

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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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

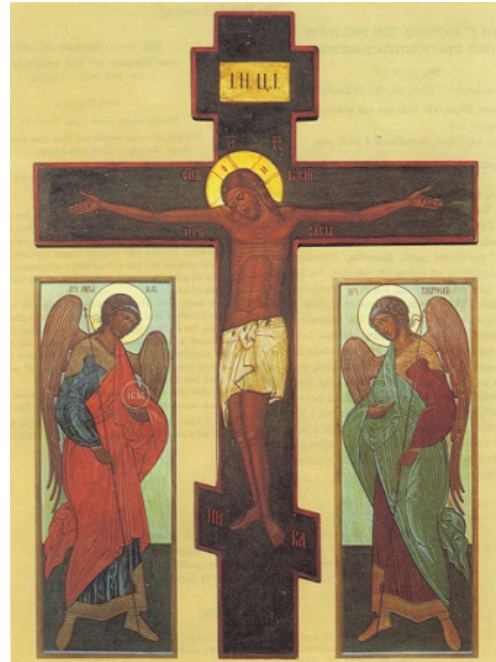
Fridays in Great Lent:

Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

April 3, 2016 – Third Sunday of Great Lent

Veneration of the Cross

In the services for this Sunday the Holy Church glorifies the holy cross and the fruits of the death of the Savior on the cross. She will carry out the holy cross into the middle of the temple for veneration, and is why the Sunday is called the Veneration of the Cross. In the hymns for this day the holy Church, inviting us to honor the holy cross, tenderly appeals: "now the angelic hosts gather in reverence and bear aloft the honored Wood, and calling together all the faithful for the veneration. Come therefore and illumined by the fast, let us fall down before it with joy and fear." "Cleansed by abstinence let us draw near, and with fervent praise let us venerate the all-holy Wood on which Christ was crucified, when He saved the world in His compassion." "Come, faithful, and let us venerate the life-giving tree, on which Christ, the King of Glory voluntarily stretched out his hands. He raised us up to the ancient blessedness, whom the enemy despoiled of old through pleasure, making us exiles far from God. Come, faithful, and let us venerate the tree whereby we have been counted worthy to crush the heads of our invisible enemies. Come, all kindred of the nations, let us honor in hymns the Cross of the Lord." Glorifying the most Holy Cross, the Holy Church sings: "Rejoice, life-bearing Cross, the beautiful Paradise of the Church, the Tree of



incorruption that brings us the enjoyment of eternal glory," "The indestructible foundation, and the victory of kings and the praise of priests." "Rejoice, life-bearing Cross, piety of invincible victory, door to paradise, foundation of the faithful, protection of the church: through you the curse is utterly destroyed, the power of death is swallowed up, and we are raised from earth to heaven: invincible weapon, adversary of demons, glory of martyrs, true ornament of holy monks, haven of salvation."

The purpose of instituting the Holy Cross in the service on the third Sunday will be revealed as a beautiful comparison by the Holy Church to the tree of life in paradise, the tree which sweetened the bitter waters of Marah, the tree with the canopy of leaves under whose shade tired travelers seeking the eternal promised land may find coolness and rest. Thus, the Holy Church offers the Holy Cross for spiritual reinforcement to those going through the ascetic effort of the fast, just as food, drink and rest serve as bodily reinforcement. This spiritual reinforcement is given as the representation of the love of God to man for whom the Son of God turned Himself over to death on the cross. It is especially necessary in the middle of our effort because now our ascetic efforts already have lost much of the freshness of its power and however yet cannot hopefully enliven itself for the near and successful ending of our ascetical effort. Having concentrated all that is the most severe and sorrowful in the worship services of the previous weeks, especially during the first, that may both frighten the sinner and apparently touch the hardest of human hearts, now in the middle of the large and difficult arena of the Holy Forty Day Fast the Holy Church offers the Holy Cross for great comfort and encouragement as needed for raising the flagging strength of those fasting.

Wherefore nothing can both console, encourage, and inspire the fatigued, or perhaps even the Christian weakened in spirit so much as the presentation of the eternal divine love of the Savior who turned Himself over to the struggle on the cross for the sake of our salvation.

