of Alexandria

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 91:

We Cannot Forgive Enough

“Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?” (Matthew 18:21 RSV)



Our society is filled with numbers and statistics. Everything has a price, for example. Newspapers are filled with ads that reveal costs as well as pages of “economic” data that are in reality, just numbers. The sports pages are crammed with box scores and player statistics. Professional sports teams are now relying heavily on what they call “analytics” defined as, the discovery and communication

of meaningful patterns in data, that is, in the statistics and numbers.

In an interesting exchange between the Apostle Peter and Our Lord in Matthew 18, numbers play an important part. The Apostle wants to know the answer to a question about “How many?” How many times should I forgive my brother for sinning against me? The Apostle suggests that it be seven times. Our Lord, however, replies with an obviously exaggerated expectation: seventy times seven is the number of times to forgive that brother.

Perhaps Jesus’ reply caused some laughter among those listening to this exchange. Seventy times seven? The numbers are simple enough to figure out: 490 times! The laughter might come in the understanding that this figure is a suggestion that no one can ever run out of times to forgive someone else. Forgiveness here is essentially infinite – it never, ever runs out. Our Lord is saying in effect, “You don’t need to bother counting. True forgiveness does not keep score.”

We have all heard the saying “To err is human; to forgive divine.” There is truth to that saying. Forgiveness is, to put it simply, God’s way. God has devised a way to offer full and complete forgiveness for all of our sins. For those of us who live

in the state of this forgiveness, we then offer our brothers and sisters that forgiveness. It is a rather simple stewardship: we have been fully forgiven, and we share that forgiveness with everyone else. Such forgiveness actually costs us nothing. It does not reduce the amount we are forgiven by God, nor do we need to find a store of materials to use in order to forgive.

Forgiveness does not keep score. Forgiveness is an opportunity to restore broken relationships. Forgiveness is an opportunity to begin again, from the start. The words of Jesus: “...forgive, and you will be forgiven ...good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back” (Luke 6:37-38 RSV). (from acrod.org)

Also Commemorated Today: Blessed Andrew the Fool-For-Christ at Constantinople



Blessed Andrew, Fool-for-Christ, was a Slav and lived in the tenth century at Constantinople. From his early years, he loved God’s Church and the Holy Scriptures. Once during a dream, the saint beheld a vision of two armies. In the one were men in radiant garb, in the other, black and fiercesome devils. An angel of God, who held wondrous crowns, said to Andrew, that these crowns were not adornments from the earthly world, but rather a celestial treasure, with which the Lord rewards His warriors, victorious over the dark hordes. “Proceed with this good deed,” the angel said to Andrew. “Be a fool for My sake and you will receive much in the day of My Kingdom.”

The saint perceived that it was the Lord Himself summoning him to this deed. From that time Andrew began to go about the streets in rags, as though his mind had become muddled. For many years the saint endured mockery and insults. With indifference he underwent beatings, hunger and thirst, cold and heat, begging alms and giving them away to the poor. For his great forbearance and humility the saint received from the Lord the gift of prophecy and wisdom, saving many from spiritual perils, and he unmasked the impiety of many.

While praying at the Blachernae church, St Andrew beheld the Most Holy Mother of God, holding her veil over those praying under her Protection (October 1). Blessed Andrew died in the year 936. (from oca.org)

THE BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE

Before Divine Liturgy last Sunday Fr. Joseph blessed the marriage of John and Molly Edgington. In the background, peeking through the Royal Door you can see Deacon Stephen Hall, who, along with his wife Nancy, returned to St. Thomas to see the blessing. Patty Blaydoe is singing in the foreground. John spent many years standing in the old "garage church" before St. Thomas the New was constructed. Many years John and Molly!



Joy at St. Thomas

On September 17, Doug and Lauren Chadwick's son Robert (Michael) was baptized into Christ's mystical body, the Church. The happy family is pictured here with Robert's Godmother, Kristina Gzikowski.





ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS

OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2016 College Student Sunday Encyclical
October 2, 2016

"Come and See"

Beloved Clergy, Godly Monastics, and Blessed Faithful,

We greet you with joy as we announce the date for **College Student Sunday**, benefiting **Orthodox Christian Fellowship**. To support the incredible efforts of our students, College Student Sunday will be the first Sunday of October, running in conjunction with OCF's Orthodox Awareness Month. This year, the date falls on **OCTOBER 2**.

Orthodox Christian Fellowship continues to provide students with opportunities to encounter Christ and grow in their Orthodox faith through their growing network of on campus OCF chapters led by talented students, clergy, and lay advisors as well as through programs such as regional retreats, College Conference, Real Break, and the Summer Leadership Institute.

OCF continues to make every effort to connect new freshmen to campus chapters and local parishes through the **First Forty Days Initiative**, which involves extensive effort from our student leaders and spiritual advisors to contact every incoming freshman within their first forty days on campus. We wholeheartedly pray for and strongly encourage your support of these noble efforts by ensuring that the contact information for your parish's graduating high school seniors be sent each and every year to the OCF National Office for dissemination to our dedicated local chapters!

Additionally, with the greatest sincerity and earnestness, we encourage your committed financial support of this fundamental ministry which functions **completely on the contributions of caring Orthodox faithful like yourselves**.

We are asking that a special collection be taken on College Student Sunday in support of the good work of OCF, and we encourage the entire faithful--clergy, parents, grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles, and friends of our treasured college students--to be generous in your offering of support to this ministry on their behalf. If for some reason October 2 is not a good date for your parish, please make the collection on the Sunday before or after. Donations may be sent to the OCF National Office at 50 Goddard Ave., Brookline, MA 02445 or online at www.ocf.net/donate.

May our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ who calls all of us to contribute to the ministry of His Church guide and strengthen all of our cherished and blessed Orthodox college students.

+ Bishop Gregory

+Bishop Gregory of Nyssa - bishopgregoryofnyssa@gmail.com

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A Message from Michael Pacurar, Co-Founder of Pan Orthodox United

I co-founded Pan Orthodox United, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created by young people for young people, because I believe in focusing on the good. I know that every year more and more young people leave Christianity, are filled with doubt and desire, and embark on spiritual or worldly quests to find themselves. I know this, because I am one of those people. I have doubted the existence of God, went months without going to church, and am always struggling for truth. I believe that most people that have left organized religion will one day be curious and contemplate things like their purpose in life, and the possibilities of the afterlife. I believe that we need to be there when they do, to give an Orthodox perspective on life and what happens after. I know that if we come together to provide resources, answer questions, and build relationships, young people will stop leaving and those that have left will start coming back home. I did.

For this reason, we recently outlined a new program called Solve 60. We want to reverse the trend of young people leaving Orthodoxy by raising the level of discussion, education, and involvement. Our plan has a few manageable steps, but it will take everyone working together to make it happen. See <https://panorthodoxunited.org/solve-60/> for details.

- Michael

[Ed. – This is in reference to the fact that a recent Pew Survey revealed that 60% of our Orthodox College Students leave the Church FOREVER during their College years. This group is trying to develop programming to prevent and even bring back those who have fallen away.]

The Diocesan Sobor Is Fast Approaching

Please lift up the delegates in your prayers as they gather October 10-12 in Johnstown to carry forward the work of our diocese.

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, Alicia Barosio and family, Millie Borys, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Cary Cooper, Curtis Cooper, Tina Crull, Ron Dominiacki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, Alex Holthus, 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, Alex & Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, John Sparks, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Daria Virvan, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Rdr. 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 Daria Virvan, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)