

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

Wednesday: Moleben to the
Theotokos 6:00 AM

Friday: Mol. 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.



June 03, 2018 – 1st Sunday After Pentecost (Sunday of All Saints)

A meditation for the Sunday of All Saints by a monk of Holy Cross Hermitage

O saints, what is your secret? How have you so united yourselves to God? How did you ever add desire to desire, zeal to zeal, love to love, fire to fire? How did you make yourselves worthy instruments of God, living vessels over-flowing with His grace? How did you become friends and intimates of the Immaterial God and King of heaven Who dwells in unapproachable light?

O our first-parents, Adam and Eve; all you patriarchs, forefathers, prophets, righteous kings, Apostles, martyrs, holy teachers, monks and virgins, wise fool's-for-Christ, unmercenary healers, O you merciful rich and long-suffering poor, and all you righteous ones made perfect by faith, together with the all-blessed Virgin

Mary, the Most Holy Mother of God: come now, attend unto us, hearken to our poor pleas, lend us your help and do not cast us away, O saints!

You, O saints, do not detract from God's glory, but rather magnify and multiply it—even as a prism gathers the sunlight and multiplies its beauty, putting forth the many-colored rainbow. For, you gave your whole selves unto God, co-operating with Him, and allowing Him to fulfill His most ardent desire: to unite and over-fill all creation with His pre-eternal beauty, immaterial grace, divine life and power for ever. You, O saints, effect wonder within the mind of the most wondrous angels—for they desire to peer into this special grace which has only come to man from God, Who became God-Man and not God-Angel!

You, O saints, are worthy of glory and praise; for God, Who alone is worthy of all glory and praise, was freely and consciously received by you into all your being: by your freely-chosen submission to the all-good will of God, you, O saints, with the All-Holy Virgin as your supreme Champion Leader, allowed God to perfectly fulfill in you and by you His good pleasure to deify mankind and all creation. O wonder: by the offering of your free-will you gave freedom to God to fulfill to the utmost His all-good will, His hidden purpose which has been enkindled from before the ages!

God the Three Persons united in One Nature, by the Person of the Son has descended incarnate into the one nature of our humanity which flourishes in many persons. And by Him, as by a door, we enter forever into the divine, pre-eternal, over-abounding, ever-existing life of the All-Holy Trinity. Through Holy Baptism and a heavenly life of inner prayer and acquisition of the virtues, you, O saints, have entered into direct communion with God—finding His buried treasure, Christ the implanted and indwelling Word, within the deepest and most secret heart of our human nature. You have been perfected in all the virtues, which are none other than the very attributes of the Living and Personal Godhead! This boundless, personal and eternally-living Sea of Life, you, O saints, have entered into.

Forever you partake of Him; forever you glorify and hymn God, Whom you never cease to behold and partake of. Being nourished by Christ, Who has given Himself to us as the inexhaustible Feast and Banquet, you are forever filled with, over-filled by, and pouring out unto all without measure, the life and grace of the all-good God. Thus, you yourselves, O saints, have become a noetic and spiritual feast and banquet for all who praise you with faith and love, trusting in your most powerful intercessions and supplications.

O wonderful saints, many-colored living rainbow of incarnate virtue which shines forth from the all-radiant splendor of the glory of that Uncreated Light: your life is hidden with Christ in God, yet it manifestly shines forth unto the ends of the

universe. You have become many steps of the ladder which takes us to heaven: noetic and intelligent, all-seeing and all-mercifully hearing, animate and living, merciful, good, humble, quick to hear, quicker to help—incarnate heavenly ladder which is set upon the firm foundation of the Rock of life, Christ, the God of gods and King of kings, the Summit of the ladder.

O saints, what is your secret? Hide it not from us! Be not silent unto us! For, beholding your glorious life and words, we seek of you the truest comprehension, imitation, and partaking thereof; grant us, unworthy as we are, not to disdain and trample underfoot your many labors of love both in this world and in the other world, which you have wonderfully offered unto God in behalf of all mankind!