According to the teaching of St. Ephraim the Syrian:

The cross abolished idolatrous adulation, enlightened the whole universe, gathered all the nations into one Church and united them with love. The cross is the resurrection of the dead. The cross is the hope of Christians. The cross is the staff for the lame. The cross is comfort for the poor. The cross is the deposing of the proud. The cross is the hope of those who despair. The cross is food for the sailors. The cross is haven for the bestormed. The cross is the father for orphans. The cross is comfort for those who mourn. The cross is the protector of children. The cross is the glory of men. The cross is the crown of elders. The cross is light for those sitting in darkness. The cross is freedom for slaves, wisdom for the ignorant. The cross is the preach-ing of

prophets, the fellow-traveler of apostles. The cross is the chastity of maidens, the joy of priests. The cross is the foundation of the Church, the establishment of the universe. The cross is the destruction of idolatrous temples, temptation for Jews. The cross is the cleansing of the lepers, the rehabilitation of the enfeebled. The cross is bread for the hungry, a fountain for the thirsty. The cross is the good hope of monks, clothing for the naked. By this holy armor of the cross Christ the Lord has terminated the all-consuming bowels of Hades and blocked the many snares in the mouth of the devil. Having seen the cross, death trembled and released everyone whom she possessed with the first creature. Armed with the cross, the God-bearing apostles subdued all the power of the enemy and caught all peoples in their dragnets, and gathered them for the worship of the One Crucified. Clothed in the cross as in armor, the martyrs of Christ trampled all the plans of torturers and preached with plainness the Divine Cross-bearer. Having taken up the cross for the sake of Christ, those who renounced everything in the world settled in deserts and on mountains, in caves and became the fasters of the earth.

But what language is worthy to praise the Cross, this invincible wall of the Orthodox, this victorious armor of the Heavenly King?! By the cross the Almighty One bestowed unspeakable blessings on humanity!

Therefore on the forehead, and on the eyes, and on the mouth, and on the breasts let us place the life-giving Cross. Let us arm them with the invincible armor of Christians, with this hope of the faithful, with this gentle light. Let us open paradise with this armor, with this support of the Orthodox faith, with this saving praise of the Church. Neither in one hour, nor in one instant, let us not forget the Cross, nor let us begin to do anything without it. But let us sleep, let us arise, let us work, let us eat, let us drink, let us go on our way, let us sail on the seas, let us go across the river, let us adorn all our members with the life-giving Cross. And let us not be frightened "by the terror of the night, nor by the arrow that flies by day, nor by anything roaming in darkness, nor by any calamity, nor any noonday demon" (Ps. 90:5, 6). If, O Christian, you will always take up the cross of Christ on yourself as a help, then "evil shall not come towards you, nor any scourge come near your habitation": for the opposition power seeing it trembles and leaves.

For such a purpose the Holy Church offers the cross on the third Sunday of Great Lent from of old. Many hymns of praise for this Sunday were composed by Joseph and Theodore of the Studite Monastery. Everything in the worship service of this day: the most Holy Cross, solemnly carried from the altar to the middle of the temple, the singing of the stichera for venerating the cross, the Epistle,

recounting the suffering of the Savior on the cross as the means of our reconciliation with God, the Gospel, reminding the Christian about everyone's duty to bear their cross in life, following the Crucified One on the cross, - everything that promotes the deep stamp of the cross of Christ on the heart of the believer, as a sign of our salvation, as our mighty, God-given power, saving us on earth and opening to us the entrance to the high place of our fatherland, as the highest and more powerful reinforcement of believers among the ascetics of the Holy Forty Day Fast.

