

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 1, 2017 – 17th Sunday After Pentecost The Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos

The Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos: “Today the Virgin stands in the midst of the Church, and with choirs of Saints she invisibly prays to God for us. Angels and Bishops venerate Her, Apostles and prophets rejoice together, Since for our sake she prays to the Eternal God!”

This miraculous appearance of the Mother of God occurred in the mid-tenth century in Constantinople, in the Blachernae church where her robe, veil, and part of her belt were preserved after being transferred from Palestine in the fifth century.

On Sunday, October 1, during the All Night Vigil, when the church was overflowing with those at prayer, the Fool-for-Christ Saint Andrew (October 2), at the fourth hour, lifted up his eyes towards the heavens and beheld our most Holy Lady Theotokos coming through the air, resplendent with heavenly light and surrounded by an assembly of the Saints. Saint John the Baptist and the holy Apostle John the Theologian accompanied the Queen of Heaven. On bended knees the Most Holy Virgin tearfully prayed for Christians for a long time. Then, coming near the Bishop’s Throne, she continued her prayer.



After completing her prayer she took her veil and spread it over the people praying in church, protecting them from enemies both visible and invisible. The Most Holy Lady Theotokos was resplendent with heavenly glory, and the protecting veil in her hands gleamed “more than the rays of the sun.” Saint Andrew gazed trembling at the miraculous vision and he asked his disciple, the blessed Epiphanius standing beside him, “Do you see, brother, the Holy Theotokos, praying for all the world?” Epiphanius answered, “I do see, holy Father, and I am in awe.”

The Ever-Blessed Mother of God implored the Lord Jesus Christ to accept the prayers of all the people calling on His Most Holy Name, and to respond speedily to her intercession, “O Heavenly King, accept all those who pray to You and call on my name for help. Do not let them go away from my icon unheard.”

Saints Andrew and Epiphanius were worthy to see the Mother of God at prayer, and “for a long time observed the Protecting Veil spread over the people and shining with flashes of glory. As long as the Most Holy Theotokos was there, the Protecting Veil was also visible, but with her departure it also became invisible. After taking it with her, she left behind the grace of her visitation.”

At the Blachernae church, the memory of the miraculous appearance of the Mother of God was remembered. In the fourteenth century, the Russian pilgrim and clerk Alexander, saw in the church an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos praying for the world, depicting Saint Andrew in contemplation of her.

The Primary Chronicle of Saint Nestor reflects that the protective intercession of the Mother of God was needed because an attack of a large pagan Russian fleet under the leadership of Askole and Dir. The feast celebrates the divine destruction of the fleet which threatened Constantinople itself, sometime in the years 864-867 or according to the Russian historian Vasiliev, on June 18, 860. Ironically, this Feast is considered important by the Slavic Churches but not by the Greeks.

The Primary Chronicle of Saint Nestor also notes the miraculous deliverance followed an all-night Vigil and the dipping of the garment of the Mother of God into the waters of the sea at the Blachernae church, but does not mention Saints Andrew and Epiphanius and their vision of the Mother of God at prayer. These latter elements, and the beginnings of the celebrating of the Feast of the Protection, seem to postdate Saint Nestor and the Chronicle. A further historical complication might be noted under (October 2) dating Saint Andrew’s death to the year 936.

The year of death might not be quite reliable, or the assertion that he survived to a ripe old age after the vision of his youth, or that his vision involved some later pagan Russian raid which met with the same fate. The suggestion that Saint Andrew was a Slav (or a Scythian according to other sources, such as S. V.

Bulgakov) is interesting, but not necessarily accurate. The extent of Slavic expansion and repopulation into Greece is the topic of scholarly disputes.

In the PROLOGUE, a Russian book of the twelfth century, a description of the establishment of the special Feast marking this event states, “For when we heard, we realized how wondrous and merciful was the vision... and it transpired that Your holy Protection should not remain without festal celebration, O Ever-Blessed One!”

