

# SOBORNOST

## St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE

## SERVICES

**Fridays: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM**

**Saturdays: Confession 5:00 PM,  
Great Vespers 5:30 PM**

**Sundays: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM | Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.**

## June 26, 2016 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday After Pentecost (All Saints)

The Saints were people just like all of us. Many of them started with grievous sins but through repentance they attained to the Kingdom of Heaven. And everyone who reaches the Kingdom of Heaven does so through repentance, which the Merciful Lord granted us by His sufferings.

In the Kingdom of Heaven where dwell the Lord and His most pure Mother, abide all the Saints. There live our Forefathers and Patriarchs who valiantly carried their faith before them. There dwell the Prophets who received the Holy Spirit, and by their exhortations called the people to God. There dwell the Apostles who died that the Gospel might be preached. There dwell the Martyrs who gladly gave their lives for love of Christ. There dwell the holy Prelates who followed the Lord's example and took upon themselves the burden of their spiritual flock. There dwell the holy Fathers who lived lives of prayer and fasting, and those who assumed folly for Christ's sake, all of whom fought the good fight and thereby overcame the world. There dwell all the Righteous who kept God's commandments and vanquished their passions. Thither aspires my soul - to that wondrous holy assembly which the Holy Spirit has gathered together. But woe is me! Inasmuch as I lack humility, the Lord does not grant me the strength to fight, and my feeble spirit flickers out like a tiny candle, whereas the spirit of the Saints burned with a bright flame, which the wind of temptation not only failed to extinguish but set



burning more fiercely than ever. They trod the earth and worked with their hands but their spirits continued with God, of Whom they were ever mindful. For the love of Christ they endured every affliction on earth, and feared no suffering, and thus glorified the Lord. Wherefore the Lord loved them and glorified them, and granted them the eternal Kingdom with Him. – St. Silouan the Athonite

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-12:2**

Brethren, all the saints 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 Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30**

The Lord said to his disciples, "whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Amen I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.

## On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 76: Temptation



*“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” (Mat. 4:1 RSV)*

In the wilderness, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ met the great temptations that would attack humanity of all time. There, singlehandedly, Jesus encountered the wily, subtle foe. And He overcame him.

The first great temptation was on hunger, or better, on appetite – that inner craving that cannot usually be put aside without fulfilling it. The second great temptation was on belief – did Jesus actually believe what the Scriptures say about his and all people’s safety? The third great temptation was on love of the world – did Jesus crave popularity, honor or fame? The thrones and kingdoms of this world, and all the glory that went along with them, were offered to Jesus. Satan came with worldly honor, wealth and presented them to Jesus in the most attractive light that tried to cover up the allurements and deception contained in the temptation. *“All these I will give you,”* Satan said, *“if you will fall down and worship me.”* Yet Jesus repelled all of the temptations, and emerged the Victor.

You and I will never be tried by temptations as powerful as these that were thrown at Jesus. Yet Satan has better success when he approaches us. We have all felt them. We have all heard them: *“All this money...all this gain...all this land...all this power...all of these honors and riches I will give you...”* And all for what? The trade-off is rarely as clear as it was for Jesus. To Jesus, Satan was quite clear: You will get these things *“If you fall down and worship me.”*

When Satan throws temptation at us, the trade-off is not so clear. He comes silently and opens the door for us. He presents us with things *we think* will make us feel good. He offers us options that *we think* will make us content. He gives us the possibility of being someone in life, that popularity and fame that we never had – that moment in the spotlight that would tell the world who we really are! And we are charmed into believing that Satan has both the power and the authority to accomplish it. And when we believe that Satan has the power and the authority? Then we, too, have fallen down and worshipped him. We have the example of Christ before us. *“You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve”* (Matthew 4:10 RSV). St. Paul advised the Christians of the Galatian churches: *“Do not be deceived”* (Galatians 6:7 RSV). (from [acrod.org](http://acrod.org))

## *A Word From the Holy Fathers*

A Christian is an imitator of Christ in thought, word and deed, as far as this is humanly possible, and he believes rightly and blamelessly in the Holy Trinity. A friend of God is the one who lives in communion with all that is natural and free from sin and who does not neglect to do what good he can. The self-controlled man strives with all his might amidst the trials, the snares, and the noise of the world, to be like someone who rises above them.

– St. John Climacus

### **HOMILY BY HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW AT THE CONCELEBRATION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY OF PENTECOST**

Your Beatitudes, Holy Brother Primates of the local Orthodox Churches, Theodoros of Alexandria, John of Antioch, Theophilos of Jerusalem, Kirill of Moscow, Irinej of Belgrade, Daniel of Bucharest, Neophyte of Bulgaria, Ilia of Georgia, Chrysostomos of Cyprus, Ieronymos of Athens, Sawa of Warsaw, Anastasios of Tirana, and Rastislav of Prešov, together with Your honorable delegations,

Your Excellency Mr. President of the Hellenic Republic,

Your Eminence Archbishop Irenaios of Crete, together with the Most Reverend and beloved brothers who, together with you, comprise the Holy Eparchial Synod of the Church of Crete,

Most Reverend and Right Reverend holy brothers,

Blessed Orthodox Clergy and Laity from all across the world,

A joyful day has now dawned, in which we celebrate the historic manifestation of the institution of the Church, which is constituted by the Holy Spirit, and we Orthodox brothers, who represent all the local Orthodox Autocephalous Churches, have gathered together in a liturgical assembly, so that we may carry out the **duty** and **responsibility** of the one Orthodox Church to the people and to the world today, by convening our Holy and Great Council.