According to the church hymns: "In the middle of the Fast, the all honorable tree calls in worship" all those who "worthily follow through their passion the passion of Christ," who in the first half of the Holy Forty Day Fast have fervently practiced asceticism in fasting and prayers, in repentance and cleansing from all impurities, in acts of love and good works. For those, the holy cross of Christ really serves with the most comfort and strongest encouragement for the continuation of their Lenten efforts, "easing their lenten time." But how and for what will they approach the life-giving cross of Christ in the course of the holy days of "the soul-pleasing Forty Day Fast" when they lead the usual sinful, vain, sensual life which, perhaps, even after holy confession and holy communion remain the same as before, with the same passions and with the same insensitivity and hardness of heart? How will they kiss the holy cross when during the holy days of the fast they strayed to the way of vice and yet have not taken the way to true repentance, the real struggle against their passions? How will they touch the pierced side of Christ, who in their heart and during the days the Lenten tenderness did not cease to be the source only of "evil desire, theft, usury, insult, cunning, temptation, shunning, abuse, arrogance, and foolishness"? How will those touch the holy tree, when their impure mouth opened only for idle talk and malicious gossip, for condemnation and slander, for grumbling and indignation?

How will they look on the stretched body of Christ hanging on the cross, who with cowardice yielded to any need of the flesh, satisfied all whims, and were afraid to give up for themselves even the excessively fashionable food and clothes? Will they even worship the Crucified One on the cross? But then will their acts of worship be distinct from those genuflections, with which the warriors of Pilate fearlessly greeted the condemned Jesus on the cross? Will they even kiss the wounds of Christ? But would these kisses be better than the kiss of Judas?

So the negligence of people and the very saving suffering of Christ can turn into condemnation, and the word of comfort cross changes to a word of bitter accusations! So from the one cup of the eternal covenant, the Christian, faithful to his name, vigilant about his salvation, or renewed by true repentance, sings of life eternal; but those uncaring about salvation, insensitive to the voice of the grace of

God sings eternal condemnation! But the Holy Church offers the life-giving Cross of Christ also to the careless in hope that the beneficial power of the cross will also touch their heart and will urge them away from the deep sleep of the sinner. "They will respect my son" said the owner of the vineyard, sending his only son to the tenants who were grumbling against him (Mt. 21:7). "They will respect the wounds of the Son of God," as if thus the Holy Church speaks about her prodigal and disobedient children, offering them the sight of the life-giving cross of Christ.

She hopes that the sight of the Divine Sufferer will remind the sinners, that as they were baptized into the death of Christ, they promised to serve the Lord instead of the world and the devil, to please God instead of their flesh, to obey the will of God instead of their lusts and passions.

The Holy Church hopes that souls will be found though guilty, but not fallen into the depths of evil, not going towards the edge of hardness, by which a look at the instrument of the suffering of the Son of God will shakes the conscience, will prick the heart, will make the saving change of thoughts and feelings so that they will return from the temple as many returned from Golgotha, - "beating their breasts" (Lk. 23:48), and in their life from now on will go by the way of faith, repentance and Christian piety. They, as Ambrose of Milan teaches, should "grieve and cry, however not pushing to despair, because the One Who has enlightened the eyes of the man blind from birth (Jn. 9), can make them both zealous and firm in His service if only they want to return with a pure heart. Therefore, let them recognize they are in their blindness and let them run to the Physician who can enlighten them."

If the Lord suffered on a cross for our sake then we also should practice asceticism unceasingly in fasting, prayer and other efforts of piety for His sake, discharging from ourselves and destroying in ourselves all that interferes with these efforts. With the aim of our greater enthusiasm for patience in efforts of piety, the Holy Church on the present day comfortably reminds us beforehand about coming nearer "to the light of the peaceful joy of Pascha," hymning, in the troparia of the canon, the holy cross and the suffering of the Savior on it, together with His joyful resurrection and inviting the faithful "with pure mouths" to sing "the song of joyfulness" - Irmos of Holy Pascha.

"This is a holy week of light, in which the precious Cross is exalted in the sight of all the world." During all this week up to Saturday "sanctifying the time of abstinence the divine and precious Cross" in the midst of the temple "clearly offers everything, source of divine forgiveness, both light of heaven and life and true joyfulness," "bestowing on those who venerate it redemptive sanctification, light and glory and mercy" and "facilitating the season of the Fast for us." The subject of the church hymns all this week is the glorification of the Holy Cross, and

therefore it is referred to as Veneration of the Cross Week. Representing beneficial fruits sprouting from the life-creating tree of the Cross into a sinful world, the Holy Church sings praises to the Holy Cross, as "a tree of life, the spoiler of Hades, the joy of the world and the consumer of corruption," "the scepter of the Holy Messiah, the heavenly glory of man, the praise of kings, the dominion of faith, the invincible weapon, the driving away of enemies, the light of radiance, the salvation of the world, the great glory of martyrs, the power of the righteous, the brightness of angels," "the sign of joy, the praise of martyrs, the adornment of apostles, the confirmation of bishops," "the joy of the Orthodox, the protector of the universe," "the fortress of abstinence, the cooperater of the vigilant, the strengthening of the fasters, the upholders of the strugglers."

