

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

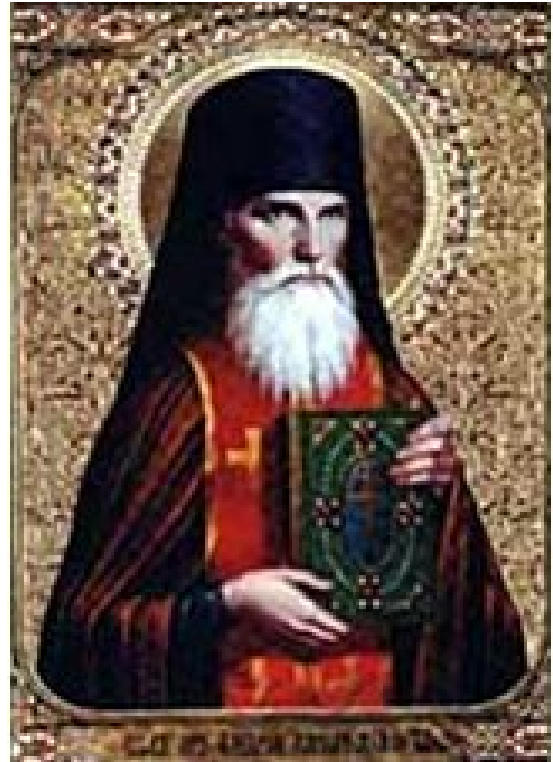
Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

November 19, 2017 – 24th Sunday After Pentecost

St. Alexis of Chust, Apostle of Carpatho-Russia

The Holy Bible commands us to remember those who went before us preaching the word of God: *Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.* (Hebrews 13:7)

They are to be our examples and models of faith, piety, and devotion to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. One such recent example of faith lived and struggled for the Faith in the mountains and villages of many of our ancestors. Our Holy Father Alexis Kabaluk was born with the name Alexander in 1877 in the Rusyn village of Yasinie to a pious Greek Catholic family. As a youth he was drawn to God and frequently visited Orthodox and Greek Catholic monasteries. After completing his military service he visited the Monastery of Biskad, now in Romania, to seek the counsel of the Elder Arcadius who blessed him to become a monk. Unable to accept the false union with Rome, Alexander entered the Orthodox Church in 1908 while on pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain – Mount Athos in Greece. In 1910 he was tonsured a monk at the Yablochino Monastery (now in Poland), taking the name – Alexis, and he was ordained to the priesthood later that year. At this time there was a growing movement away from the Greek



Catholic church, which had been forced upon the Carpatho-Rusyn people by the Hungarian authorities, to their ancestral Orthodox Faith. This movement was centered in the village of Iza where the villagers were beaten, (and in the case of a peasant, Joachim Vakarov, beaten to death) imprisoned and fined because of their attempts to profess the Orthodox Faith. It was to this village of Iza that Father Alexis arrived secretly, hidden in a hay cart, as the first Orthodox priest. Despite the danger, Father Alexis supported himself working as a wood-turner while he traveled to all the nearby villages preaching and celebrating the Holy Mysteries. Within two years, Father Alexis had established 28 parishes and over 14,000 people had returned to the Orthodox Faith.

His Suffering

In response, the Hungarian authorities arrested Father Alexis several times – homes were searched, prayer books, icons, and religious literature were seized. Orthodox believers were hung up on trees so that their feet did not touch the ground until blood flowed from their noses, mouths, and ears. Father Alexis was hunted from village to village, finally leaving in 1913 to continue his ministry among the Carpatho-Rusyn immigrants in America. With dozens of his flock being brought to trial in July, 1913, Father Alexis, now 36, returned from America to suffer with his people. He was sentenced to four-and-a-half years imprisonment and fined. When Tsar Nicholas II heard of the priest's sufferings, he awarded him a gold pectoral cross for his confession of the Faith.

A Church is Reborn

With the end of World War I, the persecution against the Orthodox eased. Upon his release from prison, Father Alexis returned to Iza and lived in the Monastery of St. Nicholas which he had founded. On the Feast of the Transfiguration 1921, Father Alexis opened the Council of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church with over 400 delegates in attendance. The new Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church was under the jurisdiction of Bishop Dositheus of the Serbian Church who himself died as a martyr for the Faith and was glorified as a Saint in 1998. The fledgling Church was aided by numerous illustrious Orthodox hierarchs and priests including Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, St. John Maximovitch (later of San Francisco), St. Justin Popovich, and St. Gorazd the New Martyr. The Diocese blossomed and by 1936 the Mukachevo-Presov Diocese had 127 churches, 138 priests and 140,000 faithful.