You have become radiant lights shining forth from highest heaven upon all the world, showing forth the manner of life which resides there and the way thereto. And as a most sweet maternal kiss filled with spiritual fragrance, you have left upon our deepest soul and heart the ever-memorable, deep noetic impression of your divine lives and words—and your eternally-living presence is our living Faith!

Because of your living testament, O saints, we are fully convinced that it is natural for our human nature to be united with God. Because of you, O saints, we know that it is false for us to be vessels of the devil's God-hating passions, thoughts, words, impulses and vile deeds.

That which is natural to a particular nature is surely lighter and easier to perform than that which is not according to that particular nature! Therefore, why have we fallen away from the light and easy yoke of Christ and the righteous life of the saints? For it is natural now for our human nature to be divine, because of the incarnate dispensation of Christ our Savior: the God-Man Who makes gods of us mortal men, and Who transforms us unthankful sinners into the very Body of God, the Church of Christ!

O saints, what is your secret? How have you come to dwell so fully, so consciously, so sensibly and so actively in God? O saints, what is your secret? Hide it not from us, and be not silent! How did that Word sink down so deeply into your ears and enter into your hearts? How did that Word mix with living faith in you, producing the spirit of salvation, the fear of God, a broken and contrite heart, a constant life of repentance, an ever-struggling contest to keep the commandments which are inscribed with ink upon books, with voice upon ears, but much more deeply upon the tablets of your hearts with the ink of your receptive and active faith in Christ?

How, O saints, did you acquire so fully and so perfectly the very personal attributes of God? How, O saints, did you constantly hearken with utmost

attention, conscientiousness, sensitivity, firm resolve and unhesitating submission to Christ's voice? How have you acquired all the virtues?

Christ-like self-crucifying self-denial, total sacrifice to God and men, superhuman fasting, endurance of all torments and afflictions of body and soul, watchfulness, unceasing prayer and unbroken mindfulness and vision of God, forgiveness, soul-possessing patience, liberating non-possessiveness, supreme humility, sublime sanctity, child-like purity, angelic dispassion, passionate thirst and zeal and desire for God alone, God-like love, goodness, meekness, sympathy and prayer for all men and all things, a life fully alive in God which embraces all creation with boundless and transcendent love.

How, O saints, were you so united to the luminous, life-giving energies of the grace of that Uncreated Light which flows forth from the utmost depths of the unmeasureable and inexhaustible Wellspring of life: the inaccessible Essence of the One Uncreated Nature Who is above all natures, and Creator of all natures: the Three Persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

O saints, what is your secret? Hide it not from us? How were your hearts so perfectly and unceasingly sensitive, pure, holy, active in virtue, alive to God, broken, contrite, humble, compunctionate, welling forth constant tears from your eyes from the inexhaustible depths of your hearts which are indwelt by, watered by, and nourished by that Living Water, the Holy Spirit?

O saints, how have you so united the all of the activity, life, movement, sensibility, consciousness and freedom of your body and spirit with Christ, the Bodily Fullness of the Godhead, and the One Spirit of God, in a pure, beautiful, eternal dance of supremely-divine order, together with all the hierarchies of angels, around God the Center and Life of all, the Source of all, the Beginning and End of all, the Ground and Height of all, the Meaning and Purpose of all? Whose Son is ever mystically enthroned upon His Holy Virgin-Mother in whom all creation rejoices: His living glory and crown, the greatest manifestation of His creative power, the fullest expression of- and the living and intelligent embodiment of- our Orthodox Faith, the saint above all saints, the absolute summit of perfect co-dynamic union between the Creator and His creation.

