

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

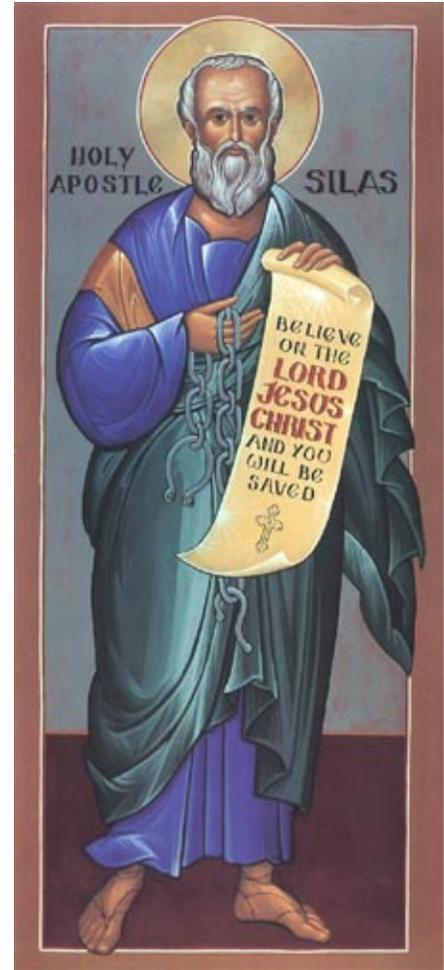
Liturgy 10:00 AM.

**July 30, 2017 – 8th Sunday After
Pentecost | Apostles Silas, Silvanus,**

Crescens, Epenetus, and Andronicus of the LXX

The Holy Apostles of the Seventy Silas, Silvanus, Crescens, Epenetus and Andronicus were disciples of the Savior.

Saint Silas was a respected figure in the original Church at Jerusalem, one of the “chief men among the brethren” (Acts 15:22). The Council of the Apostles was convened at Jerusalem in the year 51 to deal with the question of whether Gentile Christian converts should be required to observe the Mosaic Law. The Apostles sent a message with Paul and Barnabas to the Christians of Antioch, giving the decision of the Council that Christians of Gentile origin did not have to observe the prescriptions of the Mosaic Law. Nonetheless, they were told that they must refrain from partaking of foods offered to idols, from things strangled and from blood, to refrain from fornication (Acts 15:20-29). Together with Saints Paul and Barnabas, the Council of the Apostles sent Saints Silas and Jude to explain the message in greater detail, since they both were filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Saint Jude was later sent back to Jerusalem, but Saint Silas remained at



Antioch and zealously assisted Saint Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, on his missionary journeys preaching the Gospel. They visited Syria, Cilicia, Macedonia.

In the city of Philippi they were accused of inciting unrest among the people, and for this they were arrested, beaten with rods, and then thrown into prison. At midnight, when the saints were at prayer, suddenly there was a strong earthquake, their chains fell off from them and the doors of the prison opened. The prison guard, supposing that the prisoners had fled, wanted to kill himself, but was stopped by the Apostle Paul. Then, he fell down trembling at the feet of the saints, and with faith accepted their preaching about Christ. He then led them out of the prison and took them to his own home, where he washed their wounds, and was baptized together with all his household.

From Philippi Saints Paul and Silas proceeded on to the cities of Amphipolis, Apollonia and Thessalonica. In each city they made new converts to Christ and built up the Church.

At Corinth the holy Apostle Silas was consecrated as bishop, and worked many miracles and signs, and there he finished his life.

The Holy Apostle Silvanus preached the Word of God together with the chief Apostles Peter and Paul. In his First Epistle, the holy Apostle Peter makes mention of him: “By Silvanus, a faithful brother to you, as I suppose, I have written briefly...” (1 Peter 5:12). Saint Silvanus was made bishop at Thessalonica and died there a martyr, having undergone many sorrows and misfortunes for the Lord’s sake.

The Holy Apostle Crescens is mentioned by the holy Apostle Paul (2 Tim. 4:10), saying that Crescens had gone preaching to Galatia. He was made bishop there, and afterwards he preached the Word of God in Gaul (modern-day France). In the city of Vienna (modern Austria) the holy Apostle Crescens established his student Zacharias as bishop. Having returned to Galatia, he died as a martyr under the emperor Trajan (98-117).

The Holy Apostle Epenetus was made bishop at Carthage. In his Epistle to the Romans, the holy Apostle Paul writes: “Greet my dear Epenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ” (Rom. 16:5).

The Apostle Andronicus is mentioned by Saint Paul: “Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, ... who are of note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ, before me” (Rom. 16:7). The holy Apostle Andronicus was bishop in Pannonia (modern-day Hungary).

Sts Andronicus and Junia are also commemorated on May 17. (*from oca.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1:10-18

Brethren, I plead with you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household*, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 14:14-22

At that time, when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

The Dormition Fast

The Dormition fast was established as preceding the great feasts of the Transfiguration of the Lord and of the Dormition of the Mother of God. It lasts two weeks — from August 1–August 14. The Dormition fast comes down to us from the early days of Christianity.