Praising the Holy Cross, the Holy Church together with it calls on its children to restrain "from corrupting passions for food by abstinence and from sweets by disgust," and "purifying themselves by fasting" to venerate the Holy Cross "with awe and by faith," "drawing up sanctification for their souls." But as success in the Lenten spiritual efforts may, especially after having already achieved the midpoint of the holy Forty Day Fast be eclipsed by gluttony, the Holy Church following the example of the Lord, who humbled Himself by dying on the cross, also calls us to humility, so that we may not lose our justification before God because of Pharisaic pride, looking not only at our deeds, but also in our thoughts. "Let us with all the faithful, the Holy Church appeals to us, emulate the repentance of the Publican, and not boast like the Pharisee. Let us offer cries of sorrow from the depth of our heart to the loving God of all. For He Himself has given this commandment saying: Every man that exalts himself shall be abased, and that he that humbles himself shall be exalted. Therefore with one accord let us cry to Him: God be merciful to us sinners and save us" and "grant us that it may come during the rest of the fasting season in tenderness." (*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 4:14-5:6

Brethren, seeing that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is

called by God, just as Aaron *was*. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but *it was* He who said to Him: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” As *He* also *says* in another *place*: “You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Today’s Gospel Lesson – Saint Mark 8:34-9:1

At that time, when Jesus had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” And He said to them, “Amen, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

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]

Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya

In January of this year, his Grace, Bishop Neofitos was given the responsibility for a new diocese in his native Kenya, overseeing 43 priests. Until this year, there was only one bishop for all of Kenya’s over 250 priests, and parishioners would go years without seeing their bishop; he is filling a huge need. He is also starting from absolutely nothing; when he set out to go to his new diocesan seat, he didn’t even have a place to stay. He jokes that his office is his briefcase. He would like to build an office, but land is expensive in his city and his diocese is largely rural and poor. His priests often cannot hold weekly services because they cannot afford the fare



to get to the church and back; his goal is to equip every priest in his diocese with a motorcycle so they can celebrate liturgy every Sunday. Bishop Neofitos runs an orphanage of 200 children with the assistance of 12 teachers; though their salary is \$250/month, they have not been paid since January because there is no money to pay them. In parts of his diocese, people have to walk for miles to get a glass of water, and it is a struggle to provide food for one meal a day. Our three Lenten disciplines are prayer, fasting, and charity – we are exhorted to do all three. If you would like to assist the Bishop, you can make a check out to OCMC and send it to OCMC, 220 Mason Manatee Way, St. Augustine, FL 32086 with “Bishop Neofitos” on the memo line. You also can donate online through OCMC at https://www.ocmc.org/donate/donation_info.aspx; just *make sure* to type "Bishop Neofitos" in the special instructions field.

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 62: No Other Gods



“You shall not steal.” (Exodus 20:15 RSV)

The Ten Commandments are often the center of controversy in our American society. Due to their nature perceived of as “religious” rules, they are banned from public life: for example, they cannot be displayed in public buildings or on public grounds. This even in a society that proclaims religious freedom.

Such publication of the Ten Commandments in public places is outlawed because doing so (according to the lawyers) would “establish” religion and violate the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America. After all, we Americans are free to choose our own religion, or to have no religion at all, or even to speak badly of the religion of someone else without reprisal.

But what has been the effect of reducing religion to just another freedom we can choose to exercise or not? These Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses for the purpose of defining the relationship between God and His people (His people meaning everyone; for everyone is created in the image and likeness of God!). Those who choose to live with no relationship with God cannot know what is expected of them in living a moral life.

