

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.

October 22, 2017 – 20th Sunday After Pentecost

**St. Abercius the Bishop and Wonderworker of Hieropolis,
Equal of the Apostles**

Saint Abercius, Bishop and Wonderworker of Hieropolis lived in the second century in Phrygia. The city of Hieropolis was inhabited by many pagans and very few Christians. The saint prayed to the Lord for the salvation of their souls and that they might be numbered among God's chosen flock. An angel appeared and bade Saint Abercius to destroy the idols in the pagan temple. He fulfilled the command of God with zeal. Hearing that the idol-worshippers wanted to kill him, the saint went to the place where the people had gathered and openly denounced the failings of the pagans. The pagans tried to seize the saint.

At this moment three demon-possessed youths in the crowd cried out. The people were dumbfounded, as the saint expelled the devils from them by his prayers. Seeing the youths restored to normal, the people of Hieropolis asked Saint Abercius to instruct them in the Christian Faith, and then they accepted Holy Baptism.

After this the saint went to the surrounding cities and villages, healing the sick and preaching the Kingdom of God. With his preaching he made the rounds of Syria,



Cilicia, Mesopotamia, he visited Rome and everywhere he converted multitudes of people to Christ. For many years he guarded the Church against heretics, he confirmed Christians in the Faith, he set the prodigal upon the righteous path, he healed the sick and proclaimed the glory of Christ. Because of his great works, Saint Abercius is termed “Equal of the Apostles.”

Saint Abercius returned home to Hieropolis, where he soon rested from his labors. After his death, many miracles took place at his tomb. He wrote his own epitaph, and it was carved on his tombstone, which is now in the Lateran Museum. It reads as follows:

The citizen of a chosen city, I made this monument while living, that there I might have in time a resting-place of my body, I being by name Abercius, the disciple of a holy shepherd who feeds flocks of sheep both on mountains and on plains, who has great eyes that see everywhere. For this shepherd taught me that the book of life is worthy of belief. And he sent me to Rome to contemplate majesty, and to see a queen golden-robed and golden-sandalled; there also I saw a people bearing a shining mark. And I saw the land of Syria and all its cities; Nisibis I saw when I passed over Euphrates. But everywhere I had brethren. I had Paul. . . . Faith everywhere led me forward, and everywhere provided as my food a fish of exceeding great size, and perfect, which a holy virgin drew with her hands from a fountain and this faith ever gives to its friends to eat, it having wine of great virtue, and giving it mingled with bread. These things I, Abercius, having been a witness of them told to be written here. Verily I was passing through my seventy-second year. He who discerns these things, namely every fellow-believer, let him pray for Abercius....

Although Abercius could not be explicit in his faith under pagan Rome, references to Christ being born of a Virgin and offered as wine mingled with bread for his friends to eat, the illumination of holy baptism, the golden beauty of the bride of Christ, the wide spread of Christianity, and the practice of prayers for the dead can be discerned. (*adapted from oca.org and newadvent.org*)

Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s Letter to the Galatians 1:11-19

Brethren, I make known to you that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it*, but *it came* through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and *tried to* destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 16:19-31

The Lord said, "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The method of godliness consists of these two things, pious doctrines, and virtuous practice: and neither are the doctrines acceptable to God apart from good works, nor does God accept the works which are not perfected with pious doctrines. For what profit is it, to know well the doctrines concerning God, and yet to be a vile fornicator? And again, what profit is it, to be nobly temperate, and an impious blasphemer?

– St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 4.2

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.



