

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.

June 17, 2017 – 3rd Sunday After Pentecost

Holy Martyrs Manuel, Sabel, and Ismael of Persia

The Holy Martyrs Manuel, Sabel and Ismael, brothers by birth, were descended from an illustrious Persian family. Their father was a pagan, but their mother was a Christian, who baptized the children and raised them with firm faith in Christ the Savior.

When they reached adulthood, the brothers entered military service. Speaking on behalf of the Persian emperor Alamundar, they were his emissaries in concluding a peace treaty with the emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363). Julian received them with due honor and showed them his favor. But when the brothers refused to take part in a pagan sacrifice, Julian became angry. He annulled the treaty and incarcerated the ambassadors of a foreign country like common criminals.

At the interrogation he told them that if they scorned the gods he worshipped, it would be impossible to reach any peace or accord between the two sides. The holy brothers answered that they were sent as emissaries of their emperor on matters of state, and not to argue about “gods.” Seeing their firmness of faith, the emperor ordered the brothers to be tortured.



They beat the holy martyrs, then nailed their hands and feet to trees. Later, they drove iron spikes into their heads, and wedged sharp splinters under their fingernails and toenails. During this time of torment the saints glorified God and prayed as if they did not feel the tortures.

Finally, the holy martyrs were beheaded. Julian ordered their bodies to be burned, and suddenly there was an earthquake. The ground opened up and the bodies of the holy martyrs disappeared into the abyss. After two days of fervent prayer by the Christians, the earth returned the bodies of the holy brothers, from which a sweet fragrance issued forth. Many pagans, witnessing the miracle, came to believe in Christ and were baptized.

Christians reverently buried the bodies of the holy martyrs Manuel, Sabel and Ismael in the year 362. Since that time the relics of the holy passion-bearers have been glorified with miracles.

When he heard about the murder of his emissaries, and that Julian was marching against him with a vast army, the Persian emperor Alamundar mustered his army and started off toward the border of his domain. The Persians vanquished the Greeks in a great battle, and Julian the Apostate was killed by the holy Great Martyr Mercurius (November 24).

Thirty years later the pious emperor Theodosius the Great (+ 397) built at Constantinople a church in honor of the holy martyrs, and Saint Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople (May 12), then still a hieromonk, wrote a Canon in memory and in praise of the holy brothers. (*from oca.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:1-10

Brethren, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 6:22-33

The Lord said, “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

A Word From the Holy Fathers

I am now 79 years old. My heart is weak and my strength is failing me and it is evident that my time of departure from this world is near. St. Paul left a will to all the Christians. “Become followers of me, as I am of Christ.” I certainly do not dare to say this to all the Christians but to you, my children; I can say follow my example just as I have followed the example of the Apostle Paul. My life has been tough and difficult but never did I pray to God to make it easy. Because “narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Mt. 7:14.

....And now, my children let me offer to you my last will and testament. I believe deeply in God and I have built my whole life upon His commandments. And I bequeath to you that you offer your lives to God and build all things upon the commandments of Christ.

For a long time and with great determination I sailed through life against the current of the world and to you my children I bequeath that you sail against the

current, as difficult at that may be. Turn your attention and your heart away from the great majority of human beings who pursue not the higher goals but those which are easy to acquire. Do not accede to the great majority of people who live according to their own thinking and with the mind of their leaders. They anchor their lives not with the commandments of Christ but on the directives of people who have the power to lead them not to the Kingdom of Heaven but to the riches of the earthly kingdom.

The purpose of life is to seek after the highest truth and to never divert from that road even when they force you to serve the purposes of the lowest form of truth by trampling upon the truth of Christ. You should be ready even to be martyred since you are sailing against the current. Keep your faith firmly in your thoughts, in your husbands and in your wives just the way I kept it. In your scientific endeavors and in your efforts to study the mysteries of nature, you should not look for your own glory but only to lessen the pain of your sick and helpless fellow human beings.

Remember that I, your father, sacrificed all my life in doing these things. Imitate me just the way I imitated the Apostle Paul and do not work for your stomach but to help those who without your help cannot free themselves from the tortures of poverty and lies.

If you fulfill all these things that I bequeath to you, the blessing of God will come upon you in harmony with the words of David the prophet. “But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember his commandments to do them.” (Ps. 103: 17-18.) I have always prayed for that blessing and grace of God in my life for you my children, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren and surely I will always pray for your eternal life when I will stand before the throne of my God and your God, my Creator and your Creator. – St. Luke of Simferopol, *Spiritual Last Will and Testament* (from full-of-grace-and-truth.blogspot.com)

Also Commemorated Today: New Martyrs of the Turkish Yoke

On the third Sunday after Pentecost, the Orthodox Church commemorates those who were martyred by the Turks after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Among them are the 1241 New Martyrs of Naousa who were brutally massacred in the region of Kioski. These men, women and children were massacred by the Ottoman Turks from Thursday of Bright Week to the Sunday of Thomas in 1822.

