

# 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](http://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.

**Wednesdays in Great Lent:** Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts 7:00 PM

**Fridays in Great Lent:** Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

### March 20, 2016 – Sunday of Orthodoxy

This day the Holy Church commemorates the victory of Orthodoxy over heresies and is why this day is also called the "Sunday of Orthodoxy." The Synaxarion explains that the day celebrates "the restoration of the holy and venerable icons," which happened in first half of the 9th century (in 842) "by the Emperor Michael (the Byzantine Emperor), the holy and blessed Empress Theodora and the Holy Methodius, Patriarch of Constantinople." This commemoration was established to celebrate the final victory of the Holy Church over the iconoclastic heresy. In the hymns for this day the Holy Church, glorifying the holy icons, and also its iconodule adherents and inspiring in us the obligation of venerating icons, sings: "A feast of joy and gladness is revealed to us today. For the teachings of the true Faith shines in all their glory, and the Church of Christ is bright with splendor, adorned with the holy icons which now have been restored; and God has granted to the faithful unity of mind." "Now a pious brightness stretches over all, dispersing the flattery of the impious like a cloud, enlightening the hearts of the pious: come let us fall down with pious wisdom before the honorable icons of Christ worshipping in the Orthodox way," "and with due honor let us venerate the holy icons of Christ, of the all pure Virgin and the saints, whether depicted on walls, on wooden panels or on holy vessels, rejecting the impious teaching of the heretics."



But in this way the Holy Church at the time of victory over the iconoclasts in the struggle against various heresies finally explained and defined in the canons of the Seventh Ecumenical Council the Orthodox Christian teaching that is now a celebrated event and not called the celebration of iconolatry but the Triumph of Orthodoxy. It does not mean that after the 10th Century heresies would or could not appear anymore; but it means that all following heresies, even though they were numerous and various, find their accusation and refutation in the definitions of the Seven Ecumenical Councils.

The victory of Orthodoxy in the Greek Church itself was first celebrated on the first Sunday of Great Lent, and thus the basis of the present Triumph of Orthodoxy is historical. Together with these things the Holy Church through the celebration of the present day means to grant great comfort to those who attend. This intention agrees with the rules of faith and piety and the ascetic effort of the fast. It sees in this action the proof of their living communion according to their faith and life, and finds in this the foundation for prayerful petition to God for them. After the end of the liturgy on this day it is necessary to serve the special Rite of Orthodoxy, composed by St. Methodius. Again the restoration of honoring and venerating the holy and venerable icons was annually prescribed "from that time these holy confessors appointed the annual commemoration of this solemnity, so that we might never again fall into a similar ignominy." Christianity and together with it, The Rite of Orthodoxy, passed from Greece to the Russian Church.

Although this rite, in compliance with the circumstances of time, in the space of several centuries also underwent changes, but this rite always specified: 1) to carry the icons for veneration and kissing to the middle of the temple or outside of it if the rite was not done in the temple; 2) to raise up thanksgiving to God for the victory of the Church over heresies; 3) to express obedience to the Church and to confess the true faith; 4) to pronounce anathemas to the heretics; 5) to proclaim the Many Years to the living defenders and promoters of Church, and to exclaim the Eternal Memory to those who have died. Therefore the Rite of Orthodoxy, always consisted, and now consists of the prayerful singing and the exclamation of the Synodikon, concluding with the pronouncing of anathemas to the heretics, the singing of Eternal Memory for the faithful dead children of the Church and intoning of the Many Years to the true believers. (*from Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., by S. V. Bulgakov (Trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris)*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:24-26,30-12:2**

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the reward. And what more

shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who 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 John 1:43-51**

At that time, Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

### **Also Commemorated Today: St Nicetas the Confessor**

Saint Nicetas the Confessor, Archbishop of Apollonias in Bithynia, was noted for his profound knowledge of Holy Scripture, and was a pious and kindly man. During the reign of the Iconoclast emperor Leo the Armenian (813-820), the saint championed the veneration of holy icons, and so was exiled and died in prison.