Therefore, in the festal celebration of the Protection of the Mother of God, the Russian Church sings, “With the choirs of the Angels, O Sovereign Lady, with the venerable and glorious prophets, with the First-Ranked Apostles and with the Hieromartyrs and Hierarchs, pray for us sinners, glorifying the Feast of your Protection in the Russian Land.” Moreover, it would seem that Saint Andrew, contemplating the miraculous vision was a Slav, was taken captive, and became the slave of the local inhabitant of Constantinople named Theognostus.

Churches in honor of the Protection of the Mother of God began to appear in Russia in the twelfth century. Widely known for its architectural merit is the temple of the Protection at Nerl, which was built in the year 1165 by holy Prince Andrew Bogoliubsky. The efforts of this holy prince also established in the Russian Church the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God, about the year 1164.

At Novgorod in the twelfth century there was a monastery of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos (the so-called Zverin monastery) In Moscow also under Tsar Ivan the Terrible the cathedral of the Protection of the Mother of God was built at the church of the Holy Trinity (known as the church of Saint Basil the Blessed).

On the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos we implore the defense and assistance of the Queen of Heaven, “Remember us in your prayers, O Lady Virgin Mother of God, that we not perish by the increase of our sins. Protect us from every evil and from grievous woes, for in you do we hope, and venerating the Feast of your Protection, we magnify you.” (*from oca.org*)

Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:16-7:1

Brethren, what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” Therefore, having these promises, beloved,

let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear 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

Meditation is the mother of good conduct, while thoughtless impulse borders on sin. One ought not, therefore, to neglect the process of deliberating and to run after the latter, through which, along with accomplishing those things which we are eager to accomplish, we are caught giving proof of our lack of understanding.

– St. Photios the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Letter 91 to Theodoros, Metropolitan of Laodicea*

Why Greeks Celebrate the Holy Protection on Oct. 28

While Most of the Orthodox Christian world celebrates the Holy Protection, or Agia Skepi, of the Theotokos on October 1st according to ancient custom, Greeks celebrate the Holy Protection on October 28th as a special holiday in order to invite the secular government of Greece to honor the Theotokos for her special protection over the Greek people during World War 2. The celebration of Holy Protection dates back to 626 A.D., when the miraculous intervention of the Theotokos saved Constantinople from the Avars (Turkish-Mongolian Nomads), and it was officially established that October 1st be the date to honor this miracle. All Orthodox Christians celebrated this feast on October 1st until 21 October 1952 when the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece decreed that from henceforth there was to be celebrated in Greece a dual feast of the Holy Protection and the national holiday of "OXI", which commemorates Greek freedom from Italian occupation, on October 28th. A Service was specially written by Elder Gerasimos Mikragiannanites for this feast on October 28th. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

FALL YOUNG ADULT RETREAT

“Trusting the Process”

Camp Nazareth

Mercer, PA

Friday - Sunday October 27-29, 2017

About the theme: If there were another way to make it (another way out), if there were another way to heaven, to joy, peace, fulfillment, truth to life, to salvation, Jesus Christ would have told us. Instead He tells us only that the way – His way to make it, is one of holiness, of repentance, it is the way of forgiveness and of love. With this in mind, how are we to engage this journey towards Him? How are we to be encouraged to humble and to overcome ourselves and to focus our mindset towards this destiny? Do we have the tools to do this? Are we truly aware of the power and effects of our smallest actions and decisions on this cosmic process, and the cosmos itself? And can we really, in our day-to-day, 21st century American lives, really make it?

Guest Speaker:

Mr. Jacob Saylor

Director - Youth & Young Adults, Guest Lecturer



Jacob is the Pastoral Assistant at Assumption Church in Scottsdale, AZ. He has worked extensively in field of Orthodox youth and young adult ministry since 2007. Jacob received a B.A. from University of South Carolina in Philosophy & Religious Studies and his Masters of Divinity in 2010 from Holy Cross School of Theology. Following his studies, Jacob worked as youth director of Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in San Francisco from 2011-2015, during which time he also served as program director for the Metropolis of San Francisco Summer Camp (2013-2016). Invested in ministering to as many youth, families, and young adults as possible, Jacob has created, developed, and contributed to numerous programs and curriculums across our Orthodox Church in North America, and has been blessed to be further allowed to lead, organize, and guest lecture at various regional, Metropolis, and national youth, young adult, and youth worker events, retreats, and workshops year round.



