

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.

August 5, 2018 – 10th Sunday After Pentecost

Forefeast of the Transfiguration

In the church hymns for this day: "O Faithful, brightly celebrating today the Forefeast of the glorious and awesome Transfiguration of Christ" and "it is brightly festive," "let us meet in advance the Transfiguration of Christ," "let us prepare ourselves well in the morning" and "let us intelligently cleanse ourselves beforehand for the mount, that we may ascend Tabor to see Christ," and "let us behold the glory of His transfiguration, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father," "and there let us hear the voice of the Living God, the Unoriginate Father, in a bright cloud witnessing with the Divine Spirit, to His relationship of eternal sonship," "and being exalted in spirit, let us ever sing praises to the Coessential Trinity."

Troparion of the Forefeast, in Tone 4: Let us meet in advance the Transfiguration of Christ, O Faithful, * Let us brightly celebrate the Forefeast and cry out: * The day of divine gladness is at hand, * The Master ascends Mount Tabor // To glow in the beauty of His Divinity.

(from Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., by S. V. Bulgakov (Trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris))



Transfiguration of Our Lord

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16

Brethren, I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you*. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do* not *have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 17:14-23

At that time, when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

Also Commemorated Today: Martyr Eusignius of Antioch

The Martyr Eusignius was born at Antioch in the mid-third century. For sixty years he served in the Roman armies of the emperors Diocletian, Maximian Hercules, Constantius Chlorus, Constantine the Great and his sons. Saint Eusignius was a companion of Saint Basiliscus (March 3 and May 22), and he provided an account of his martyrdom. At the beginning of the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, Saint Eusignius was a witness to the appearance of the Cross in the sky, a prediction of victory.

Saint Eusignius retired in his old age from military service and returned to his own country. There he spent his time in prayer, fasting, and attending the church of God. So he lived until the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-363), who yearned for a return to paganism. Through the denunciation of one of the Antiochian citizens, Saint Eusignius stood trial as a Christian before the emperor Julian in the year 362. He fearlessly accused the emperor of apostasy from Christ, and reproached him with the example of his relative, Constantine the Great, and he described in detail how he himself had been an eyewitness to the appearance of the sign of the Cross in the sky. Julian did not spare the aged Saint Eusignius, then 110 years old, but ordered him beheaded. *(from oca.org)*

A New Light from the Holy Land - St. John Jacob the Chozebite

A new light has appeared in the land sanctified by the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is a light to guide and enlighten Orthodox Christians who was not himself the light but reflected Christ who is the Light of the World. St. John Jacob the Chozebite was canonized by the Orthodox Church of Romania in 1992 which was affirmed by the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem in 2015.

St. John Jacob was born in 1913 in Romania as the only child of pious Orthodox parents Maxim and Katherine and was baptized with the name Elias. Shortly after his birth his mother fell asleep in the Lord and two years later his father also died leaving his grandmother Maria to raise him. She taught the young Elias how to pray, fast and to learn and follow the commandments of the Lord. In 1923 his grandmother also died and he was then entrusted to his uncle Alec.

Known as a pious Orthodox Christian, his family encouraged Elias to enter the seminary to study for the priesthood. He was attracted, however, to the life of the monks who populated the many monasteries that dotted the Romanian landscape. In 1932 he packed his meager belongings and set out for the Neamt Monastery where he was received into the brotherhood and given the obedience (work) in the library and the infirmary. Two years later he was drafted into the 9th Infantry Regiment of the Romanian army serving as a male nurse and after fulfilling his military duty he returned to his monastery where he was tonsured as a monk in 1936 with the name John.

Desiring more solitude and to be in the holy places sanctified by the Lord's life, death and resurrection, he departed Romania in 1936 for the Holy Land along with two fellow monks. Venerating the holy places where the Lord Jesus suffered, died and rose from the tomb, Father John entered the community of the Monastery of Saint Sabbas in the desert wilderness. Here he remained for ten years serving as

the sacristan of the monastery church: baking the prosphora (Communion bread) and maintain the order and cleanliness of the church. He also served in the monastery infirmary, tending to the sick monks as well as the local Arabs who came to the monastery for help. While his days were spent in his monastic obediences, his nights were given over to prayer and reading the Scriptures and teachings of the Holy Fathers. Desiring even greater solitude, Father John lived in a cave in the desert wilderness of Qumran, near the Dead Sea in 1939-1940.

In 1947, with the blessing of the Patriarch of Romania and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Father John was ordained deacon in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and later that same year ordained as a priest. He was assigned to oversee the Romanian Skete of St. John the Baptist in the Jordan Valley near the site of our Lord's Baptism. Here he conducted the daily services in the Romanian language and ministered to Romanians who were on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In 1952 Fr. John retired from his responsibilities at the Skete of St. John and moved to St. George the Chozebite Monastery in the Hoseva desert, eventually settling in a remote cave. Here he lived for seven years with one disciple named Joanichios praying constantly, fasting, fighting against his sinful passions. His bed was a wooden plank, his food biscuits, olives and figs and water. There Father John and Father Joanichios celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the cave chapel, receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion.