It began with the martyrdom of five priests from the Church of Saint George and the destruction of the church with those in it. Hieromonk John of the Holy

Monastery of Petras Olympus represented his Monastery in the struggle of the Greeks. On Bright Thursday of 1822 Saint John celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Church of Saint George in Naousa together with four other priests. At the end of the Divine Liturgy thirty faithful were in the church who had fled there to pray for God's mercy and to escape the fury of the Turks. Unfortunately, the siege of the Turks was persistent and they managed to enter inside the temple, and behead all those who were inside with the first being Hieromonk John, then Papa Gerasimos the Spiritual and Papa Dimitri the Sakelario, and two other priests whose names remain unknown. The people of Naousa had sought to defend the church from destruction, but were killed in return. (*adapted from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Saint Botolph

Saint Botolph was born in England around 610. He was born into a Christian Saxon family in the early seventh century. Botolph and his brother Adolph were educated by Saint Fursey in Cnobersburg Monastery, located at Burgh Castle near Great Yarmouth.

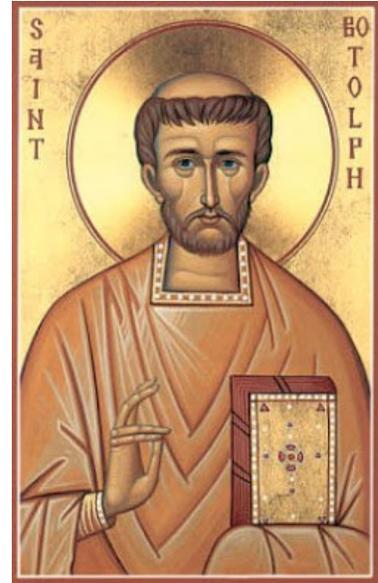
When Mercian forces invaded the region, Botolph and Adolph went to Europe and became Benedictine monks in Belgian Gaul. Botolph returned to England in 647 to found a monastery in East Anglia based on the Benedictine Rule. He is credited for first bringing Benedictine monasticism to England. His brother Adolph, also commemorated on June 17th, remained in Germany or Holland and became a bishop.

On his return, Botolph approached the little known King of the southern Angles, Ethelmund, whose sisters he had known in Germany that were also monastics. The King offered Botolph part of the royal estate upon which to build a monastery. Botolph however had specifically asked for land not already in anyone's possession so that his gain would not be another person's loss. Instead he settled for a desolate, barren island, reported to be haunted by demons. We are told that he received threats and horrible apparitions by these marsh-demons and overcame them through prayer, fasting and erecting a large Cross. Thus, land haunted by demons became holy ground.

With the support of Saint Syre, Saint Aubierge, and their brother, King Anna of East Anglia (who may be the same King Ethelmund), Botolph founded the Monastery of Ikanhoe (Oxisland), which according to the Saxon Chronicle, was established in 654 AD as a Benedictine abbey. The site was surrounded by water and endless work was needed to make this austere place viable. But Botolph attracted enough brother monks and hermits and soon, through their hard work and faith, the monastery grew. The monks built several structures, turned large areas

of marsh and scrub into productive grazing and farm land, and dispelled the local people's fear of demons.

No one knows for sure today where Ikanhoe was - the two modern contenders are Iken in Suffolk and Boston in Lincolnshire. For many years local historians believed that the developing area around the monastery came to be called Botolph's Town, then Botolphston, with the name finally contracted to Boston. However, more recent research suggests that the actual spot may be the village of Iken, near Snape in east Suffolk which, centuries ago, was almost encircled by the River Alde. The church there is also dedicated to St. Botolph.



During his time at the monastery, Botolph also worked as a travelling missionary through the rough, bandit-plagued areas of East Anglia, Kent and Sussex. He was known for many wonders and healings and displayed a gift of prophecy. His biographer, the English monk and musician, Folcard, writing in the 11th century, describes him as "distinguished for his sweetness of disposition and affability." Even the prominent Anglo-Saxon monastic, St. Ceolfrid, who later brought to Rome the Codex Amiatinus, a manuscript of the oldest Vulgate text of the Bible, came to Ikanhoe to spend time with this man.

Having led many in the way of salvation, and renowned for his sanctity and miracles, Saint Botolph reposed after a long painful illness while being carried to chapel for a compline service on 17 June 680 – the date his feast is commemorated. He was buried there at Ikanhoe. He was known to be "a man of remarkable life and learning, full of the grace of the Holy Spirit." His relics were later found incorrupt, and giving off a sweet fragrance.