\$75 per person

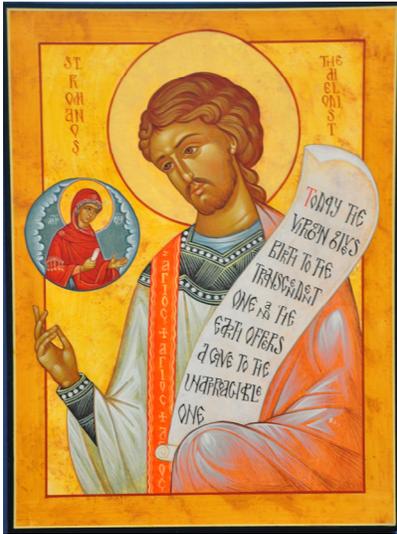
Online registration: campnazareth.org or pittsburgh.goarch.org

Financial-need scholarships available, contact your diocese.

For more info: YoungAdultRetreats@gmail.com or Phone: 724.662.4840 or 412.621.8543



Also commemorated today: **St. Romanos the Melodist**



Saint Romanos the Melodist was born in the fifth century in the Syrian city of Emesa of Jewish parents. After moving to Constantinople, he became a church sacristan in the temple of Hagia Sophia. The monk spent his nights alone at prayer in a field or in the Blachernae church beyond the city.

Saint Romanos was not a talented reader or singer. Once, on the eve of the Nativity of Christ, he read the kathisma verses. He read so poorly that another reader had to take his place. The clergy ridiculed Romanos, which devastated him.

On the day of the Nativity, the Mother of God appeared to the grief-stricken youth in a vision while he was praying before her Kyriotissa icon. She gave him a scroll and commanded him to eat it. Thus was he given the gift of understanding, composition, and hymnography.

That evening at the all-night Vigil Saint Romanos sang, in a wondrous voice, his first Kontakion: “Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One...” All the hymns of Saint Romanos became known as kontakia, in reference to the Virgin’s scroll. Saint Romanos was also the first to write in the form of the Oikos, which he incorporated into the all-night Vigil at his places of residence (In Greek, “oikos”).

For his zealous service Saint Romanos was ordained as a deacon and became a teacher of song. Until his death, which occurred about the year 556, the hierodeacon Romanos the Melodist composed nearly a thousand hymns, many of which are still used by Christians to glorify the Lord. About eighty survive. (*from oca.org*)

Venerable John (Koukouzelis) the Hymnographer of Mt. Athos

Saint John Koukouzelis, a native of Dirrachia (Bulgaria), was orphaned in childhood. Endowed with a very fine voice, he entered the Constantinople court school. He found favor with the emperor John Comnenos (1118-1143) and became a chief court singer. The sumptuousness and luxury of the imperial court bothered the pious youth. Once, when asked what he had eaten for dinner, he replied, “Beans and peas.” The name Koukouzelis (beans and peas) stuck with him ever after.

John began to seek ways to escape the enticements of the court, as well as a marriage arranged for him by the emperor. By the will of God, John met an igumen from Mt. Athos who had come to Constantinople on monastery business. John

revealed to the Elder his desire to leave the court. The Elder blessed John to come to the Holy Mountain. There John was accepted and tonsured a monk.

He was given the obedience of tending the monastery's flock of goats. He took the flock to remote areas of the Holy Mountain to graze. There in the wilderness the youth was able to pray, contemplate God, and sing the divine hymns in solitude. Charmed by the angelic beauty of his voice, the animals gathered around him and listened as though entranced.

Out of modesty and humility the singer did not reveal his gift to the brethren. But once, a wilderness dweller overheard his moving pastoral song and informed the igumen. Saint John then revealed to the igumen that he had been a court singer. He tearfully implored him to remain in the wilderness with his flock.

