

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

(301) 638-5035 Church
4419 Leonardtown Road
Waldorf, MD 20601

Rev. Father Joseph Edgington, Pastor

(703) 380-9673 Cell

fredgington@gmail.com

www.apostlethomas.org

American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Saturdays: Confession 5:00 PM,

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sundays: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.



February 7, 2016 – Afterfeast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple | St. Parthenius, Bishop of Lampsacus

Saint Parthenius, Bishop of Lampsacus, was a native of the city of Melitoupolis (in northwestern Asia Minor), where his father Christopher served as deacon. The youth did not receive adequate schooling, but he learned the Holy Scripture by attending church services. He had a good heart, and distributed to the poor the money he earned working as a fisherman.

Filled with the grace of God, St Parthenius from age eighteen healed the sick in the name of Christ, cast out demons and worked other miracles. Learning of the young man's virtuous life, Bishop Philetus of Melitoupolis educated him and ordained him presbyter.

In 325, during the reign of Constantine the Great, Archbishop Achilles of Cyzicus made him bishop of the city of Lampsacus (Asia Minor). In the city were many pagans, and the saint fervently began to spread the faith in Christ, confirming it through many miracles and by healing the sick.

The people began to turn from their pagan beliefs, and the saint went to the emperor Constantine the Great seeking permission to tear down the pagan temple and build a Christian church in its place. The emperor received the saint with honor, gave him a decree authorizing the destruction of the pagan temple, and

provided him with the means to build a church. Returning to Lampsacus, St Parthenius had the pagan temple torn down, and built a beautiful church of God in the city.

In one of the razed temples, he found a large marble slab which he thought would be very suitable as an altar. The saint ordered work to begin on the stone, and to move it to the church. Through the malice of the devil, who became enraged at the removal of the stone from the pagan temple, the cart overturned and killed the driver Eutychian. St Parthenius restored him to life by his prayer and shamed the devil, who wanted to frustrate the work of God.

The saint was so kind that he refused healing to no one who came to him, or who chanced to meet him by the wayside, whether he suffered from bodily illnesses or was tormented by unclean spirits. People even stopped going to physicians, since St Parthenius healed all the sick for free. With the great power of the name of Christ, the saint banished a host of demons from people, from their homes, and from the waters of the sea.

Once, the saint prepared to cast out a devil from a certain man, who had been possessed by it since childhood. The demon began to implore the saint not to do so. St Parthenius promised to give the evil spirit another man in whom he could dwell. The demon asked, "Who is that man?" The saint replied, "You may dwell in me, if you wish." The demon fled as if stung by fire, crying out, "If the mere sight of you is a torment to me, how can I dare to enter into you?"

An unclean spirit, cast out of the house where the imperial purple dye was prepared, said that a divine fire was pursuing him with the fire of Gehenna. Having shown people the great power of faith in Christ, the saint converted a multitude of idol-worshippers to the true God. St Parthenius died peacefully and was solemnly buried beside the cathedral church of Lampsacus, which he built. *(from oca.org)*

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 1:15-17

My son Timothy, this *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.



Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 15:21-28

At that time, Jesus departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs." And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

AMAZONSMILE

The on-line shopping store, Amazon.com will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese of the USA whenever you shop on AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know – same products, same prices, same service. Simply go to the home page of our Diocesan website (www.acrod.org) and click on the AmazonSmile button in the far left column and then shop as usual.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The holy mother goes up to the temple to exhibit to the law a new and strange wonder, even that child long expected, who opened the virgin's womb, and yet did not burst the barriers of virginity; that child, superior to the law, who yet fulfilled the law; that child that was at once before the law, and yet after it; that child, in short, who was of her incarnate beyond the law of nature. For in other cases every womb being opened by connection with a man, and, being impregnated by his seed, receives the beginning of conception, and by the pangs which make perfect parturition, at length brings forth to light its offspring endowed with reason, and with its nature consistent, in accordance with the wise provision of God its creator. For God said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." But the womb of this virgin, without being opened before, or being impregnated with seed, gave birth to an offspring that transcended nature, while at the same time it was cognate to it, and that without detriment to the indivisible unity, so that the miracle was the more stupendous, the prerogative of virginity likewise remaining intact.

She goes up, therefore, to the temple, she who was more exalted than the temple, clothed with a double glory -- the glory, I say, of undefiled virginity, and that of ineffable fecundity, the benediction of the law, and the sanctification of grace.