# DIOCESAN LENTEN RETREATS



## For All Orthodox Christians, Family & Friends

### EASTERN REGION

**LOCATION:** The Conference Center at Valley Forge  
Phoenixville, PA      **DATE:** Sat April 16, 2016      **TIME:** 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

	<b>TOPIC:</b>	<b>PRESENTER:</b>
Adults	<i>The Synergy of Faith and Works for Living and Sharing Our Orthodox Faith</i>	Fr. Michael Chendorain
Ages 12-18	<i>The Spiritual Life: Prayer in Action</i>	Fr. William Bennett
Ages 6-11	<i>We Are The Church: How Am I A Part Of God's Family?</i>	Fr. William George

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 4/2/16**

Come Escape From the World For A Day and Be Spiritually Renewed!



Sponsored By The National A.C.R.Y.

## Local Lenten Retreat – Saturday, April 2 in Baltimore

Annunciation Cathedral (24 W. Preston St., Baltimore, [www.goannun.org](http://www.goannun.org)) is conducting a lenten retreat on Saturday, April 2, from 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM. Abbot Tryphon of the All-Merciful Savior Monastery on Vashon Island, WA (host of *The Morning Offering* on Ancient Faith Radio) will speak on the topic: “*I will walk among you: Our participation in the Incarnation of Christ.*” Cost: \$30. Paid registration due March 23. Registration forms are on the back table in the nave. For more info call: Mrs. Jeanne Tsakalos 410-252-6021 or [jeannetsakalos@hotmail.com](mailto:jeannetsakalos@hotmail.com). [This should not be a substitute for our diocesan Lenten retreat – Ed.]

## On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 60: Giving Your All Part 2



*“And (Jesus) said, ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all the living that she had’” (Luke 21:1-4 RSV)*

The Gospel story of *“The Widow’s Mite”* is very well-known. As Jesus observes those who were making offerings at the temple in Jerusalem, he sees two types of givers. First there are those who make a great show of the great amount they have given; second there was

the widow who gave all that she had.

The large donations of the rich had deprived them of no comfort or even luxury. Their giving required no sacrifice. This poor widow, so much a picture of the widow who gave all her food to the Holy Prophet Elias leaving none for herself or her son, gave her last two coins to give support to what she held to be most important in her life. What she held to be important was of more value than money, and, now without anything, perhaps more important than even her own life. The value of the widow’s mites could not even be compared to the value of any other gift. It is the motive that gives value to our acts. Not the great things that every eye sees and every tongue praises that are accounted most precious in the eyes of God. A heart that is full of faith and love and sacrifice is dearer to God than the most costly gift.

The poor widow gave her living to do the little that she did. She deprived herself of food in order to give these two mites to the cause she loved. And she did it in faith, believing that her heavenly Father would not overlook her great need. It was this unselfish spirit and childlike faith that won Christ’s commendation.

And what of the rich and wealthy? In this Gospel story, those *“rich”* who gave, we are told, gave *“out of their abundance.”* And after they had given? They still had abundance. They gave not in sacrifice. They suffered nothing from their giving. And they had no increase in reliance upon the graciousness of God than they had before they gave their gift.

Our stewardship, as a way of life, is best shown when we give *“till it hurts”* as the old saying goes. If when we give of ourselves to Christ and His Church we do not increase our reliance upon God to provide, then we, too, have simply given out of our abundance. *“...she out of her poverty put in all the living that she had...”* (from [acrod.org](http://acrod.org))

## Yard Sale

Yard sales will be held at St. Thomas on the following Saturdays this year: May 21, June 18, July 9, Sept. 3, Sept. 24, and Oct. 15. Please sign up on the sheet in the fellowship hall if you are able to help. Contact Dennis or Phyllis at thomidg@comcast.net or 410-535-3005 if you have items that you would like to donate to arrange for item pickup.