O saints, what is your secret? Disdain us not! But, by your most effectual and holy prayers unto the all-accomplishing and life-giving God, the inexhaustible and depthless Treasury of all riches, visible and invisible; by your prayers unto Him, O saints, may we—who are always slothful, coarse, proud, light-minded, unfruitful, inactive, apathetic, useless and most sinful—find the gracious glance of your good favor and that of your God in heaven. For, He loves everyone who is aware of their poverty, un-skillfulness and weakness; and He helps everyone who confesses

to Him, and begs His help. He is our All-Good God, without Whom we are, and can do, nothing: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Who is forever worshipped, hymned, glorified and honored by all the saints—together with whom may we also find eternal life in God unto the ages of ages. Amen. (*from holycross-hermitage.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-12:2

Brethren, all the saints through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30

The Lord said to his disciples, "whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Amen I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The saints, and they who truly practice virtue, ‘mortify their members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness passions, evil concupiscence (Col. 3:5);’ and, as the result of this, are pure and without spot, confiding in the promise of our Savior, who said, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. 5:8).’ These, having become dead to the world, and renounced the merchandise of the world, gain an honorable death; for, ‘precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints (Ps. 115 LXX).’ They are also able, preserving the Apostolic likeness, to say, ‘I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me (Gal. 2:20).’ For that is the true life, which a man lives in Christ; for although they are dead to the world, yet they dwell as it were in heaven, minding those things which are above, as he who was a lover of such a habitation said, ‘While we walk on earth, our dwelling is in heaven.’ Now those who thus live, and are partakers in such virtue, are alone able to give glory to God, and this it is which essentially constitutes a feast and a holiday....

For the righteous man, being nurtured in faith and knowledge, and the observance of divine precepts, has his soul always in health. Therefore it is commanded to ‘receive to ourselves him who is weak in the faith,’ and to nourish him, even if he is not yet able to eat bread, but herbs, ‘for he who is weak eats herbs.’ For even the Corinthians were not able to partake of such bread, being yet babes, and like babes they drank milk. ‘For everyone who partakes of milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness (1 Cor. 3:1; Heb. 5:13),’ according to the words of that divine man. The Apostle exhorts his beloved son Timothy, in his first Epistle, ‘to be nourished with the word of faith, and the good doctrine whereto he had attained.’ And in the second, ‘Preserve the form of sound words which you have heard of me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 1:13).’ And not only here, my brethren, is this bread the food of the righteous, neither are the saints on earth alone nourished by such bread and such blood; but we also eat them in heaven, for the Lord is the food even of the exalted spirits, and the angels, and He is the joy of all the heavenly host. And to all He is everything, and He has pity upon all according to His loving-kindness.

Already the Lord has given us angels’ food, and He promises to those who continue with Him in His trials, saying, ‘And I promise to you a kingdom, as My Father has promised to Me; that you shall eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:29, 30).’ O what a banquet is this, my brethren, and how great is the harmony and gladness of those who eat at this heavenly table! For they delight themselves not with that food which is cast out, but with that which produces life everlasting.

Who then shall be deemed worthy of that assembly? Who is so blessed as to be called, and accounted worthy of that divine feast? Truly, ‘blessed is he who shall eat bread in Your kingdom (Luke 14:15).’

Now he who has been counted worthy of the heavenly calling, and by this calling has been sanctified, if he grow negligent in it, although washed becomes defiled: ‘counting the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a profane thing, and despising the Spirit of grace,’ he hears the words, ‘Friend, how did you come in here, not having wedding garments?’ For the banquet of the saints is spotless and pure; ‘for many are called, but few chosen (Heb. 10:29; Matt. 22:12,14).’

– St. Athanasius the Great, *Festal Letter VII*

Towards an Orthodox America

To launch its Fundraising Campaign for their Parish Hall Building Fund, Holy Apostles Orthodox Church in Beltsville is pleased to present a special address by one of Orthodoxy's most beloved and respected authors and speakers: '**Towards an Orthodox America**' with special guest speaker, Frederica Mathewes-Green.

Father George Johnson and the clergy and parishioners of Holy Apostles would like to invite you to a special address by noted author and speaker, **Frederica Mathewes-Green**, which kicks off our fundraising drive for our new parish hall at our historic chapel & campus. Please join us on **Sunday evening, June 10, at 6 o'clock**, for an inspiring talk by Frederica on realizing the vision for an Orthodox America. All are welcome. Bring a friend!