– Heiromartyr Methodius, Bishop of Patara (+312)

ANNUAL PARISH RETREAT, SKI TRIP TO WEST VIRGINIA



THINK SNOW! Mark your calendar for **11-13 March 2016** to join our annual parish retreat to Davis, West Virginia, for a weekend of fellowship, skiing and fun at Timberline Resort and Blackwater Falls State Park. All families and guests are welcome. **PLEASE ATTEND A SHORT ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING AFTER LITURGY ON 14 FEBRUARY.** *See Dana Dewey if you are interested, but cannot attend this meeting.* This very affordable trip has been planned for those who have never skied before, and for experienced skiers, too. It's also a great opportunity for any non-skiers to get away for a relaxing weekend in the scenic Canaan Valley area of wild and wonderful West Virginia! We'll stay at Canaan Valley Baptist Church in Davis, WV. We'll have use of their fellowship hall, kitchen, Sunday school rooms, and bathrooms, including showers. Timberline resort has a great family style atmosphere, and several recent improvements. It has a 1,000+ foot vertical drop, with trails for accomplished skiers and beginners alike – from the double diamond "Drop" to the gentle, two mile long "Salamander," and lots of intermediates in between. We'll ski 9AM to 4:30PM on Saturday and on Sunday morning we'll conduct our own worship service at our host Church, and have an optional tour of nearby Blackwater Falls State Park before returning home. All first time skiers must take a lesson before getting on a lift! We want a perfect safety record, and this is where it starts! You can get a free lesson from our certified instructor, Al Harvey, and his crew of helpers. They will also help you throughout the day - ask them to watch you, and to offer helpful tips that can make your skiing easier, safer, and more enjoyable. Experienced skiers will only need a quick safety check run on the beginners' slope before hitting the slopes with their buddies. Spread the word and THINK SNOW!

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 54: Widow and Orphan



“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (James 1:27 RSV)

Stewards are wise in how they give to those in need. Giving to those in need without wisdom and insight may lead to even greater poverty. I have talked before about giving to the hungry poor on the streets of the city. I used to offer a food coupon from a local fast-food chain as a gift to those who asked for money when they said they needed to eat. I’ve changed my approach. Now I invite the brother or sister in want to that restaurant to eat with me. On most occasions, the invitations are turned down by the supposedly hungry beggars. It takes wisdom and insight to discriminate between the poor and the manipulator.

Among all those whose needs demand our interest, it is the widow and the orphan who have the strongest claims on our stewardship. The holy Apostle James: Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. How does God care for a family left behind because of accident, war or medical problem?

God does not send miraculous manna from heaven as He did for the Israelites in the wilderness. He does not perform a miracle by sending ravens with food as He did for St. Elias. God rather performs a miracle on human hearts. That miracle is the dismissing of selfishness, the opening of the fountain of kindness.

God tests the love of His beloved stewards by giving to them the responsibility of care for those left bereft of the head of the family: the widow and orphan. As in every other act of stewardship and kindness to someone in need, the action taken is not simply one toward that person – it is an act of kindness directed to Christ Himself.

It is our obligation, not simply as financial stewards who care for that which is God’s, but simply as Orthodox Christians to be mothers and fathers to the families that are without. There are so many such families these days. Deaths of the head of the household in war and on the streets of our cities have become common. Acts of kindness need to match the need. *(from acrod.org)*

Also Commemorated Today: Venerable Luke of Hellas



Saint Luke of Hellas was a native of the Greek village of Kastorion. The son of poor farmers, the saint from childhood had toiled much, working in the fields and shepherding the sheep. He was very obedient to his parents and very temperate in eating. He often gave his own food and clothing to the poor, for which he suffered reproach from his parents. He once gave away almost all the seed which was needed for planting in the fields. The Lord rewarded him for his charity, and the harvest gathered was greater than ever before.

As a child, he prayed fervently and often. His mother saw him more than once standing not on the ground, but in the air while he prayed.

After the death of his father, he left his mother and went to Athens, where he entered a monastery. But through the prayers of his mother, who was very concerned about him, the Lord returned him to his parental home in a miraculous manner. He spent four months there, then with his mother's blessing he went to a solitary place on a mountain called Ioannou (or Ioannitsa). Here there was a church dedicated to the holy Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian, where he lived an ascetical life in constant prayer and fasting. He was tonsured there by some Elders who were on pilgrimage. After this, St Luke redoubled his ascetic efforts, for which the Lord granted him the gift of foresight.

After a seven years on Ioannou, the saint moved to Corinth because of an invasion of the Bulgarian armies. Hearing about the exploits of a certain stylite at Patras, he went to see him, and remained for ten years to serve the ascetic with humility and obedience. Afterwards, the saint returned again to his native land and again began to pursue asceticism on Mount Ioannou.