## JR ACRY Prepares for their Lenten Project

Our Jr. ACRY will again be supporting the Safe Night Program by collecting non-perishable foods to be used in making up bagged lunches that will be given to the homeless throughout the year. Last year, with your help, we were able to donate (80) bagged lunches to be given out, which is (20) more than the previous year. We're hoping to up the ante and beat last year's total with your help this year.

The project is being done in cooperation with LifeStyles of MD (LaPlata) (<http://www.lifestylesofmd.org>) and the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church (Waldorf), who will be hosting the dinner for the homeless Sunday, April 10, 2016.

We are soliciting the following items that are needed to create the lunch bags:

- ❖ Tuna/Ham/Turkey/Chicken/Hummus Kits (meat/cracker combo found by the canned Tuna)
- ❖ Fruit Cups/Fruit Snacks
- ❖ Cheese/Crackers
- ❖ Granola/Cereal Bars
- ❖ Bottled Water

All items should be of single-serving size, suitable for repackaging into single lunches and can be placed in the Cry Room in the back of the church.

Thank you for your support in helping us help others.



## Parish Life in Pictures

Last weekend, a contingent of St. Thomas faithful took part in our annual ski trip to Davis, West Virginia. Former parishioners Dcn. Steve and Nancy Hall, as well as Andy Single, went along, and led the contingent in Sunday services away from “home.” On the way back, some of the attendees stopped at nearby Blackwater Falls State Park to take in the scenery.



## *A Word From the Holy Fathers*

Our life, my brethren, truly consists in our denying all bodily things, and continuing steadfast in those only of our Savior. Therefore the present season requires of us, that we should not only utter such words, but should also imitate the deeds of the saints. But we imitate them, when we acknowledge Him who died, and no longer live unto ourselves, but Christ henceforth lives in us; when we render a recompense to the Lord to the utmost of our power, though when we make a return we give nothing of our own, but those things which we have before received from Him, this being especially of His grace, that He should require, as from us, His own gifts. He bears witness to this when He says, ‘My offerings are My own gifts (Num. 38:2, LXX).’ That is, those things which you give Me are yours, as having received them from Me, but they are the gifts of God. And let us offer to the Lord every virtue, and that true holiness which is in Him, and in piety let us keep the feast to Him with those things which He has hallowed for us. Let us thus engage in the holy fasts, as having been prescribed by Him, and by means of which we find the way to God... For the Passover is indeed abstinence from evil for exercise of virtue, and a departure from death unto life. This may be learnt even from the type of old time. For then they toiled earnestly to pass from Egypt to Jerusalem, but now we depart from death to life; they then passed from Pharaoh to Moses, but now we rise from the devil to the Savior. And as, at that time, the type of deliverance bore witness every year, so now we commemorate our salvation. We fast meditating on death, that we may be able to live; and we watch, not as mourners, but as they that wait for the Lord, when He shall have returned from the wedding, so that we may vie with each other in the triumph, hastening to announce the sign of victory over death.

– St. Athanasius the Great

### **Holy Fathers who were slain at the Monastery of St Sava**

Saints John, Sergius, Patrick and others were slain in the Monastery of Saint Sava. During the eighth century the area around Jerusalem was subjected to frequent incursions of the Saracens. The monastery of St Chariton was devastated and fell into ruin. Twice the Saracens tried to plunder the Lavra of St Sava the Sanctified, but God’s Providence protected the monastery. The monks would have been able to escape the barbarians by going to Jerusalem, but they decided not to forsake the place where they had sought salvation for so many years.

On March 13, the Saracens broke into the monastery and demanded all the valuables. The monks told them that there was nothing in the monastery but a meager supply of food and old clothing. Then the Saracens began to shoot arrows at the monks. Thirteen men were killed and many wounded, and monastery cells

were set afire. The Saracens intended also to torch the monastery church, but seeing a throng of people in the distance, they mistook this for an army sent from Jerusalem. The Saracens managed to get away, carrying off the little they were able to plunder. After the enemy fled, Father Thomas, an experienced physician, began to help those who remained alive.