Botolph is supposed to have been buried at his foundation of Ikanhoe. In 970 King Edgar gave permission for his relics to be transferred to Burgh, near Woodbridge where they remained for some 50 years before being transferred, on the instructions of Cnut, to their own tomb at the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds. His relics were later translated (with those of his brother Adolph) to Thorney Abbey, although his head was transferred to Ely and other portions to Westminster Abbey and other houses. December 1 is the Feast of the Translation of his relics. He was greatly revered by his Christian countrymen in antiquity, and is commemorated to this day in the name of two cities, both the original Boston in the Lincoln-shire fens (about 100 miles north of London), and likewise its namesake in the New World, in Massachusetts. The feast of St. Botolph is celebrated June 17. (*ad. frm. johnsanidopoulos.com*)

WHAT IS AN ORTHODOX MAN?

Happy is the man who becomes wise – who comes to have understanding (Proverbs 3:13). We live today in a society where husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, have been torn from their roots, ripped from time-honored and theologically-sanctioned values about what it is to be a man, a woman, a family. The old values and roles, so easily nurtured in a largely agrarian and patriarchal society, now seem almost impossible to live in our industrialized cities. The healthy psychological bonding that used to occur naturally between mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, is now a rare experience.

As if this were not a difficult enough burden for the spiritually-minded to bear, we are also now inundated by strange and sometimes aberrant notions about sexuality and role models. We live in a culture of increasing “unisex,” perversion, and immorality – on the job, at home, and sometimes even in the church. The “women’s liberation movement” was originally an understandable reaction to irresponsible, heavy-handed, arrogant and insensitive men; but instead of raising the conscience and morality of men to the traditional nurturing and moral level of women, it had the effect of bringing women down to the more animal level of men’s behavior, while at the same time shattering the “male myth” without giving in its place a proper sense of what it is to be a man – or, for our purposes, what it is to be an Orthodox Christian man.

An extraordinarily relevant model for the Orthodox man today is the Holy Prophet Job in the Old Testament. Indeed, here was a man “after God’s own heart.” His life gives evidence of certain manly characteristics by which the Orthodox man can, and should, measure himself today – providing a program of spiritual growth and struggle that is without equal. We think of St. Job primarily in the context of his trial of faith and the afflictions of his life, for which reason the Orthodox call him “The Muchsuffering.” We forget that he persevered to the end and found victory over his troubles. We seldom realize that in order to obtain this victory, he needed certain qualities of character and soul – the qualities of a true and godly man.

What are those qualities?

- ◆ He was a man who did not forget God and God’s loving care for him, no matter how terrible the present affliction: God was always with me and the friendship of God protected my home (Job 29:3- 4).
- ◆ The Orthodox man strives never to forget God and His blessings whether in the past or in the present, and he gives this same example to his wife and children, especially in times of trial.

- ◆ The Prophet loved his children and missed them sorely when he was in exile. He did not see them as an irritating intrusion into his own “lifestyle.” He rose early to pray and make sacrifice for them, in order to purify them in case they had sinned. The Orthodox man prays ardently for his children – both for wisdom in guiding them aright, and for God’s blessing and grace on them. This is also a model for a priest, who has many spiritual children.
- ◆ St. Job was just and fair, both with his children and with those for whom he had responsibility outside his family. In the same way, an Orthodox man is a model of justice and even-handedness for his own children, tempering justice with mercy.
- ◆ The Prophet Job received respect from old and young. Orthodox men show respect to their elders, both in the family and at work, but especially in the Church, and they earn the respect of their wives and children, doing nothing to kill this respect or to scandalize them.
- ◆ The Saint was stable, like a tree whose roots always have water. An Orthodox man consciously strives to avoid the restlessness of our mobile society, recognizing the need for children to have a secure sense of place and stability in their lives.
- ◆ St. Job was a seeker after God and wisdom: The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord. An Orthodox man also strives to serenely rest in God’s providence, keeping lively his commitment to the Orthodox Faith, and modeling this for his family according to his strength.

Because of all these spiritual characteristics, St. Job was able to endure terrible suffering and affliction, as a result of which the Lord blessed the last part of Job’s life even more than he had blessed the first. Here, then, is a real example for today’s men, who are often tempted to retreat into passive selfcenteredness in the face of difficulty and temptation, who are too ready (and encouraged by society to do so) to jettison job, wife, and children at the slightest whim or difficulty. Here, then, is a Saint who can inspire in contemporary man a real manhood rather than a fake masculinity. Always obey the Lord and you will be happy. If you are stubborn, you will be ruined (Proverbs 28:14).

Father Alexey Young

~ Happy Father’s Day! ~

Treasurer's report for May

Glory to God! May was a difficult month for us with the basement flooding troubles in the brick house. We had a total income of \$11,900 and expenses of \$17,500. The major expense for the month was \$3,900 in water removal and mitigation in the basement as we required the fans and dehumidifiers for much longer than originally anticipated due to the constant rains. Thank you for continuing to be generous with your gifts as we work our way through this issue and come up with a permanent solution.

In Christ,

Josh Moore

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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, Alexander Shostko, Bernie Takabayashi & family, 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.)