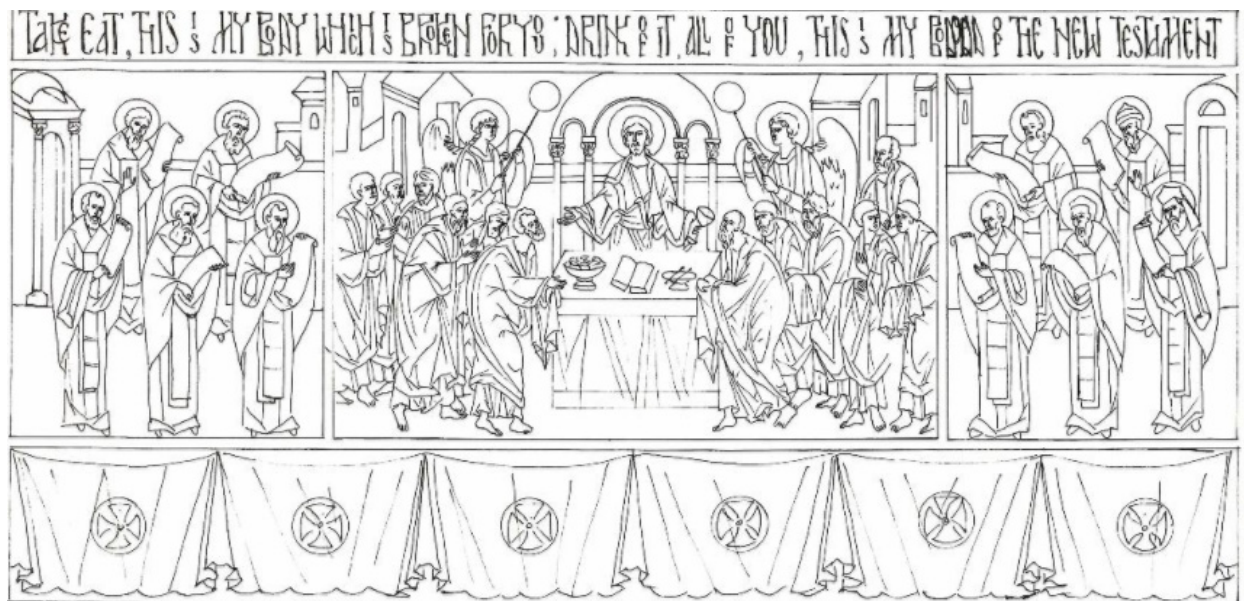
\$75 per person

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





ARCHANGEL STUNO MICHAEL KABELUCK - 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 Funds: \$4,600 | Remaining Needed: \$21,800.

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).

The Junior American Carpatho-Russian Youth



invites you to

Encounter 2017



November 10 – 12 at Camp Nazareth

The Junior ACRY invites youth aged 8-18 to attend Encounter 2017 at Camp Nazareth! Please join us for a weekend of prayer, fun and fellowship. Activities will include Divine Liturgy, a religious talk with clergy, sports and a special event.

EVENT INFORMATION

Friday, Nov 10th to Sunday Nov 12th

Camp Nazareth 339 Pew Rd. Mercer, Pa 16137

REGISTRATION:

Friday, Nov 10th - 7:00 to 9:00pm

CONCLUSION:

Sunday, Nov 12th 9:00am Divine Liturgy – Parents welcome! Noon Encounter Dismissal

TO REGISTER: 1) Please email rachelprib@gmail.com by Wednesday November 1st. Include the name of each Encounter participant, age and any food allergies. Go to <http://www.acrod.org/organizations/senioracry/jracy/forms> to find registration forms.

There will also be an adult study group on Saturday; So, parents and guardians bring your Bibles

2) Please mail completed registration forms and a check made out to “National Jr. ACRY” for \$90 by Wednesday, November 1st to: Rachel Pribish 668 S. Broad St. Elizabeth, NJ 07202 Sign up today! If you have questions please feel free to contact Rachel Pribish at rachelprib@gmail.com or Fr. Miles at frmiles@gmail.com

ALSO COMMEMORATED TODAY: 7 HOLY YOUTHS “SEVEN SLEEPERS” OF EPHESUS

The Seven Youths of Ephesus: Maximilian, Iamblicus, Martinian, John, Dionysius, Exacustodianus (Constantine) and Antoninus, lived in the third century. Saint Maximilian was the son of the Ephesus city administrator, and the other six youths were sons of illustrious citizens of Ephesus. The youths were friends from childhood, and all were in military service together.

When the emperor Decius (249-251) arrived in Ephesus, he commanded all the citizens to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Torture and death awaited anyone who disobeyed. The seven youths were denounced by informants, and were summoned to reply to the charges.

Appearing before the emperor, the young men confessed their faith in Christ. Their military belts and insignia were quickly taken from them. Decius permitted them to go free, however, hoping that they would change their minds while he was off on a military campaign. The youths fled from the city and hid in a cave on Mount Ochlon, where they passed their time in prayer, preparing for martyrdom.

The youngest of them, Saint Iamblicus, dressed as a beggar and went into the city to buy bread. On one of his excursions into the city, he heard that the emperor had returned and was looking for them. Saint Maximilian urged his companions to come out of the cave and present themselves for trial. Learning where the young men were hidden, the emperor ordered that the entrance of the cave be sealed with stones so that the saints would perish from hunger and thirst. Two of the dignitaries at the blocked entrance to the cave were secret Christians. Desiring to preserve the memory of the saints, they placed in the cave a sealed container containing two metal plaques. On them were inscribed the names of the seven youths and the details of their suffering and death.

The Lord placed the youths into a miraculous sleep lasting almost two centuries. In the meantime, the persecutions against Christians had ceased. During the reign of the holy emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450) there were heretics who denied that there would be a general resurrection of the dead at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some of them said, “How can there be a resurrection of the dead when there will be neither soul nor body, since they are disintegrated?”