The result? Take as an example the widespread sin of theft. Theft is a result of greed. Greed originates in the basic human desire to care for one’s self. Self-care often turns into excessive self-centeredness or even self-indulgence. What began as desire for security can easily end up as greed. And greedy people never have

enough. Then comes the plan to get more by any means possible. The end is theft. It shows up in many forms, from cheating on income tax returns to outright shoplifting to

St. Paul gives wise counsel to young Timothy: *“There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content”* (1 Timothy 6:6-8 RSV). The Ten Commandments assist us in how to live a life of stewardship. *“Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well”* (Matthew 6:31-33 RSV). (from acrod.org)

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The cross of the Lord is unpleasant and sorrowful to the ear, but it consists of joy and gladness. It is the originator not so much of suffering as much as of passionlessness. For Jews the cross is temptation, for pagans it is madness, but for us believers it reminds us of our salvation. When in church one reads about the cross and one is reminded of the sufferings on the cross, the faithful are indignant at the cross and let out a plaintive wail and murmur not at the cross but at the crucifiers and unbelievers. For the cross is the salvation of the Church, the cross is the praise of those who hope on it. The cross has released us from the evil that possessed us and is the beginning of the blessings received by us. The cross is the reconciliation of His enemies with God, the promise of sinners to Christ. For by the cross we were freed from enmity and through the cross we have become amiable to God. The cross delivered us from the authority of the devil, the cross saved us from death and destruction. The cross changed human nature to the angelic, having released it from all that is corruptible, and have found lives worthy of immortality. How great is the power of the cross! How great is the change made by it in the human race! How from the deep darkness it has led us to the boundless light, from death it has restored us to eternal life, from corruption it has transferred us to incorruption.

What good is not accomplished for us by means of the cross? Through the cross we learned piety and learned the properties of the Divine essence. Through the cross we learn the truth about God, through the cross we who were far from Him are united to Christ, and we become worthy of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Through the cross we learn the power of love and we are taught to die for others. Through the cross we are scorned and all what we do is not temporal, we search the blessings of the future and we accept the invisible as if seen. The cross is

preached, and the faith in God is confessed, His truth is spread throughout the universe. The cross is preached, and the faith in the resurrection, the life and the kingdom of heaven is made without a doubt. What is more precious than the cross and what is more saving for the soul? The cross is the triumph over demons, the armor against sin and the sword with which the Lord has struck the snake. The cross is the will of the Father, the glory of the Only-begotten, the joy of the Holy Spirit, the ornament of angels, the protection of the Church, the praise of St. Paul, the protection of the Saints, the lamp of all the world. See, however desired and deservedly amiable the cross is made today, it was the most terrible and shameful sign of the cruelest execution in antiquity! And the cross makes the best ornament on the imperial crown, the most precious in all the world. The image of the cross is now found on you, both masters and servants, both wives and husbands, both maidens and married, both slaves and free. All place the sign of the cross on the noblest part of their body, daily carrying this sign on their forehead, as on a depicted pillar. It shines on a sacred meal, on the clothes of the priest and together with the Lord's body at the mystical supper. You see it lifted everywhere: on houses, in market-places, in the deserts, on the paths, on mountains and hills, on the sea, on ships, on islands, on boxes, on clothes, on armor, in the halls, on golden and silver vessels, in pictures, on the bodies of sick animals, on the bodies of the demon-possessed, in war, in the world, in the afternoon, at night, in festal assemblies and in the cells of the ascetics. Already no one is ashamed and does not blush at the thought that the cross is a sign of a shameful death. To the contrary, all of us honor this as an adornment for ourselves, which has surpassed crowns and diadems and precious stones. Let us not run, let us not be frightened, but let us kiss and honor it as an invaluable treasure.

– St. John Chrysostom

Dedication of Renovated Cabins at Camp Nazareth

Dear Faithful, all of us are invited to take part in the dedication of the newly renovated and expanded cabins at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA on Wednesday, May 11, 2016. We are invited to the Service of Dedication which will take place at 10am on that day and then to the brunch which will be served in the Main Lodge following the dedication. If you are able, plan on attending the festivities. We are grateful to God for many blessings including the blessing of our beloved Camp Nazareth and the ministry that takes place there. Come to enjoy the festivities and give thanks to God for what He has allowed us and blessed us to accomplish. Please see the flyer in on the table in the back of the nave and in the social hall. Please note that reservations for the event must be received by May 3, 2016!! Hurry! Space is limited!