The throngs of people flocking there disturbed his quietude, so with the blessing of his Elder Theophylactus, St Luke went with his disciple to a still more remote place at Kalamion. After three years, he settled on the desolate and arid island of Ampelon because of an invasion of the Turks. Steiris was another place of his ascetic efforts. Here brethren gathered to the monk, and a small monastery grew up, the church of which was dedicated to the Great Martyr Barbara. Dwelling in the monastery, the saint performed many miracles, healing sicknesses of soul and of body.

Foreseeing his end, the saint confined himself in a cell and for three months prepared for his departure. When asked where he was to be buried, the monk replied, "Throw my body into a ravine to be eaten by wild beasts." When the brethren begged him to change these instructions, he commanded them to bury his body on the spot where he lay. Raising his eyes to heaven, he said, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!"

St Luke fell asleep in the Lord on February 7, 946. Later, a church was built over his tomb. Myrrh flowed from his holy relics, and many healings occurred. (*from oca.org*)

St. Richard, King of Wessex

More than any other race, the Anglo Saxons are distinguished for the royal patronage bestowed upon the Christian Church, and for the way in which kings and their families have worked in the spreading of the gospel in their own lands and overseas. St. Richard and his family are outstanding examples. He was one of the kings or princes of Wessex, related to the royal house of Kent, and married to Winna, herself a descendant of Cerdic and aunt to Boniface of Crediton.

Richard was brought up as a Christian and his faith was real and firm. When his eldest son Willibald was three years old, the child fell grievously ill, and there seemed to be no hope for his recovery. His father wrapped him in a blanket and, mounting his horse, rode out into the night to a wayside crucifix at a crossroads near to the village where they lived. Richard placed the child at the foot of the cross and knelt in prayer, pleading for his son's life. Willibald did recover, and two years later he was entrusted to Egbald, the abbot of Warham, near Winchester, to be trained.

When Willibald reached manhood, he returned to his family with a desire to spread the faith abroad, and persuaded his father and brother to accompany him on a pilgrimage to Rome and the Holy Land. Richard had a daughter, Walburga, by a second marriage, and she now entered the convent at Wimborne, under the Abbess Tetta. When Richard had renounced his royal estate, he set sail with his two sons from Hamblehaven near Southampton. They made a leisurely progress through



France, spending time at various Christian centres including Rouen, and it seems that at some time during their journey Richard took monastic vows.

They reached Italy and came to Lucca, where the Cathedral had been built by an Irish monk called Frigidian, but known by the local inhabitants as Frediano. Richard, who was growing old and had become infirm during his travels, now succumbed to the heat and died in 722. His sons saw to his burial in St. Frediano's church and then continued their journey. Later they joined their uncle St. Boniface and their sister St. Walburga in the work of converting the Germans. Their father, St. Richard, is still venerated in Lucca. A famous account of the pilgrimage on which he died was written by his son's cousin, the nun Hugeburc, entitled *Hodoeporicon* (see <https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/willibald.asp>). (from celticsaints.org)

ST. THOMAS WELCOMES NEW MEMBER



Last Sunday, Cecilia Saksen, wife of Benjamin Saksen, was received into Holy Orthodoxy. She is shown reciting the Creed, as her sponsor Sophia looks on. May God grant her many blessed years!



February Anniversaries and Birthdays

Anniversaries:

Stefan & Jennifer Popescu 20th

Birthdays:

Benjamin Dewey 3rd
Lauren Chadwick 11th
Walter Howl 19th

Doug Chadwick 3rd
William Howl V 17th
Clara Vallandingham 24th
John Edgington 28th

Bernard Vallandingham 5th
Caleb Karbowsky 19th
Rachael David 27th



Upcoming Lecture Announced

Metropolitan Kallistos Ware will be giving a lecture on "*The Unchanging Gospel in an Ever-Changing Culture*" on Saturday, March 5, 2016 from 10 AM to 3 PM (with a break from noon to 1 PM).

There will be 3 respondents to the lecture:

Father John Behr, Dean, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary

Dr. Hauna Ondrey, North Park University

Dr Marcus Pleasted, Marquette University

The moderator is Professor Nassif, Professor of Biblical Studies at North Park University (Chicago). This event will be "live streamed" for all who wish to see the event live, and to possibly be part of the audience during the Q/A session with Metropolitan Kallistos. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.northpark.edu/orthodox>

AMAZONSMILE

The on-line shopping store, Amazon.com will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese of the USA whenever you shop on AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know – same products, same prices, same service. Simply go to the home page of our Diocesan website (www.acrod.org) and click on the AmazonSmile button in the far left column and then shop as usual.

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, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbytera Katie Baker and family, Alicia Barosio and family, Millie Borys, Jeffrey Carey, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Tina Crull, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, Alex Holthus, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Deanna Jarrett, Tucker Karl and family, Robert Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Alex & Valentina Makowelski, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Daria Virvan, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, 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.)