Others affirmed, “The souls alone will have a restoration, since it would be impossible for bodies to arise and live after a thousand years, when even their dust would not remain.” Therefore, the Lord revealed the mystery of the Resurrection of the Dead and of the future life through His seven saints.

The owner of the land on which Mount Ochlon was situated, discovered the stone construction, and his workers opened up the entrance to the cave. The Lord had kept the youths alive, and they awoke from their sleep, unaware that almost two hundred years had passed. Their bodies and clothing were completely undecayed. Preparing to accept torture, the youths once again asked Saint Iamblicus to buy bread for them in the city. Going toward the city, the youth was astonished to see a cross on the gates. Hearing the name of Jesus Christ freely spoken, he began to doubt that he was approaching his own city.

When he paid for the bread, Iamblicus gave the merchant coins with the image of the emperor Decius on it. He was detained, as someone who might be concealing a horde of old money. They took Saint Iamblicus to the city administrator, who also happened to be the Bishop of Ephesus. Hearing the bewildering answers of the young man, the bishop perceived that God was revealing some sort of mystery through him, and went with other people to the cave.

At the entrance to the cave the bishop found the sealed container and opened it. He read upon the metal plaques the names of the seven youths and the details of the sealing of the cave on the orders of the emperor Decius. Going into the cave and seeing the saints alive, everyone rejoiced and perceived that the Lord, by waking them from their long sleep, was demonstrating to the Church the mystery of the Resurrection of the Dead.

Soon the emperor himself arrived in Ephesus and spoke with the young men in the cave. Then the holy youths, in sight of everyone, lay their heads upon the ground and fell asleep again, this time until the General Resurrection. The emperor wanted to place each of the youths into a jeweled coffin, but they appeared to him in a dream and said that their bodies were to be left upon the ground in the cave. In the twelfth century the Russian pilgrim Igumen Daniel saw the holy relics of the seven youths in the cave.

There is a second commemoration of the seven youths on August 4. According to one tradition, which entered into the Russian PROLOGUE (of Saints’ Lives), the youths fell asleep for the second time on this day. The Greek MENAION of 1870 says that they first fell asleep on August 4, and woke up on October 22. There is a prayer of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in the GREAT BOOK OF NEEDS (Trebnik) for those who are ill and cannot sleep. The Seven Sleepers are also mentioned in the service for the Church New Year, September 1. (*from oca.org*)

ST THOMAS PARISH LIFE MEETING

We now have 35 responses to the St Thomas Parish Life survey: it's time to follow through on our input and meet to discuss a path forward for all the great things suggested. Please join us for a guided brainstorming session where we will use methods used by consultants, corporations and the military that are guaranteed to keep the discussion on track. Everyone's voice will be heard....and we need to hear yours!

Who: all adults (18+)

What: Parish Life Meeting

When: Saturday, 28 October at 12:30 pm (ending no later than 3:30 pm)

Where: St Thomas Brick House Parish Hall

Why: to look at the Parish Life Survey results, and also to discuss what we're doing right, what we could do differently, and what we need to start doing.

How: guided brainstorming with specific methods to involve every attendee, to keep the discussion on track, and to create actionable products...as we Orthodox like to say, "Come and see!"

Questions/Requests: Josh & Kelsey via the email form on the St Thomas website to "Parish Life Survey"

Other notes: RSVP appreciated but not required, but please let us know if you need a sitter and we will have one on site. Also, there will be coffee and donuts!!!

We are now offering Sunday School and Teen Ministry!

Who: all youth aged 2 to 18 in three classes: "Littles" will be led by Anna Connour, "Bigs" will be led by Kelsey Moore, and the Teens will be led by Carol Vallandingham.

What: for the Bigs and Littles, a simple, age-appropriate 30 min participative class covering the Gospel lesson for that Sunday ("Let Us Attend", Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese); for the Teens, an episode of a well-done 10 min YouTube video series ("The Trench", Greek Orthodox Archdiocese) followed by a 20 min discussion.

When: Sundays from 9:30-10 am, starting Sunday, October 8th and going most Sundays until the end of the school year; a schedule is available and any cancellations/changes will be announced on the website.

Where: the Brick House - Littles upstairs at the kid table, Bigs downstairs where we eat, and Teens in the back room downstairs.

Why: to offer a structured opportunity for the youth to get to know each other and to learn and share about their faith at an age-appropriate level; even the older and wiser teens are encouraged to participate since they will be able to give valuable input to the discussions and provide examples for the younger teens and children to look up to.

What do parents do while the kids are in class? Matins/Orthros is a beautiful pre-Liturgy service that is a great opportunity to worship and prepare for liturgy without kids.

Please let Kelsey Moore know if you have any questions.

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, 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 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. 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.)