

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.**

July 17, 2016 – 4th Sunday After Pentecost | Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils | Greatmartyr Marina

Today we remember the Fathers of the first six Ecumenical Councils, those pastorbishops who met in various gatherings from the fourth to the seventh centuries to combat heresies and formulate canons, or rules, to guide the Church in holy living. We honor these Fathers – indeed, we honor all the saints – because they are friends of Christ, because they show us Christ: Whom our lesson from Hebrews describes as the same yesterday, and today, and forever. The lesson also reminds us that it is all-too-easy to be swept away by diverse and strange teachings. I'm sure each of us could list more than a few strange teachings that we've encountered just in the last week! The Fathers committed their lives, many of them as martyrs, to teaching clearly and faithfully the word of God. And so, we are called (again, in the words of our lesson from Hebrews) to consider carefully the outcome of their life and to imitate their faith. We are to follow their examples in never neglecting to do good and to share what we have, for such is the way of the fathers, the way of the saints, and such sacrifices are well-pleasing to God. One of the reasons our churches are filled with icons is to aid us in this task. In worship we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, a tremendous company of those who teach us in word and deed



the way of Christ. Many of them were mistreated by the world. Like their Lord Christ, they met their end in dishonor, “dying outside the city,” far removed from fame or fortune. For here they had no lasting city, but rather they sought a city which is to come. We remember them, we cling to their relics, we venerate their icons, because we know that they’re not simply dead and gone, buried and forgotten. We know that in Christ they live. Dwelling in the fullness of His presence, they are in a certain profound sense more alive than we are in our present struggles. And so we ask their prayers, that our lives may become more deeply rooted in the life and love of Christ, just as theirs are. We remember them this day and every day. In the words of St. John of Damascus, who wrote in the eighth century:

“Let us carefully review the life of these men, and let us emulate their faith and love and hope and zeal and way of life, and endurance of sufferings and patience even to (the shedding of) blood, in order that we may be sharers with them in their crowns of glory.”

Amen. [Fr. Mark Christian] (*from transfigurebatonrouge.blogspot.com*)

Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews 13:7-16

BRETHREN, remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct. Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried away with various and strange doctrines. For *it is* good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Today’s Gospel Lesson – Saint John 17:1-13

At that time, Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He shall give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And

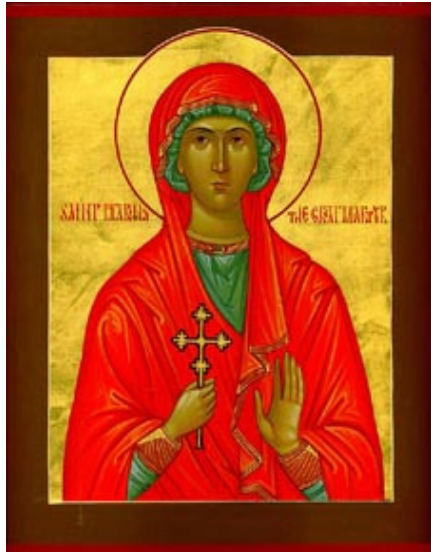
now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them through Your name which You have given Me, that they may be one as We *are*. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Drink holy water, the more often, the better. It is the best and most effective medicine. I'm not saying this as a priest, I'm saying it as a doctor, from my medical experience. – St. Luke the Surgeon, Archbishop of Simferopol

GREATMARTYR MARINA (MARGARET) OF ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA



The Holy Great Martyr Marina was born in Asia Minor, in the city of Antioch of Pisidia (southern Asia Minor), into the family of a pagan priest. In infancy she lost her mother, and her father gave her into the care of a nursemaid, who raised Marina in the Orthodox Faith. Upon learning that his daughter had become a Christian, the father angrily disowned her. During the time of the persecution against Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305), when she was fifteen years old, St Marina was arrested and locked up in prison. With firm trust in the will of God and His help, the young prisoner prepared for her impending fate. The governor

Olymbrios, charmed with the beautiful girl, tried to persuade her to renounce the Christian Faith and become his wife. But the saint, unswayed, refused his offers. The vexed governor gave the holy martyr over to torture. Having beaten her fiercely, they fastened the saint with nails to a board and tore at her body with

tridents. The governor himself, unable to bear the horror of these tortures, hid his face in his hands. But the holy martyr remained unyielding. Thrown for the night into prison, she was granted heavenly aid and healed of her wounds. They stripped her and tied her to a tree, then burned the martyr with fire. Barely alive, the martyr prayed: “Lord, You have granted me to go through fire for Your Name, grant me also to go through the water of holy Baptism.” Hearing the word “water,” the governor gave orders to drown the saint in a large cauldron. The martyr besought the Lord that this manner of execution should become for her holy Baptism. When they plunged her into the water, there suddenly shone a light, and a snow-white dove came down from Heaven, bearing in its beak a golden crown. The fetters put upon St Marina came apart by themselves. The martyr stood up in the fount of Baptism glorifying the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. St Marina emerged from the fount completely healed, without any trace of burns. Amazed at this miracle, the people glorified the True God, and many came to believe. This brought the governor into a rage, and he gave orders to kill anyone who might confess the Name of Christ. 15,000 Christians perished there, and the holy Martyr Marina was beheaded. The sufferings of the Great Martyr Marina were described by an eyewitness of the event, named Theotimos. (*from oca.org*)

Amen. [Fr. Mark Christian] (*from transfigurebatonrouge.blogspot.com*)

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 78: In Debt to God



“I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish...” (Romans 1:14 RSV)

When St. Paul speaks to the Romans about being “*under obligation*,” he actually means that he is *in debt* to “*Greeks and to barbarians...to the wise and to the foolish.*” What does St. Paul owe to these people he mentions? And why does Paul say he is in “debt” to them? When we speak of being “in debt,” we usually refer to the amount of money we owe on credit cards, loans or mortgages. We have purchased something or we have borrowed cash, and we owe the cost or the repayment. These are our debts. St. Paul says he is in debt to virtually all people, including the “*wise and the foolish.*” Here St. Paul is not talking about money (which is perhaps why the translators have used the word “obligation” rather than “debt”). St. Paul recognized what he has received, not only from God but from the Church. When he was known as Saul, St. Paul persecuted the Church. He is said to have actually murdered Christians, and was giving his approval to the death of Holy Protomartyr Stephen when Stephen was stoned. St. Paul, however, was rescued from his life as persecutor. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he was converted to Christianity, and was given many gifts to use to spread Christianity to the known world. God had

revealed His truth to St. Paul. What St. Paul “owed” as a debt was an obligation to take this truth and share it with Greeks, barbarians, the wise and the foolish. He felt he had to pay God back for the many gifts St. Paul himself had received in the process of his conversion and the mission work that followed. Seldom do we think about the fact that all that we have are gifts from God. The first and foremost gift is the gift of life on this earth. Our lives, provided and supported by God Himself, become our own debt to God. We owe *Him* our lives. We owe God something in repayment for allowing us to live on this earth. But there is more. We have been given the means by which we live, the money by which we buy the necessities (and pleasures) of life. But these, too, are loans, so to speak. We have become debtors to God. We owe God a return on what He has actually “lent” to us while we are on earth. None of this is our own – we are debtors to God. St. Paul saw his life, his whole life, all he was and all he owned and all the gifts given to him as missionary and preacher something he needed to give back. Let us take stock of our lives, and see how much we actually owe to God and our neighbor. (*from 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, Cary Cooper, 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, 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, f for the newly departed handmaiden of God Hope Stephanadis, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)