In 1960 Father John's health began to decline and he knew that death was approaching. He received Holy Communion on August 4 and peacefully fell asleep in the Lord the next day at the young age of 47. On August 8, 1980 his relics were found to be incorrupt and fragrant, and he was canonized by the Orthodox Church of Romania in 1992. His feastday is the day of his falling asleep – August 5 (August 18 Julian calendar). His relics are enshrined in a side chapel of the Monastery of St. George the Chozebite. Those who have been blessed to be on pilgrimage to the Holy Land know this monastery for its spectacular location: is literally built into the side of a cliff in Wadi Qelt of the West Bank of Israel.

St. John Jacob, like many of our canonized saints spent his life in the solitude and quiet of a monastery. I have been blessed over the years to spend time in several monasteries including the Holy Mountain – Mt. Athos. Surrounded by peace, quiet, sanctity it was often difficult to leave and return to *“real life”*. How can I preserve the atmosphere of peace and prayerfulness that I always find in monasteries? This is the question that came up at Camp Nazareth recently as we came to the end of one of our Diocesan camping weeks. One of the graduating seniors encouraged the other campers to *“take Camp Nazareth with you.”* In other words he was encouraging his fellow campers to take what they learned and experienced at Camp Nazareth back to their *“real lives”*. But the hard question

is: *How do I do this?* How do I maintain the “spiritual high” that so many of our young people describe after a week at camp? How do I maintain my enthusiasm for the Faith and love for the Lord after I leave the monastery or leave church camp?

One helpful way to maintain what I experienced in a monastery (and at Camp Nazareth) is to find a time and a place daily for peace, quiet and prayer. This becomes an extension of a monastery, an extension of Camp Nazareth, a place for a mini retreat. It is a place with one or more icons, a vigil lamp and we take up our prayer book and Bible. Here we turn to be with God for a daily quiet time, for at least 10-20 minutes we shut out the busyness of our day, move away from social media and be still. While the circumstances of life prohibit many of us from spending hours each day in quiet and prayer like St. John Jacob, his example encourages us to begin to practice the words of Psalm 45:10: *“Be still and know that I am God.”*

- Father Edward Pehanich

(from acrod.org)



A Word From the Holy Fathers

When God created man He set a conscience within his soul so that he may be governed by it as by a rule, and so that he may be guided in what to do and what to avoid. Conscience is nothing other than natural or innate law, which is why it also agrees with the written Law of God. For whatever the Law of God teaches, conscience teaches also.

The Law of God commands us to know the one God; conscience teaches the same. Wherefore even pagans, convinced by conscience, acknowledged one God. The Law of God commands us to reverence God above all creatures and to render supreme honor to God alone; conscience teaches the same. The Law of God teaches us not to hold anything equal to God; conscience teaches the same. The Law of God commands us to show submissiveness, subordination and obedience to God as the supreme authority; conscience teaches the same. The Law of God commands us to fear God as the most righteous Judge; we hear the same from conscience. The Law of God commands us to punish those who blaspheme the name of God; our conscience cannot endure it either. The Law of God teaches us to listen to God more than to man; conscience teaches the same. The Law of God demands that we love God above all things; conscience demands the same. For God is the most exalted and supreme good and the source of all good, therefore we must love Him above all created good things. The Law of God teaches us to thank God for all things; conscience teaches us the same, for conscience itself convinces us to be thankful to our Benefactor.

The Law of God commands us to put all our hope in God; conscience commands the same. For God alone is able to do all things as Almighty. Every created thing is powerless without God and apart from God, therefore hope in them is inconstant and infirm. The Law of God commands us to submit and give honor to parents and all authorities sent by God; we hear the same thing from our conscience. The Law of God forbids us to harm a man and to deprive him of life; conscience forbids the same thing. The Law of God commands us to help a man in misfortune and need; conscience commands the same. The Law of God forbids adultery and fornication; a man hears the same from his conscience, and it thunders within him not to defile himself with uncleanness. The Law of God forbids us to lay hold of the goods of others without the consent of the proprietor; conscience cries out the same. The Law of God forbids lying, flattery, and deceit; conscience forbids it too.