The igumen was afraid that the emperor would find out that his favorite court singer was on the Holy Mountain and force him to return to court. Wishing to avoid the emperor's displeasure the igumen journeyed to Constantinople to explain what had become of John and begged him not to hinder the young man from his salvific path.

Thereafter John Koukouzelis sang on the right clerics in the cathedral on Sundays and feastdays. Once, after singing an Akathist before an icon of the Mother of God, John was granted a great mercy. The Mother of God appeared to him in a dream and said, "Rejoice, John, and do not cease to sing. For that, I shall not forsake you." With these words she placed into John's hand a golden coin, then became invisible. This coin was placed beneath the icon. Many miracles have been credited to the coin and the icon. The icon, named the "Koukouzelissa" in memory of Saint John is located in the Lavra monastery of Saint Athanasius. It is commemorated on October 1, and on the 10th Friday after Pascha.



The Mother of God appeared to Saint John again and healed him of a grievous affliction of his legs, caused by the long standing in church. Saint John's remaining days were spent in intense ascetic efforts. He also worked hard on the discipline of church singing, gaining the title of both master teacher and regent (overseer).

He arranged and compiled melodies for church stichera verses, troparia and kontakia. He edited texts of hymns and wrote his own troparia. Some of his compositions are also in the following manuscripts: "A Book, by the Will of God Encompassing All the Order of Progression of

Church Services, Compiled by Master Teacher John Koukouzelis,” “Progression of Services, Compiled by Master Teacher John Koukouzelis, “From the Beginning of Great Vespers through to the Completion of the Divine Liturgy,” and “The Science of Song and Singing Signs with all the Legitimate Hand-Placement and with all the Arrangements of Song.”

Foreseeing the hour of his death, Saint John took his leave of the brethren, and in his last wishes bade them to bury him in the Church of the Archangel that he built. Church singers reverence Saint John Koukouzelis as their own special patron saint. (from oca.org)

Bishop Gregory’s 5th Anniversary Information

Monday, November 27, 2017

5:00 PM Prayers of Thanksgiving for His Grace at the Holiday Inn

5:15 PM Cash Bar & Hors d’oeuvres

6:00 PM Dinner

Hotel Information: Holiday Inn, 250 Market Street, Johnstown, PA - 814 535-7777

\$94.99 + Tax

Book Under ‘ACROD’ No Later Than

November 6, 2017

Meals: Salmon or Filet Mignon - \$50
and Younger - \$20

Child Appropriate Meal – 12 Years

(If more than one member in a family is attending, please list each name separately. Banquet reservations may be made with the Chancery either by individuals or through your parish.)

Name	Parish City	Salmon	Filet Mignon	Child’s Meal
	Waldorf			

Return this form with checks NO LATER than Monday, November 6, 2017 (necessary for memento ordering purposes). Make checks payable to ACROD, 312 Garfield Street, Johnstown, PA 15906 (“Bishop’s Anniversary” on Memo Line)

Parish Prayer Corner

Please keep parishioner Angel Almodovar and his family in your prayers. His family is living in Puerto Rico, which was hit hard by Hurricane Maria following Hurricane Irma. Currently, Angel does not have direct communication with them, but was able to talk to his mother just before the event. They don't have electricity at this time, but thankfully they have water service and the house is undamaged. God willing, Angel's daughter Rachel and grandson Sebastian will be received into Orthodoxy via chrismation on the Saturday after Thanksgiving.



October Anniversaries and Birthdays



Anniversaries:

Benjamin & Cecilia Saksen 6th Lynn & Andrea Hampton 17th
Ron & Heather Wright 23rd

Birthdays:

Bernadette Karbowsky 2nd Ceilidh Richardson 5th Olivia Brady 8th
Richard Wright 8th Taylor Wright 12th Mary Vallandingham 17th
Jocelyn Connour 20th Anna Oswald 23rd Nikki Samson 26th
Andrea Hampton 29th

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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 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. 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.)