

# 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.



**November 27, 2016 – 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**

### **Great-Martyr James of Persia**

The Holy Great Martyr James the Persian (the Sawn-Asunder) was born in the fourth century into a pious Christian family, both wealthy and illustrious. His wife was also a Christian, and the couple raised their children in piety, inspiring in them a love for prayer and the Holy Scriptures. James occupied a high position at the court of the Persian emperor Izdegerd (399-420) and his successor Barakhranes (420-438). But on one of the military campaigns James, seduced by the emperor's beneficence, was afraid to acknowledge himself a Christian, and so he offered sacrifice to idols with the emperor. Learning of this, James' mother and wife wrote him a letter, in which they rebuked him and urged him to repent. Receiving the letter, James realized the gravity of his sin. Faced with the horror of being cut off not only from his family, but also from God Himself, he began to weep loudly, imploring the Lord for forgiveness.

His fellow-soldiers, hearing him pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, reported this to the emperor. Under interrogation, St James bravely confessed his faith in the one True

God. No amount of urging by the emperor could make him renounce Christ. The emperor then ordered the saint to be put to death.

They began to cut off his fingers and his toes one by one, then his hands and his feet, and then his arms and legs. During the prolonged torture St James offered prayers of thanksgiving to the Lord, Who had granted him the possibility of redemption from his sins by enduring these terrible torments. Finally, the martyr was beheaded. Christians gathered up the pieces of his body and buried them with great reverence. (*from oca.org*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 2:4-10**

Brethren, God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 13:10-17**

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise *herself* up. But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead *it* away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.



## On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 101:

### Theosis Without Stewardship?



*“For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, proud...ungrateful...lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” (2 Tim. 3, 2-4 OSB)*

Theosis, the continuous communion with God, comes to us by the grace of God. As Orthodox Christians, it should be what we all strive for – with all our heart, soul, and might. It is the reason God gave us life, to pursue Theosis. If we believe the preceding, what price would you pay to be illumined and in communion with God?

The Saints serve as living proof that when you love God with all your heart, keep His commandments and pray unceasingly, God blesses all with a pure heart, an illumined nous, and continuous communion with Him. The Saints lived their lives *for* God and only *for* Him, giving all – not only their hearts, but their time, talents and wealth. We can read of Saints that exhibited the attainment of Illumination and Theosis; from these Saints a light was emitted from their faces – a light so bright that their faces were no longer visible, as was the case with St. Seraphim of Sarov.

Orthodox Stewardship as defined by the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese states that we should “receive God's gifts gratefully, cherishing and tending them in a responsible and accountable manner, sharing them in justice and love with all and returning with increase to the Lord.” The Saints gave *everything* to the Lord in thanksgiving; we are, however, only asked to share and return to the Lord *a portion* of what He has given us. This is but one example of God's generosity.

What occurs if we do not practice Stewardship? The most common reason for not practicing Stewardship is greed, one of the eight basic thoughts which leads to a darkening of the nous, sin, and passions as taught by St. John of Damascus and also Evagrius, a fourth-century anchorite monk. Not practicing stewardship may mean that we want to please ourselves, self-love, with material things more than we want to please God and obtain communion with Him. In other words, we are making a choice between God and self, with self the object of our choice. Unless we cleanse ourselves by sincere repentance and prayer, our nous will remain darkened, preventing communion with God. If we do not sincerely repent we, not God, place our salvation in jeopardy.

The path to salvation is before us! Living a life with Christ, of Stewardship as the Church directs, places us on the path to Illumination and Theosis. We should only seek that which leads to our eternal salvation. Give generously of your time, talent and resources, "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*" (Mathew 6:19-20, RSV). One cannot obtain Theosis without true Stewardship. (*from acrod.org*)

## *A Word from the Holy Fathers*

We usually take the reckoning of our money early in the morning, but of our actions, of all that we have said and done by day, let us demand of ourselves the account after supper, and even after nightfall, as we lie upon our bed, with none to trouble, none to disturb us. And if we see anything done amiss, let us chastise our conscience, let us rebuke our mind, let us so vehemently impugn our account, that we may no more dare to rise up and bring ourselves to the same pit of sin, being mindful of the scourging at night.

– St. John Chrysostom

Mary was offered in God's holy temple, and remained there, showing to all a great example of zeal and holiness, withdrawn from frivolous society. When, however, she reached full age and the law required that she should leave the temple, she was entrusted by the priests to Joseph, her bridegroom, as the guardian of her virginity, a steadfast observer of the law from his youth. Mary, the holy and undefiled, went to Joseph, contenting herself with her household matters, and knowing nothing beyond her four walls.

– St. John of Damascus



## *December Anniversaries and Birthdays*

### *Anniversaries:*

Ramius & Anna Connour 1<sup>st</sup>



### *Birthdays:*

Katrina Robinson 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Kara David 9<sup>th</sup>  
William Howl 14<sup>th</sup>  
Barbara Maston 23<sup>rd</sup>

Ronnie Robinson 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Andrew Dewey 11<sup>th</sup>  
Gabriela Howl 14<sup>th</sup>  
Tina Harris 26<sup>th</sup>

Luke Cooper 5<sup>th</sup>  
Jocelyn Gray 12<sup>th</sup>  
Andrew (AJ) McNeil 16<sup>th</sup>  
James Stiver 27<sup>th</sup>

## **Giving Good Gifts**

In this Nativity season, we have an opportunity to help establish a young family in their first apartment. So, if you have beds, couches, chairs, tables, TVs, microwaves, and other working furniture and household items, please let us know who you are and what you have on the sign-up sheet in the social hall. The need is imminent so don't delay!



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

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

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

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

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

**You Tube:** <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

***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, 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, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectarios 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.)