On Great Thursday, March 20, the Saracens again descended upon the Lavra with a larger force and began to beat up the monks. The survivors were driven into the church, where they were tortured in order to force them to reveal where any treasure might be hidden. The monastery was surrounded, so no one could save himself by fleeing. The barbarians seized St John, a young monk, who had cared for vagrants. They beat him fiercely, then they cut the sinews of his hands and feet and dragged him over stones by his feet, which tore the skin from the martyr's back. The keeper of the church vessels, St Sergius, hid the church vessels and attempted to flee, but he was captured and beheaded. Several of the monks nevertheless managed to hide themselves outside the monastery in a cave, but they were spotted by a sentry on a hill, and they ordered everyone to come out. Inside the cave St Patrick whispered to the brethren huddled with him, "Fear not, I will go alone and meet my death. Meanwhile, sit and pray." The Saracens asked whether there was anyone else in the cave, and Patrick said that he was alone. They led him to the Lavra, where the captives awaited their fate. The Saracens demanded of them a ransom of 4,000 gold pieces and the sacred vessels. The monks were not able to give such a ransom. Then they led them into the cave of St Sava inside the monastery walls. They lit a fire on which they piled up dung in front of the entrance to the cave, hoping to suffocate the monks with the poisonous fumes. Eighteen men perished in the cave, among whom were Sts John and Patrick. The Saracens continued to torture those who were still alive, but got nothing out of them. Finally, they left the monastery. Later, on the night of Great Friday, the monks hidden in the hills returned to the Lavra, they took up the bodies of the murdered Fathers to the church and buried them there. The barbarians who plundered the monastery were punished by God. They were stricken with a sudden illness, and they all perished. Their bodies were devoured by wild beasts. (*from oca.org*)

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF FASTING AND ITS OBSERVANCE TODAY**

*Draft document of the Pan-Orthodox Council, adopted by the 5<sup>th</sup> Pan-Orthodox Pre-Council Conference in Chambésy on October 10-17, 2015. Published in compliance with the decision of the Synaxis of Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches, Chambésy, January 21-28, 2016.*

1) Fasting is God's commandment (Gen 2:16-17). According to St Basil the Great, fasting is *as old as humanity itself; it was prescribed in Paradise* (On Fasting, 1,3).

It is a great spiritual endeavor and the foremost expression of the Orthodox ascetic ideal. The Orthodox Church, in strict conformity with the precepts of the holy apostles, the rules of the Councils and the patristic tradition as a whole, has always proclaimed a great significance of fasting for people's spiritual life and salvation. The annual cycle of liturgical celebrations fully reflects the patristic teaching on fasting, as well as the teaching on the necessity of constant unrelaxing watchfulness and on how to succeed in spiritual endeavors. The Triodion praises fasting as *bringing the light of grace, as the invincible arms, the beginning of spiritual warfare, the perfect path of virtues, the nourishment for the soul, the source of wisdom, the life imperishable and imitation the angelic life, the mother of all blessings and virtues, and as the image of the life to come.*

2) As an ancient institution, fasting was mentioned already in the Old Testament (Deut 9:18; Is 58:4-10; Joel 2:15; Jonah 3:5-7) and affirmed in the New Testament. The Lord Himself fasted for forty days before entering upon His public ministry (Lk 4:1-2) and gave to people instructions on how to practice fasting (Mt 6:16-18). Fasting as a means of abstinence, repentance and spiritual growth is presented in the New Testament (Mk 1:6; Acts 13:3; 14:23; Rom 14:21). Since the apostolic times, the Church has been proclaiming a profound importance of fasting, having established Wednesday and Friday as fast days (Didache, 8,1) and the fast before Easter (St Irenaeus of Lyons in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5, 24). In church practice that has existed for centuries there has always been a variety with regard not only to the length of fast before Easter (St Dionysius of Alexandria, Letter to Basilides, PG 10, 1278), but also to a number and content of other periods of fasting which became customary under the influence of various factors, primarily, of the liturgical and monastic traditions, with the view of proper preparation of people for great feasts. Accordingly, the indissoluble link between the fast and the liturgy indicates an extent and a purpose of fasting and emphasizes the spiritual nature of the fast, with all the faithful called to observe it, each to the best of his or her abilities and in respect to this sacred precept: *See that no one make thee to err from this path of doctrine... If thou art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, thou wilt be perfect; but if thou art not able, what thou art able, that do. But concerning meat, bear that which thou art able to do* (Didache, 6, 1-3).