Today is a day of **unity**, as we are all united in the faith and the sacraments through our liturgical gathering in one place and have come together “in the breaking of the Bread.” The Holy Eucharist truly reaffirms the **unity** and **catholicity** of our Orthodox Church.

The event of Pentecost, which took place in Jerusalem, marked the Church’s starting point in its historical journey and laid the foundations for the sanctification of human history in its entirety. The Apostles and the three thousands Christians

who were baptized by them at that time comprised the first Church, which is a theanthropic reality of Christ, present in all of its members. Today, we, too, are filled with the same inspiration from the tongues of fire – from the Holy Spirit – and we are one Church, one body, even though we come from different ethnic, linguistic, and cultural traditions. Christ the God-man, the “firstborn among many brethren” (cf. Rom. 8:29), is present in each of our members.

Today, the fulfillment of the purpose of Divine Economy in its totality is taking place. Because, at Pentecost and after Pentecost, “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 5:5). There is one Christ and we are all His joints and members: “All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills” (1 Cor. 12:11).

Through our distinctness, each Orthodox Church, as well as every faithful Orthodox Christian, are joined to one body, each with his own gifts, over which we should not look to others with suspicion or anger, but rejoice as if they were our own: “The treasure that my brother acquires ... I possess also,” proclaims Macarius of Egypt.

Every local Orthodox Church has its own treasure and offers it to Christ. The eye cannot say to the hand “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet. Within the Church, there is no individual local Church that does not hold significance in its own right, so as to enable the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church not to be in need of each and every one of its members, nor can one member exist independently and absolutely sovereign, as is being attempted by those outside of the Church; especially during these last days. The Orthodox Church Militant, most honorable brothers, which is present on earth, perpetually continues the “upper room” of Pentecost, our local Churches, which are represented by all of us here today. We represent the mystical body of Christ, which extends unto the ages and delivers the human race from manifold suffering and impasses, and we are united with the Church Triumphant, fulfilling **God’s dispensation** and unifying the earthly with the heavenly (see the Kontakion of the feast of the Ascension). **This is precisely the mission of our Orthodox Church.**

At the same time, today is a **day of crying out** to the gracious Paraclete to come and abide in us and keep us in Its Truth and Its sanctification, as stated by our Lord during his agonizing prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. This entreaty of our Lord, which is fulfilled here on this great day of Pentecost, is and remains the primary request of all humanity in a divided world that is full of strife, and which thirsts for unity, on behalf of which the Son of God gave up Himself so that all of us may have life, and that we may have it more abundantly.

Our Orthodox Church has the supreme gift and blessing of possessing the **treasure of truth** and preserving intact the **gift** of the All-Holy Spirit, which “has filled the whole world” (Wis. 1:7), and it is obliged to give the contemporary world a **testimony of love and unity**, and to reveal the **hidden hope that lies within it**. Of course, we do not boast over the truth of our Church. We sense its singular splendor, but also our own personal weakness and unworthiness. However, this is not enough when it remains on a theoretical level. It behooves a response on the practical level, where, unfortunately, we are greatly lacking.

The Lord began His preaching to the world by calling on the people to repent. The work of a Christian throughout the duration of his life is repentance. We, the leaders of the Church, especially, are obliged to provide a good example and embrace the entirety of the truth which we have received; because our opponent tries to scatter misguided ideas in our hearts which negate the truth of our faith. Those fellow men and women of ours who are misled about the truth spread these misguided ideas, which appear novel and worthy of attention, and often manage to lure away a good amount of faithful through the repeated skillful presentation of these ideas. For this reason, we Bishops ought to gather together to discuss the matters that are confronting the Orthodox Church at different times and throughout the world, so as to adopt the appropriate measures to protect the faithful from the prevailing errors. Especially in our time, there is a very large number of errors that are circulating, and the arguments used by the deceivers are particularly sophisticated, which means that a coordinated effort on the part of the shepherds of the Orthodox Church is required in order to inform the faithful. The number of religious factions that are attempting to lead the Orthodox faithful astray are in the hundreds. The discussions and exchange of related experiences on the manner in which to counter the methods of the aforementioned organizations during the Council will have much to offer to the Orthodox Church.

The Lord of the Orthodox Church, Who is “the same yesterday, today and forever,” worked with us so that we could reach today’s historic moment of the Holy and Great Council, this liturgical Gathering, and communion from one Common Cup. Regardless of our different opinions, we Orthodox Christians ought to point out that the only **road** on our course in this world is **unity**. Of course, this road demands a living sacrifice, much work, and is achieved after great struggle. It is certain that this Council of ours will contribute towards this direction by creating a climate of mutual trust and understanding through our meeting in the Holy Spirit and through an edifying and sincere dialogue.