With the end of World War II, Carpatho-Rus was freed from Nazism but was soon to fall under another yoke – the Communists. Just as they had acted in Russia after the 1917 Revolution, the Communists began the systematic closing of Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches and monasteries throughout the Carpathians. The Soviet persecution of Carpatho-Rus was another tragedy in the life of Father

Alexis as he witnessed the slow disintegration of his life-long ministry. After taking the monastic rank of the Great Schema on November 22, 1947 he fell asleep in the Lord on December 2, 1947. In February 1999, at St. Nicholas Monastery in Iza, Bishop Agapit of Chust uncovered the relics of Father Alexis which were found to be almost completely incorrupt. With the relics was recovered an icon of the Iveron Mother of God which Father Alexis had brought with him from Mount Athos. The canonization of Father Alexis as “*The Apostle of Carpatho-Russia*” took place in Iza on October 21, 2001, celebrated by His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and all Ukraine, attended by over 20,000 faithful.

His Significance

The life and ministry of St. Alexis of Chust is an embarrassment to many modern Christians, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox. The days of suspicion, hatred, fighting, insults, and persecution between Orthodox and Greek Catholics are, thankfully, distant memories. There is a new spirit of peace, friendship and conciliation between these people who are divided by faith yet share the same homeland, language, and customs. To many, the honoring of saints such as St. Alexis merely dredges up a past that is better left to the dust bin of history. Yet the witness of St. Alexis reminds us of an unchanging truth: the Orthodox Church continues to teach that She maintains the Faith of the Apostles “*once for all delivered to the saints*” (Jude 3). Despite our respect and esteem for our Catholic brothers and sisters, we hold that the Orthodox Church alone has kept unchanged the Faith handed down from the Apostles without additions or subtractions. Thousands of converts are finding their way to the doors of our Orthodox Churches because they too have come to believe that Orthodoxy holds the fullness of Christianity. It is our duty to respect and honor the memory of those men and women who by their sufferings, sacrifices and struggles preserved and taught this unchanging Faith. (*from acrod.org*)

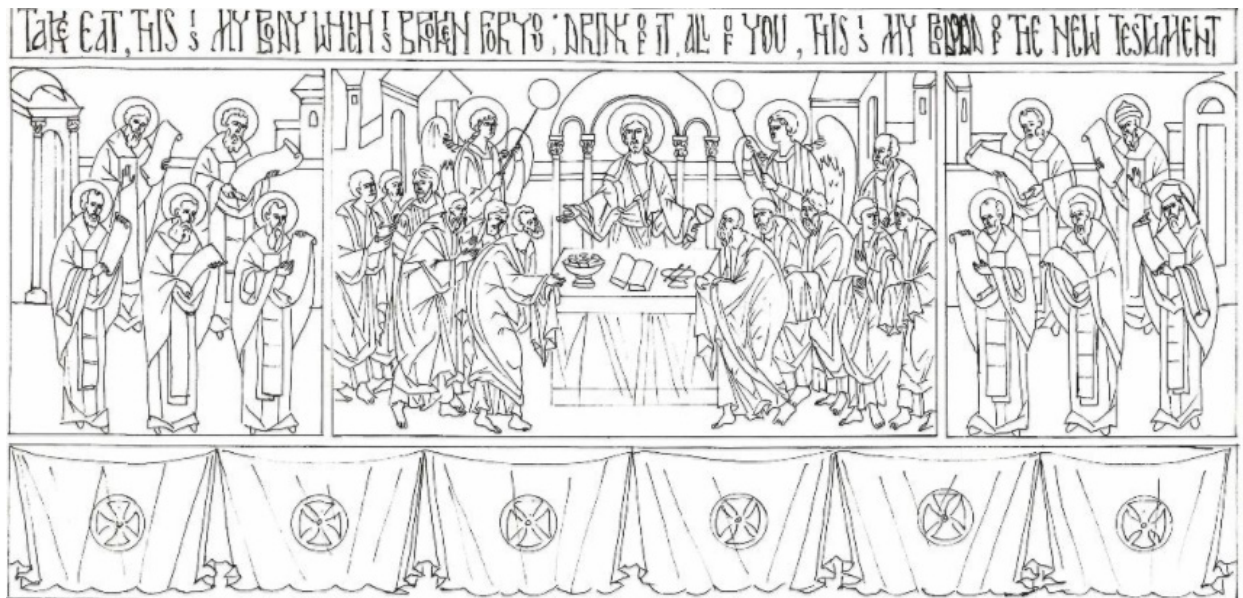
Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians 2:14-22

