

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

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

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



September 18, 2016 – Sunday After & Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross | St. Eumenius, Bishop of Gortyna

From his early years, St. Eumenius gave himself entirely to a life along the narrow path of austere asceticism and extreme renunciation, that he fittingly combined with deep humility and all the virtues. His countenance was always bathed in tears and no one ever heard him find fault with anyone, or give so much as a hearing to gossip. Seeing that he fulfilled all righteousness, the people of Gortyna constrained him to become their Bishop in 688. As the sixth Bishop of Gortyna, he accomplished everything that belongs to that office wisely, in all things obedient to the Holy Spirit, working many miracles by his prayers and shepherding his flock with great care and love.

In the service composed by Joseph the Hymnographer in his honor, he says, “Fittingly with Orthodox teachings, Father, you vanquished all the dark heresies.” This was the time when the heresy of the Monothelites flourished, teaching that after the union of the two natures of Christ, there is only one will and energy, thus only the divine will existed in Christ, abolishing the human will. After its condemnation at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680-81, this heresy continued and was centered in Lebanon at the Monastery of St. Maron, which established the

Maronite Church. Joseph the Hymnographer also informs us that St. Eumenius reconciled the co-emperors Constantine IV Pognatos, Heraclius and Tiberius at Constantinople. Yielding to the divine will, he illumined Rome with godly teaching and miracles. He then journeyed to the Thebaid where, without intending a miracle, he put an end to a time of drought by his prayer. It was in the Thebaid that he fell asleep in the Lord, and the faithful who dwelt there sent his holy body to be buried in Rhaxos in his homeland, where the body of his predecessor St. Cyril (June 4) already lay. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lessons – St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 2:16-20

Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 16:13-24

Brethren, watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all *that* you *do* be done with love. I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with *us*. I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men. The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The salutation with my own hand—Paul's. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. O Lord, come! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Today's Gospel Lessons – Saint Mark 8:34-38: 9:1

The Lord said, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give

in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Saint Matthew 21:33-42

The Lord said, "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*. "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

A Word From the Holy Fathers

How are we to become disciples of Christ? Let us listen to him saying: "He who 'wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me'" (Mt. 16:24). By 'following,' he means the imitating of him through our works, that as he walked, we also may walk like him, and that we may endure with joy temptations and abuse, and may share in the Holy Spirit – without this, neither fasting, nor having one's pallet on the floor, nor poverty, nor keeping vigil, nor remaining standing, nor solitude, nor bodily toil, nor anything else you might mention, would supply us with a word of wisdom, or a word of knowledge or of discernment. For all these practices are a road, and lead people to the light, but they themselves are not the light. So if I walk along them for a thousand years, and do not reach the light, which is the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father, and through the Son enlightens every man who comes, yet if at my departure from this life I am found to be still in the darkness, what have I gained? Of course you will answer, "Nothing."

– St. Symeon the New Theologian

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 89:

Abram: One Steward's Response

“So Abram went, as the LORD had told him.”
(Genesis 12:4 RSV)



The twelfth chapter of Genesis begins with God appearing to a man named Abram. Without so much as an introduction, God tells Abram that He will bless Abram and his family. Further, Abram and his family will become a blessing to all the families of the earth. Abram is to take his family to a place God would show him.

Then comes an astonishing, if not unbelievable, three-word response: *“So Abram went.”* There is no argument. There was no questioning. There was no negotiation. Abram simply went. Many years later St. Paul would write of Abram's faith (see Romans 4:16 and Hebrews 11:8,17). Abram's response was simple and complete obedience.

We live in a world that misunderstands the blessings of God. How often have we heard some sports hero claim that God had blessed him or her to make that winning shot, or stop that game-changing goal in some championship contest? Did God not bless the opposition? Or did He withhold His blessing so that the hero's team could win? Does God bless us to be successful in our businesses or in school or in whatever is our chosen vocation?

God was clear to Abram: *“I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing ... by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves”* (Genesis 12:2-3 RSV). The blessing that Abram receives is to “be a blessing.” Christian stewards recognize in God's promise to Abram two small words. God offers to bless Abram *so that* Abram will be a blessing. It was through Abram and his family that God chose to bless the rest of humanity. This is a clear example of the way God works in reality. He does not pick and choose those whom He will bless to win a ball game or pass a test or get a raise.

The way God has worked and continues to work is the way He worked in blessing the entire world. Through one Person, God blesses all people. He sent His Son Jesus Christ in order that all would receive the blessing. Surely, God could have chosen another way. What has been revealed to us is that He did not. God uses human agents, like Abram and Jesus to pass on His blessings. Today we might call such human agents “stewards.” (*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, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, 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, John Sparks, 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, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)