Camp Nazareth Family Camp & Family Day

Family Camp will be held this year on Friday, June 3 and Saturday, June 4, and campers will join in with the Family Day celebration on June 5th. Families will “camp” together in the Camp cabins and participate in a weekend of services, games, discussions, activities and challenges that are all designed to help families deepen their relationship with God and with one another. This year’s theme is “Not letting Orthodoxy be your family’s secret identity.” For more information and registration forms, visit the Camp website. Space is limited, so act quickly! Forms are due by May 20.

The Nazarene Returns

The first 2016 Spring issue of The Nazarene, the Camp Nazareth newspaper started last summer at Camp, is now available at the Camp website. They are being published again as a way to spur interest in the upcoming Summer camping season. A new issue will be published weekly. Each issue will be posted on the Camp website and a link to it will appear on the Camp's Facebook page. It will also be posted in the social hall. Each issue will include a "Remember When" section from last year as well as a section devoted to what is up and coming this Summer (without spoiling any surprises).

National Junior ACRY Lenten Project 2016

O Christ our God, You give strength to all who fall, and rescue all who have been cast aside. - Lenten Amvon Prayer

Very Reverend & Reverend Fathers; Sunday School Teachers; Parish Organizations.

The National Junior ACRY calls upon all to help aid in the Mission of our Diocesan Apostolate of Saint John the Compassionate, in the inner city of Toronto, Ontario. The National Junior ACRY hears the call from the hymns of the Great Fast/Lent and invites everyone to help fulfill this plea of the voice of the Church.

Members of the Junior ACRY had the opportunity to visit the Mission this past summer and witness Christ’s love, which labors through the Mission to minister to the needs of so many. Last year’s donation from the National ACRY along with a matching grant from the John C. Kulis Charitable Foundation was hand delivered by National President Josef Samilenko to Fr. Roberto on behalf of all who donated to the Lenten Project. The Project raised over \$12,000.00 for the Mission last year.

The Very Reverend Father Roberto Ubertino who leads the Mission along with the staff and volunteers helps provide assistance to those in need in the inner city. The Mission has continued to provide meals, job training, spiritual counsel and education to all those in need in part because of the generous contributions made by individuals and organizations. This mission is growing with the expansion of a drop-in center in the Scarborough area of Toronto, which is one of the poorest areas of the city. This expansion can be aided by your contribution made during this time of the Great Fast when our focus is truly on the needs of others.

The Mission needs support from those who can offer their financial support. This support is needed to insure that the programs of the Mission can continue to help transform the lives of those in need and to expand in areas that are in need. You can visit the Mission's website for detailed information on its many ministries: www.stjohnsmission.org

The National Juniors invite individual chapters, parishes, church school classes and other parish organizations to aid in this endeavor of providing for the needs of others through this Diocesan Mission during this season of Lent.

[To donate, please designate the funds to "Toronto Mission" on your offering envelope by May xx. – Ed.] By God's mercy a trip is being planned to the Mission for this summer, so that the funds raised by the project will be hand delivered to the Mission.

We pray you will join us in this ministry. May the good Lord assist you in all the work you do in His name so that your light may so shine forth before men.

Very Rev. Fr. Miles Paul Zdinak Josef Samilenko

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Junior ACRY Spiritual Advisor Junior ACRY President

AUTONOMY AND THE MEANS OF PROCLAIMING IT

Decision taken by the 5th Pan-Orthodox Pre-Council Conference, Chambésy, October 10-17, 2015. Published in compliance with the resolution of the Synaxis of Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches, Chambésy, January 21-28, 2016.

Upon completing the work based on the text "Autonomy and the Means of Proclaiming It" that had been agreed upon and adopted by the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission at its session in Chambésy on December 9-17, 2009, the 5th Pan-Orthodox Pre-Council Conference considered ecclesiological, canonical and pastoral aspects of the institution of autonomy and arrived at a unanimous Pan-Orthodox position on the matter.