3) As a spiritual endeavor, the true fast is inseparable from unceasing prayer and genuine repentance. *Repentance without fasting is fruitless* (St Basil the Great, On Fasting, 1,3); fasting is also fruitless without deeds of mercy, especially nowadays when the unequal and unjust distribution of benefits deprives entire nations of their daily bread. *While fasting physically, brethren, let us also fast spiritually. Let us loose every knot of iniquity; let us tear up every unrighteous bond; let us distribute bread to the hungry, and welcome into our homes those who have no roof over*

*their heads...* (Stichera at Vespers on Wednesday of the First Week of Lent; cf. Is 58:6-7). Fasting shall not be reduced to simple and formal abstinence from certain foods. *So let us not be selfish as we begin the abstinence from foods that is the noble fast. Let us fast in an acceptable manner, one that is pleasing to God.* (cf. Phil 4:18). *A true fast is one that is set against evil, it is self-control of the tongue. It is the checking of anger, separation from things like lusts, evil-speaking, lies, and false oaths. Self-denial from these things is a true fast, so fasting from these negative things is good* (St Basil the Great. On Fasting, 7).

Abstinence from certain foods during the fast and temperance in choosing what and how much to eat constitute a visible aspect of this spiritual endeavor. *In the literal sense, fasting is abstinence from food, but food makes us neither more nor less righteous. However, in the spiritual sense, it is clear that, as life comes from food for each of us and the lack of food is a symbol of death, so it is necessary that we fast from worldly things, in order that we might die to the world and after this, having partaken of the divine nourishment, live to God* (St Clement of Alexandria, *Eclogae*. PG 9, 704-705). Therefore, the true fast refers to the life, in all its fullness, of believers in Christ and is crowned by their participation in the liturgy, particularly in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

4) The forty-day fast of the Lord sets an example for the faithful in fasting, making them participants in the obedience of the Lord, *in order that we might recover by keeping it that which we had lost by not keeping it* (St Gregory the Theologian, The Second Oration on Easter, 28). St Gregory Palamas summarizes the Christocentric understanding of the spiritual dimension of fasting, of Lent in particular, characteristic of the whole patristic tradition, *When you fast like this you not only suffer with Christ and are dead with Him, but you are risen with Him and reign with Him forever and ever. If through such a fast you have been planted together in the likeness of His death, you shall also share in His resurrection and inherit life in Him* (St Gregory Palamas, Homily 13, on the Fifth Sunday of Lent. PG 151, 161).

5) According to the Orthodox Tradition, the measure of spiritual perfection is the measure of *the stature of the fullness of Christ* (Eph 4:13), and all who want to attain it should strive and grow. For this very reason, the asceticism and spiritual endeavor, like the perfection of the perfect, are endless in this life. Everyone is called to strive to the best of his or her abilities to meet the requirements of the lofty Orthodox criteria and attain deification by grace. And those who attain it, albeit they do all the things that they were commanded, never vaunt themselves, but confess that they *are unprofitable servants and have done that which was their duty to do* (Lk 17:10). According to the Orthodox understanding of spiritual life, all people ought to persist in fighting their good fight of fasting, and even while

permitting some indulgences, to rely upon God's mercy in remorse and awareness of their unworthiness, for the Orthodox spiritual life is unattainable without the endeavor of fasting.