Brethren, He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom

the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 12:16-21

Jesus spoke this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”



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: \$8,925 | Remaining Needed: \$17,475.

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

Beloved Christians! Nothing is more pleasant, lovelier, and sweeter to us sinners than the Gospel. More welcome than bread to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, freedom to captives and those in prison, is the Gospel to sinners who understand their misfortune.

“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost” (Lk. 19:10). This is the exceedingly sweet voice of the Gospel. Who is this Son of Man? He is the Son of God, the King of Heaven, sent from His Heavenly Father, the One Who willed for our sake to be called the Son of Man. For what cause did He come? To seek out and to save us who are lost and to bring us into His eternal Kingdom. What could be more welcome and desirable to us who are lost? But let us see what the Gospel is, and what it requires of us, and to whom it is rightly preached.

From its very name the Gospel is the gladdest of tidings. To all the world it preaches Christ the Savior of the world Who came to seek out and to save the lost. Listen all you lost sinners, listen to that exceedingly sweet voice of the Gospel! It cries out to us all, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

It is a fearful thing for us to be found in sin before God. The Gospel preaches that our sins are forgiven for Christ's name's sake and that Christ is our justification before God. In You, my Savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, am I justified. You art my truth and enlightenment. It is a fearful thing for us to be found at enmity with God. The Gospel preaches that Christ has reconciled us to God, and having

come He preached peace to all near and far. A fearful thing for us is the curse of the Law, for we are all sinners; it subjects the sinner to both temporal and eternal punishment. The Gospel preaches that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become the curse for us. A fearful thing for us is death. The Gospel preaches that Christ is our resurrection and life. A fearful thing for us are Gehenna and hell. The Gospel preaches that Christ delivered us from hell and all its calamities. It is a fearful thing for us to be separated from God. The Gospel preaches that we shall be with the Lord always in His eternal Kingdom.

This, blessed Christians, is the most sweet voice of the Gospel, "Taste," then, "and see that the Lord is good" (LXX-Ps. 33:9 [KJV-Ps. 34:8]). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned" (Jn. 3:16-18). "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David" (Lk. 1:68-69).

It is demanded of us, Christians, that we receive these heavenly and most sweet tidings gratefully as they are sent from Heaven, and that from a pure heart we always give thanks to God our Benefactor, Who so freely had mercy on us, and that we show holy obedience and compliance in all thankfulness. For conscience itself instructs and convinces us to be thankful to our Benefactor. He loved us who are unworthy Let us also love Him Who is worthy of all love. Love requires that we never offend the beloved. God is offended by every sin. Let us keep away from every sin and let us do His holy will that we may not offend Him as our compassionate Father and Benefactor. "Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and so on (Mt. 6:9-10).

To whom is the Gospel preached? Christ answers us, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for Whose sake He has anointed Me to preach to the poor, He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted" (Lk.4:18). In other words, to those people who, acknowledging their sins, see their poverty, misfortune, and wretchedness, and have a contrite heart with fear of God's judgment and sorrow, to them the Gospel is rightly preached as a healing plaster is applied to a wounded body. Hear, you sorrowful and contrite souls, hear the most sweet voice of the Gospel! "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost!" This healing plaster of the Gospel most sweet is applied to your wounded souls. By this saving medicine heal your broken hearts. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost," He seeks you and saves you, because you are one of those that He came to seek. Accept and confess yourselves to be sinners before God. Your sins are also

forgiven for Christ's name's sake. Repent of your sins and lament for God, for salvation is prepared for you, too, by God.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief" (1 Tim. 1:15). The Holy Spirit speaks to you through His servant, "The sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit, a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise" (LXX-Ps. 50:19 [KJV-Ps. 51:17]). This sacrifice is offered to God from a repentant and contrite heart and is more acceptable to Him than any other offering. God looks mercifully upon such a sacrifice and sends His grace down upon it.