We find a clear reference to the Dormition fast in a conversation of Leo the Great from around the year 450 A.D.: "The Church fasts are situated in the year in such a

way that a special abstinence is prescribed for each time. Thus, for spring there is the spring fast — the Forty Days Great Lent; for summer there is the summer fast [the Apostles' fast]; for autumn there is the autumn fast, in the seventh month [Dormition fast]; for winter there is the winter fast [Nativity fast].”

St. Symeon of Thessalonica writes that, “The fast in August [Dormition fast] was established in honor of the Mother of God the Word; Who, foreknowing Her repose, ascetically labored and fasted for us as always, although She was holy and immaculate, and had no need for fasting. Thus, She especially prayed for us in preparation for being transported from this life to the future life, when Her blessed soul would be united through the Divine Spirit with Her Son. Therefore, we also should fast and praise Her, emulating Her life, urging Her thereby to pray for us. Some, by the way, say that this fast was instituted on the occasion of two feasts — the Transfiguration and the Dormition. I also consider it necessary to remember these two feasts — one which gives us light, and the other which is merciful to us and intercedes for us.”

The Dormition fast is not as strict as the Great Fast, but it is stricter than the Apostle's and Nativity fasts.

On Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays of the Dormition fast, the Church rubrics prescribe xerophagy, that is, the strictest fast of uncooked food (without oil); on Tuesdays and Thursdays, “with cooked food, but with no oil”; on Saturdays and Sundays wine and oil are allowed.

Until the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, when grapes and apples are blessed in the churches, the Church requires that we abstain from these fruits. According to the tradition of the Holy Fathers, “If one of the brethren should eat the grapes before the feast, then let him be forbidden for obedience's sake to taste of the grapes during the entire month of August.”

On the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the Church rubrics allow fish. After that day, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the fruits of the new harvest would always be included in the meals.

The spiritual fast is closely united with the bodily, just as our soul is united with the body, penetrates it, enlivens it, and makes one united whole with it, as the soul and body make one living human being. Therefore, in fasting bodily we must at the same time fast spiritually: “Brothers, in fasting bodily let us also fast spiritually, severing all union with unrighteousness,” the Holy Church enjoins us.

The main thing in fasting bodily is restraint from abundant, tasty and sweet foods; the main thing in fasting spiritually is restraint from passionate, sinful movements that indulge our sensual inclinations and vices. The former is renunciation of the

more nourishing foods for fasting food, which is less nourishing; the latter is the renunciation of our favorite sins for exercise in the virtues which oppose them.

The essence of the fast is expressed in the following Church hymn: "If you fast from food, my soul, but are not purified of the passions, in vain do we comfort ourselves by not eating. For if the fast does not bring correction, then it will be hateful to God as false, and you will be like unto the evil demons, who never eat."

The Great Fast and the Dormition Fast are particularly strict with regard to entertainment — in Imperial Russia even civil law forbade public masquerades and shows during these fasts. (*from pravoslavie.ru*)

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Every time that I made confession I was filled with an immense joy and I devoted myself to prayer. Not only then, but even now, when I make confession I feel joy and at once all burdens are lifted from my soul. I have invested great faith in the sacrament of confession. I believe all guidance should be given through the sacrament of confession. All things should be done in obedience and in sanctification.

Obedience is a great and wise thing. It is the secret of spiritual life. We are unable to comprehend it. But, with the grace of our Lord, I have experienced it. I know how delightful it is and how perfect and carefree it is to obey God, to devote yourself to the worship of God and to obey your elder. Obedience is very important. It is a great virtue and is the same as humility. Obedience with joy and willingness - even if what your elder demands is wrong-headed. Obedience as such is of great value. Such obedience is touching to God: "I love those who love me, and those who seek me shall find grace. (Prov. 8:17)." ...Obedience, especially to a spiritual father, is a great capital. When you live with a saint, you too are sanctified. You assume something of his saintly habits from his words and from his silence. His prayer affects you. Even when you don't speak, something takes place, something holy and divine is transmitted to you without your realizing it... Obedience to an elder is a great virtue, a great advantage. It is everything. You must pass through obedience to be a complete person, in order to face the difficulties of human life. Without humility and without obedience, you do not have the grace of God. If you do not pass through humility and therefore through obedience you have a very hard time. Lack of obedience is due to egotism and self-love. Egotism and pride engendered the disobedience which ejected us from Paradise. A proud person can never be obedient. He always wants to examine and question what he is told in order to see if it's right or wrong and to respond accordingly. Or else he does it, but with protestations and objections, believing that in this way he is demonstrating his freedom. But in obedience a person discovers

true freedom, whereas slavery is that which compels him not to obey. When he obeys, he enters into the freedom of the children of God.