6) Like an affectionate mother, the Orthodox Church has defined what is necessary for people's salvation and established the sacred periods of fasting as God-given protection of the new life of believers in Christ from every snare of the enemy. Following the example of the Holy Fathers, she preserves now, as she did in the past, the holy apostolic precepts, the conciliar rules and the sacred traditions, always offering fasts to the faithful as the best ascetic path leading to spiritual perfection and salvation, and proclaiming the necessity to observe all the fasts prescribed in the year of the Lord, that is, Lent, Wednesday and Friday, which are established in the sacred canons, as well as the Nativity, the Apostles' and the Dormition fasts, one-day fasts on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, on the eve of the Theophany and on the commemoration day of the Beheading of St John the Baptist, as well as the fasts established for pastoral reasons or observed at the wish of the faithful.

7) At the same time, the Church, for pastoral reasons, has set limits of her loving *oikonomia* concerning the rules of fasting. Therefore, it is to the cases of physical infirmity, extreme necessity or difficult times that she has ordained to apply the principle of ecclesiastical *oikonomia*, in accordance with the discernment and pastoral care of the episcopate of the Local Churches.

8) The fact is that many faithful today do not observe all the prescriptions concerning fasting, either for faint-heartedness or because of their living conditions, whatever is meant by this. However, all cases of non-observance of the sacred prescriptions concerning fasting, either general or individual, should be treated by the Church with pastoral care, for God has *no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live* (Ezek 33:11). At the same time, the importance of fasting should not be diminished. Therefore, it is left to the Local Orthodox Churches to define an extent of her loving *oikonomia* and indulgence towards those who have some difficulties in observing the existing rules of fasting, be it for their personal reasons (illness, military service, conditions of work, etc.) or for more general reasons (climatic conditions, social and economic situation in some countries, for instance, lack of fasting foods), and to ease in these special cases the "burden" of fasting, as stated above, by no means diminishing the importance of the sacred institution of fasting.

The Church should show the compassionate indulgence with all prudence and, undoubtedly, to a greater extent when it comes to those fasts, with regard to which the ecclesiastical tradition and practice have not always been uniform. It is good to

fast, but may the one who fasts not blame the one who does not fast. In such matters you must neither legislate, nor use force, nor compel the flock entrusted to you; instead, you must use persuasion, gentleness and the word seasoned with salt (St John of Damascus, On the Holy Fasts, 7).

9) Moreover, all the faithful children of the Church ought to observe the holy fasts and abstain from food since midnight to prepare properly for partaking of the Holy Communion which is the most profound expression of the essence of the Church. They also ought to fast to show repentance, to fulfil spiritual vows, to succeed in achieving particular spiritual goals, at a time of temptations, when they apply to God in supplication, before baptism (for adults) or ordination, when penances are imposed, and also during pilgrimages and in other similar cases.

*Chambésy, October 16, 2015*

### **AMAZONSMILE**

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### **Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian**

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. (*prostration*)

But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. (*prostration*)

Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not judge my brother. For blessed are You, forever and ever. Amen. (*prostration*)

O God, cleanse me, a sinner. (*bow*) (x12)

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust for power, and vain talking. But give to me, Your servant, the spirit of purity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, Lord and King, grant me to see my own sins and not judge my brother. For blessed are You, forever and ever. Amen. (*prostration*)

*[This prayer is said, sometimes with only the first three prostrations, in virtually every weekday Lenten service. I encourage you to say the prayer during your weekday morning and evening prayers during this time of fasting and increased prayer. – Ed.]*

## Patriarchal Pence – Support Patriarch Bartholomew



During this season of increased prayer, fasting, and charity all the parishes in our Diocese send a token of our affection to support the work of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. To this end we will take a special collection on the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross. Please be generous! [Photo Credit: Nikolaos Manginas]

### Follow Our Diocese On-Line

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

Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

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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, 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, 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, Alex & Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, 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.)