And so you see, O Christian, that the Gospel is not intended for those Christians who live recklessly and in iniquity, and do not recognize their sins, poverty and misfortune, and do not have a contrite heart. For of what use is oil to a rock? A plaster is applied to a wound, and healing is given to him who recognizes and admits his weakness. To such people is it said, "Repent, be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy into heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up" (Jas. 4:9-10). And again: "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees, therefore every tree which brings not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire" (Mt. 3:10).

Sinners! Let us fear the judgment of God and endeavor to have a contrite and humble heart, that we also may draw from the Gospel as from a saving font of living water of refreshment and consolation, and that we may water our souls and so receive everlasting life in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be glory with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages.

– St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, "On the Gospel of Salvation"

ENCYCLICAL FOR THANKSGIVING DAY (FROM 2016)

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Thanksgiving holiday is a joyous day of celebrating the blessings of life. Traditions connected to faith, family, and community have developed in this country, affirming the importance of offering thanks to God for these blessings and recognizing the many ways we are blessed by Him.

We are blessed through God's compassion and care for all that He has created. Our Lord asked, *Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?* (Matthew 6:26).

He knows our needs, even those we think are small and insignificant. Because God's love and provision are always with us, because He created us and sustains us by His grace, we give thanks.

We are blessed abundantly by this wondrous power of His grace. It is a power that heals, redeems, protects, and saves. The Apostle Paul proclaimed this power by stating, *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and it is not of your own doing, it is the gift of God* (Ephesians 2:8). We accept this gift by faith and with thanksgiving. We offer thanks to God in communion with Him through the Holy Eucharist, a communal act filled with grace. Because God loves us and by His grace seeks to restore us to eternal fellowship with Him, we give thanks.

We are blessed because in Him we have life, and we *have it abundantly*. We are blessed with the anticipation of salvation and glory to come (Revelation 19:1). We are thankful to God that so many before us have endured for our sake so that in the words of the Apostle Paul we may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory. (II Timothy 2:10). Because we have hope in deliverance, joy in the light of the Resurrection, and assurance in God's promises, we give thanks.

As you observe Thanksgiving Day, may all of these blessings be on your hearts and minds. May this be a day of giving thanks to God for His grace, and may His abundant blessings be on each of you and your families. Through your thanksgiving and your joy in His blessings may you offer a witness to the world of the life and love we have in Him. Have a blessed Thanksgiving Day.

With paternal love in Christ,

†Demetrios Archbishop of America

Scholarships Available for Diocesan Students Attending CrossRoad Orthodox Summer Institute

The Diocesan Chancery is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 2018 CrossRoad program (<http://www.crossroadinstitute.org>).

CrossRoad is a ten-day academic summer institute that prepares high school juniors and seniors to make big life decisions and invites them to connect with the Orthodox Christian theological and spiritual tradition. Participants from all over the country come together to experience daily worship, take theology classes from some of the best professors in the country, visit local parishes, serve their neighbor, tour the city, and even spend a day at the beach.

Historically, CrossRoad has been hosted solely on the campus of Hellenic College Holy Cross. This year, we are excited to announce that CrossRoad is expanding to Chicago! This summer, there will be a third session offered on the campus of

North Park University in Chicago, IL. CrossRoad Chicago is the same program, run by the same staff, in a brand new location!

The sessions are as follows: Session 1 - June 16 – June 26 (Boston) Session 2 - July 2 – July 12 (Boston) Session 3 - July 21 – July 31 (Chicago)

Scholarships covering the registration and tuition fee will be available to our Diocesan students who apply and are accepted to any one of the three sessions. Diocesan Students interested in attending are asked to apply to the program before the February 1, 2018 Deadline. Upon acceptance, students are kindly asked to contact Fr. Stephen Loposky, Diocesan Director of Youth at campnazareth@acrod.org or 724-662-4840.

REMINDER

Just a reminder that Bishop Gregory's 5th Anniversary Celebration on November 27th begins at 5 PM. Location is the Holiday Inn Downtown Johnstown. Everything will take place at the Hotel. All participants are asked to be seated in the Crown Ballroom by 5 PM.

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. 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.)