More information:

- **Where:**
 - **Holy Apostles Orthodox Church**
 - *Currently located in Twin Chimneys Office Park*
 - 10760 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, Maryland 20705
 - Contact info: 301-572-5738; apostlebird@aol.com

For more information, visit www.holyapostlesorthodoxchurch.org

Commemorated Today: The Venerable Nun Hieria

The Nun Hieria was born into a pagan family, and became the wife of a Roman senator, but after a mere 7 months was widowed. While in the Assyrian city of Seuapolis, she learned that in the vicinity of the city of Niziba there was a women's monastery, in which asceticised the young Monastic Febronia, distinguished for her particularly strict life. Under the guise of a wanderer, Hieria visited her and conversed with her all night, being instructed in the Christian faith, and then

having returned home, she was baptised and persuaded her parents to do likewise. During the time of the persecution by Diocletian (284-305), the majority of the inhabitants of the Niziba monastery left and hid away from the persecutors, but Saint Febronia was brought to trial before the cruel official Selinus and for her confession of Christ she was subjected to inhuman tortures. Saint Hieria intrepidly denounced the cruelty of the torturers. The judge gave orders to arrest and torture her also, but then he changed his mind, in learning that Saint Hieria – was the widow of a Roman senator. Bitterly bewailing the martyr's death of Saint Febronia (+ c. 304, Comm. 25 June), Hieria grieved, that she herself had not been vouchsafed to suffer for the faith in Christ. With tears she besought the hegumeness Brienna to accept her in place of Febronia at the monastery. Having bestown all her substance upon the monastery, the nun Hieria spent there the remaining days of her life and peacefully reposed to God in about the year 320. *(from holytrinityorthodox.com)*

FAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL (JUNE 4-28)

The Podvig of the Apostles' Fast is less strict than during Great Lent: We abstain from eating meat and dairy products throughout the Fast. The Church *ustav* also provides that, on **Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays** during the Apostles' Fast, we **abstain from consuming fish, wine and oil**; on the other days of the week, **Tuesday and Thursday**, we **abstain from eating fish**. Eating **fish is permitted on Saturdays and Sundays**, on days commemorating certain great Saints, and **on the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (24 June)**. The monastic originators (hence the extension of strict fasting to Mondays) of these rules also prescribed 100 prostrations on weekdays during the Fast.

Teachings of St. Seraphim of Sarov on Fasting

Fasting consists not just of eating rarely, but also of eating little. And not just in eating only one meal, but in not eating much. Foolish is the faster who waits for a specific time [to eat a meal], but then at the time of the meal is completely consumed, body and mind, with insatiable eating.

In proportion to how the body of the faster becomes thin and light, so the spiritual life attains perfection and reveals itself in wonderful ways. Then the soul acts as if in an incorporeal body. Carnal feelings are shut off, and the spirit, released from the world, ascends to heaven and completely immerses itself in contemplation of the spiritual world.

Every day one should partake of just enough food to permit the body, being fortified, to be a friend and helper to the soul in performing the virtues. Otherwise, with the body exhausted, the soul may also weaken. *(adapted from stjohndc.org)*

[The editor apologizes for neglecting to include the below in last week's e-bulletin.]

Thank You!

Thank you everyone for all the joy and attention you gave both of us in celebration of our 50th anniversary. We are both happy we had a chance to share our vow renewals with our close church family. We were happy to sit with our youth and enjoy their company and hear their accomplishments. Milestones shared made for a very wonderful day for us. Thank you again.

Love Kari and Diane



June Anniversaries and Birthdays

Anniversaries:

Steve & Nancy Hall 4th

Larry & Gail Hartenstein 6th

Bernie & Carol Vallandingham 8th

Michael & Phyllis Kopan 9th



Birthdays:

Rebecca Vallandingham 6th

Chris Nicolaus 25th

Ron Wright 30th

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Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org>

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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, 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 Dominiacki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert & Pam 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, Bernie Takabayashi & family, 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.)