The issues considered by the 5th Pan-Orthodox Pre-Council Conference, derived from the topics of the text adopted by the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission, related to: the concept, nature and various forms of the institution of autonomy; the prerequisites, on the basis of which a local Church petitions the Autocephalous Church to which it belongs to grant it autonomy; the exclusive prerogative of the Autocephalous Church to initiate and complete the process of granting autonomy to a certain part of its canonical jurisdiction, provided that no autonomous Churches shall be established in the territory of the Orthodox diaspora; and the impact of this ecclesiastical act on relations of the proclaimed Autonomous Church both with the Autocephalous Church to which it belongs, and with the other Autocephalous Orthodox Churches.

1. The institution of autonomy is a canonical expression of the status of relative or partial independence that a certain ecclesiastical area has from the canonical jurisdiction of the Autocephalous Church to which it canonically belongs. The application of this institution in church practice has resulted in varying degrees of dependence of an Autonomous Church upon the Autocephalous Church to which it belongs. The election of the head of an Autonomous Church shall be approved or carried out by the competent ecclesiastical authority of the Autocephalous Church, the primate of which the Autonomous Church shall commemorate and be in canonical relationship to. Functioning of the institution of autonomy implies that it shall be used in church practice in various forms, as defined by the degree of an Autonomous Church's dependence on the Autocephalous Church. In some forms of autonomy, the degree of dependence of an Autocephalous Church shall be expressed through its primate's participation in the Synod of the Autocephalous Church.

2. The initiation and completion of the process of proclaiming autonomy to a part of its canonical jurisdiction, to which the Church belongs, having been proclaimed autonomous, is the canonical prerogative of the Autocephalous Church. Accordingly, if a local Church requesting autonomy fulfills all necessary ecclesiastical and pastoral prerequisites, it shall appeal to the Autocephalous Church to which it belongs, explaining the serious reasons prompting such an appeal. Upon receiving the appeal, the Autocephalous Church shall consider all its prerequisites and reasons, and make a decision whether or not to grant autonomy. Should the decision be favorable, the Autocephalous Church shall issue a Tomos defining the territorial boundaries of the Autonomous Church, as well as its relations with the Autocephalous Church to which it belongs, in accordance with the established criteria of ecclesiastical Tradition. The primate of the Autocephalous Church shall inform the Ecumenical Patriarchate and other Autocephalous Orthodox Churches of the proclamation of the Autonomous

Church. The Autonomous Church maintains inter-Orthodox, inter-Christian and inter-religious relations via the Autocephalous Church that granted it autonomy. Each Autocephalous Church may only grant autonomy to a Church that acts within its geographical boundaries. No Autonomous Church shall be established in the territory of the Orthodox diaspora, except by pan-Orthodox consent mediated by the Ecumenical Patriarch in accordance with pan-Orthodox procedure. Should two Autocephalous Churches grant autonomous status within one and the same geographical ecclesiastical area, with resulting disagreements concerning these autonomies, the parties involved shall appeal, together or separately, to the Ecumenical Patriarch to come to a canonical solution to the question in accordance with pan-Orthodox procedure.

3. The implications arising from the proclamation of autonomy concerning the Autonomous Church and its relationship with the Autocephalous Church are as follows: the head of the Autonomous Church shall only commemorate the primate of the Autocephalous Church; the name of the head of the Autonomous Church shall not be included in the Diptychs; the Autonomous Church shall receive Holy Chrism from the Autocephalous Church; and bishops of the Autonomous Church shall be elected and appointed by its own competent ecclesiastical authority. In the event that the Autonomous Church finds this absolutely impossible, it shall receive assistance from the Autocephalous Church to which it belongs.

Chambésy, October 15, 2015

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.

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.



Parish Life in Pictures

Two weeks ago, we celebrated March birthdays, but only Kristen McNeil (*right*) was there to celebrate. Where were the rest of you?



We also celebrated the restoration of icons in 843 by processing with them into the church, where Fr. Joseph read the Synodicon.

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

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Grace Bishop GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbytera Katie Baker and family, 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.)