The Law of God commands us not to desire anything that belongs to another; conscience commands it too. Thus the Law of God and conscience mutually agree and are appointed for the same end, that is, our blessedness, whence even the pagans, enlightened by philosophical teaching wrote many useful precepts. This

comes from nothing other than conscience or natural law illumined by much labor and instruction. Therefore everyone who sins against conscience also sins against the Law of God and against the Lawgiver Himself, God. Whoever does not listen to his conscience listens neither to the Law of God nor to God Himself. Whoever does not obey his conscience obeys neither the Law of God nor God Himself. Whoever offends his own conscience also offends God Himself. Those Christians who sin against their conscience do not truly worship God, but are hypocrites, for it is impossible to worship God without a clean conscience. A true Christian does not wish to, and keeps himself from sinning against his conscience, and so break the Law of God. He would rather suffer than sin. Faith rests in such a conscience and makes a man joyful; for where there is a clean conscience, there is faith and joy.

Just as the Law of God accuses a man of sin, so likewise conscience accuses him also. So it is that when a word of reproof is spoken in general, then sinners are wounded in conscience and troubled. Thus the profligate are troubled when profligacy is spoken of; thieves and robbers are troubled when thievery and robbery are spoken of; flatterers and liars are troubled when deceit and lies are spoken of; they are troubled and even show some outward signs. This is the accusation of conscience working in them. Just as the Law of God puts the fear of God's judgment into a sinner, so likewise conscience puts fear into him and cries within the sinner, "Man, it shall go miserably for you." Just as the effect of the Law of God and of conscience are the same, so shall they be the same at the Judgment of Christ. There the Law of God which he violated will accuse the sinner; the conscience offended by his sins will also accuse him. There, these two, conscience and the Law of God, will be the witnesses and the accusers against every sinner. It happens that an evil conscience is as though asleep; but when it awakens and begins to accuse the sinner, then cruel torment will come upon him through his conscience, whence it is that many kill themselves, not enduring the pangs of conscience. For just as there is no better repose than from a pure conscience, so likewise there is no greater disquiet and torment than from a wicked conscience. If conscience torments so much here, how shall it torment a sinner in the age to come when all his sins shall stand before him and it accuses him of them and torments him?

O sinners, why do we sleep? Let us awaken and repent and cleanse our sins by repentance and contrition of heart, and let us correct ourselves and cease from sinning and offending our conscience, lest we appear before the Judgment of Christ with an evil conscience blackened with sins, when the books of the conscience shall be opened and each shall receive according to his works. Do not do what conscience forbids you to do, for an unerring conscience forbids what the Law of

God also forbids. For a good conscience is in agreement with the Law of God. The Law of God says, "You shalt not kill, You shalt not steal" (Ex. 20:13,15), and so on. You also hear the same within your conscience, and it tells you the same thing. Avoid, then, doing what conscience forbids, lest having wounded your conscience you wound your soul.
– St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

Archbishop Demetrios Raises the Issues of Religious Freedom of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in State Department Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom

WASHINGTON – His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, at the invitation of the Secretary of State of the United States Mike Pompeo, participated in the first-ever *Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom*, July 24-26, 2018, held at the State Department.

Archbishop Demetrios, addressing the plenary meeting on July 25, raised the issue of religious freedom for the Ecumenical Patriarchate and in particular said that the Ecumenical Patriarchate is deprived, first of a legal status which limits its ability to exercise its duties and ministry; secondly the Ecumenical Patriarchate has suffered a massive confiscation of its properties buildings, and land; and thirdly, the Ecumenical Patriarchate had only one theological school, located on the island of Halki, which has been closed by the Turkish authorities for almost 50 years and remains closed, despite the efforts of many people and countries in the West, including repeated appeals by U.S. Presidents. As the Patriarchal Theological School of Halki remains closed, said the Archbishop, the Ecumenical Patriarchate is deprived of the ability to educate its own clergy, which is clearly a violation of its religious freedom.

The Archbishop's remarks were very well received by the Plenary and the participants applauded his call for action in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

The Ministerial convened a broad range of stakeholders from eighty countries, including foreign ministers, ambassadors, international organization representatives, religious leaders, and civil society representatives, to discuss challenges, identify concrete ways to combat religious persecution and discrimination, and ensure greater respect for religious freedom for all.

On the sidelines of the Ministerial conference, His Eminence had the opportunity to meet with several officials including Sam Brownback, United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom; John J. Sullivan, Deputy Secretary of State; Knox Thames, Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia; and religious and political leaders from around the world. (*from goarch.org*)

July Treasurer's Report

Glory to God! July was a blessing for St. Thomas as we prepare to have major expenditures in August for repairs on the house basement. In July we had an operating income of \$13,076 and expenditures of \$9,525. Major expenses included our annual environmental tax, high power bills (combatting the flooding in the basement has required lots of power!), and restocking candle supplies. We also gave over %530 towards charity last month, which includes our monthly \$100 support of an Orthodox missionary in Guatemala, Jesse Brandow, with the remainder going to help needy individuals in our community. In Christ, Josh Moore, Treasurer.

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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.)