...It is the process of assimilation to God - theosis - which embraces everything.... God is the height of perfection, the highest good. Union with God has everything. Full satisfaction is achieved by this union. No other pleasure is higher than the pleasure given by union with God. It is the pleasure which passes all understanding. It is the pleasure of those who have given themselves to God. This all happens with divine help. Where grace is effective, things are supernatural.

– St. Porphyrius of Kafsokalivia, *Wounded by Love* p. 161-63

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – 145:

Unimaginable Potential



“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”
(Genesis 1:26 RSV)

What an amazing revelation we find in the first book of the First (Old) Testament. God made us to be like Him! Our potential is infinite, we have the potential to be sons and daughters of God! God gave us rule over all creation that we might steward it, multiple it and give it back to God in gratitude. Have we lived up to that unimaginable potential that God provide for us?

You see, there is nothing that we cannot do if only we placed God as the center of our life. Christ came to us healing the sick and the lepers, casting out demons and exposing injustice. **If only we could do that?** Newsflash, we can! What you say? What was Christ comment to the disciples after they had witnessed the healings and casting out of demons? After giving them the new commandment, He tells them in John 14:12, **“Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do.”** Can you only imagine what potential we have? To do works greater than what Christ has done!

So what limits us from using all the gifts that God has given us to do greater works than Jesus Christ? In order to reach that unimaginable potential, we have to over a lifetime learn to be grateful. We have to learn how to take the gifts God has given to us, multiply them and return them to God so that He may multiply them and give them back to us. We have to learn to be the sons and daughters, the kings/queens and priests of creation and offer the creation which He gave us rule over back to the Creator as gift and thanksgiving.

We will never reach our full potential by being intoxicated by our own passions, desires and hungers. We will never reach our full potential by being **self-centered and ungrateful**. We were made in the image of God, each person is our brother or sister yet we do not treat all people in the same way, even though all were all made in the image of God. In 1 John 4:20 we read, “If any one says I love God and hates his brother, **he is a liar**; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.” Ghandi had rephrased this passage in this way, “If you haven’t found God in the faces of those around you, don’t bother looking for Him anywhere else.”

We show our love for God by keeping His commandments. We received the fullness of grace at baptism along with the many gifts God has given us to live to the fullness of our potential. St. Maximus the Confessor states, “**Each of us possesses the manifest energy of the Spirit in proportion to the faith that is in him. Each person thus is the steward of his own grace.**” And St. John Chrysostom further elaborates, “**After God’s grace, everything depends on us and our application.**”

If we don’t truly love God (we show this by disregarding His commandments), can we really expect to live to our full potential? How many gifts has He given us that we will never realize when we don’t obey His commandments. And if we don’t realize those gifts, how will that affect the body of Christ with whom we are commanded to share our gifts. Will we ever reach our full potential? (*from acrod.org*)

Also Commemorated Today: Martyr John the Soldier at Constantinople

The Holy Martyr John the Warrior served in the imperial army of the emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363). He was sent with other soldiers to seek out and kill Christians. While appearing to be a persecutor, Saint John rendered great help to the Christians. He freed those who had been arrested, warned others of dangers threatening them, and assisted in their flight. Saint John showed charity not only to Christians, but to all the destitute and those needing help. He visited with the sick, and he consoled the grieving. When Julian the Apostate learned about the actions of the saint, he ordered him locked up in prison.

In the year 363 Julian the Apostate was killed in his war with the Persians. Saint John was set free and devoted his life to service of neighbor, and he lived in holiness and purity. He died in his old age. The precise year of his death is unknown, and the place of burial of Saint John the Warrior was gradually forgotten. Then he appeared to a certain devout woman and indicated the location of his tomb. This became known throughout the region. His uncovered relics were

placed in a church of the Apostle John the Theologian in Constantinople. The Lord granted the relics of Saint John the Warrior the power of healing. Through the prayers of Saint John, the aggrieved and sorrowing received comfort. In the Russian Church, Saint John the Warrior is revered as a great intercessor in sorrows and difficult circumstances. We also pray to him for the recovery of stolen articles.
(from oca.org)

The Kids are off to Camp!

Fr. Joseph blessed the children of St. Thomas last week before liturgy as they headed off to Camp Nazareth for a week of Orthodox fun & fellowship.



August Anniversaries and Birthdays



Anniversaries:

Doug & Sandy Tucker 11th Dana & Olga Dewey 12th
 David & Kathryn Newman 17th William & Gabriela Howl 24th

Birthdays:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Larry Hartenstein 4 th | Kari David 7 th | Sandy Tucker 8 th |
| Steve Hall 9 th | Reagan Beauchamp 13 th | Elena Chadwick 14 th |
| David Newman 15 th | Carol Vallandingham 19 th | Ievgeniia Gryshukova 22 nd |
| Anna Connour 24 th | Ashley Vallandingham 27 th | Olga Cohoon 31 st |

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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. Nectaros and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the newly departed handmaiden of God Caroline Schmuck, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)