The **unity** of the Orthodox Church and its faithful represents our **mission**. It is followed by the **testimony** of our Church, so that the world may see “its good works” – **our good works** – shining brightly, be refreshed, and glorify “our Father

who is in heaven.” Our ecclesial unity does not take on the form of a federation, nor does it stem from the congregating around some mortal figure. It proceeds from and is made complete by our common faith, which is synonymous with salvation, with eternal life. “And this is eternal life,” to know the Father and Him whom He sent, Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, as he is depicted in our Orthodox Iconography as well.

**Your Beatitudes, Holy brethren, Your Excellency Mr. President of the Hellenic Republic, Blessed Orthodox Christians, clergy, monastics, and people everywhere under the heavens,** We are convinced – and we proclaim at this historic moment from the altar of the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Island of Crete, which is an extension of the one belonging to the Holy and Great Church of Christ, the church of the Haghia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), Haghia Irene (Holy Peace), and Haghia Dynamis (Holy Might); that is, the Holy Synthrono of John Chrysostom, Gregory the Theologian, and Photios the Great – that only **in unity** and by living out our Orthodoxy as an **experience of faith and life** is it possible to navigate through the modern world’s dramatic history and give a testimony of salvation to those both near and far.

Setting aside the problems that arise from our different ethnic backgrounds, we beseech the descent of the Paraclete upon all of us as well, so that illuminated by Him – by the “Light and Life, and living fountain of reason; by the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding ... the Spirit of sovereignty and the Spirit that expiates sins; the God Who deifies” (cf. sticheron for the vespers of Pentecost) – we may issue a **message of truth, genuineness, and hope** all across today’s world, which thirsts, and our Churches as an **institution** and we as **persons** may reaffirm that we are **precious vessels**.

The Holy Spirit unites us in the Church through the “**bond of perfection**” and **love**, and is expressed and borne witness to by the persons of the Holy Trinity, which is of one nature, but reveals itself in three persons. Similarly, the Orthodox Church is One, but reveals itself in the world through its individual local vines, which are unbreakably and indivisibly attached to one – to one Church, to one body.

Brothers, fathers and children, today the totality of our Holy Orthodox Church is represented here in Crete: “we have seen the true light; we have received the heavenly Spirit; we have found the true faith, worshipping the undivided Trinity, for the Trinity has saved us.” Therefore, we bless the Lord of Mercy and Compassions, and every supplication with one voice and one heart, for He is “the source of our existence, our breath, our understanding, our knowledge of God, the Holy Spirit and the Father Who is without beginning, and His only begotten Son



... the One Who gave us to comprehend the beauty of heaven, the sun in its course, the orb of the moon, the order of the stars and the harmony and different movements that prevail among them ... the turning hours, the changing seasons, the flowing air, the cycle of years ... our hope of gaining the heavenly kingdom, equality of honor with the angels, the contemplation of glory.”

To this All-Holy Spirit, which brings to perfection all good things, and today’s concelebration, and the testimony of our Orthodox Church to the entire world in and through this Holy and Great Council of ours, to It, together with the Father and the Son, do we dutifully offer praise, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.



Bishop Gregory with his good friend Bishop Neofitos at the Great Council.



## Commemorated Today: St. David of Thessaloniki



Saint David of Thessalonica pursued asceticism at the monastery of the holy Martyrs Theodore and Mercurius. Inspired by the example of the holy stylites, he lived in an almond tree in constant prayer, keeping strict fast, and enduring heat and cold. He remained there for three years until an angel told him to come down.

St David received from God the gift of wonderworking, and he healed many from sickness. The holy ascetic gave spiritual counsel to all who came to him. Having attained to passionlessness, he was like an angel in the flesh, and he was able to take hot coals into his hands

without harm. He died the year 540.

### Greetings from the Halls

*“Aloha” to our church family at St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox church! We loved getting your beautiful 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary card. We have wonderful memories from our time there. Thank you for thinking of us. We learned one word - Aloha - can mean “Hello,” “Goodbye” or “love.”*

*In Christ's love, Dcn. Steve & Nancy*



28<sup>th</sup>

### July Anniversaries and Birthdays

#### Anniversaries:

Jacob & Hillary Maher 19<sup>th</sup>

Jim & Jessica Stiver 26<sup>th</sup>

Doug & Lauren Chadwick



#### Birthdays:

Emily Rodzianko 3<sup>rd</sup>

Shannon McNeil 7<sup>th</sup>

Phyllis Thomidis 21<sup>st</sup>

Jamila Madison 30<sup>th</sup>

Phyllis Kopan 4<sup>th</sup>

Avery Lynne Robinson 19<sup>th</sup>

Tudor Stefan Popescu 23<sup>rd</sup>

Olga Dewey 6<sup>th</sup>

Melanie Samson 20<sup>th</sup>

Valentina Makowelski 25<sup>th</sup>

### **Follow Our Diocese On-Line**

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

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**Holy & Great Council:** <http://www.orthodoxcouncil.org>

***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 Domieniecki, 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, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Daria Virvan, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Rdr. Nectaros and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, for the newly departed servant of God Peter Tatsis, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)