

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

(301) 638-5035 Church

4419 Leonardtown Road

Waldorf, MD 20601

Rev. Father Joseph Edgington, Pastor

(703) 532-8017

fredgington@gmail.com

www.apostlethomas.org

American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

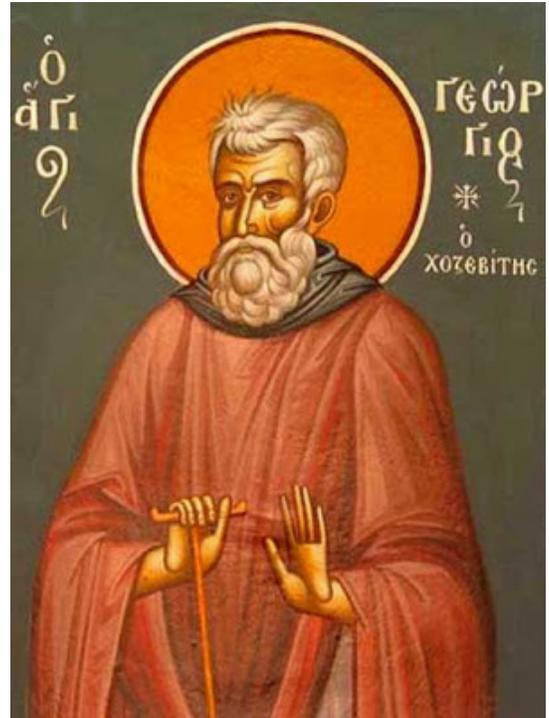
Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM |

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.



January 8, 2017 – Sunday After Theophany Venerable George the Chozebite

The second day of the Afterfeast of Theophany falls on January 8. At Vespers we repeat a hymn which has already been sung at Compline for Theophany. In the hymn Saint John wonders in whose name he should baptize Christ. Should he baptize Him in the name of the Father? The Lord Jesus Christ already bears Him in Himself. Of the Son? He Himself is the incarnate Son of God. Of the Holy Spirit? Christ Himself sends the Spirit. (*from oca.org*)

Our holy Father George was born in Cyprus towards the middle of the sixth century. After the death of his devout parents, desiring to embrace the ascetic life and to escape the marriage arranged for him by his uncle and tutor, he fled to the Holy Land, where his elder brother Heraclides had already been living for some years as a hermit in the Lavra of Calamon on the banks of the Jordan. Finding him still too young for eremitic life, his brother took him to the Monastery of the Mother of God at Chozeba on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, which had been founded in the previous century by Bishop John of Ceasarea (Oct. 3). After receiving the monastic tonsure, he was placed with an elder from Mesopotamia, who was severe and unjust; but his disciple obeyed him meekly, patiently and humbly, as if the Lord Himself manifested His presence through him. One day, as

he was late bringing water from the stream, his elder struck him a violent blow in the presence of the whole community, whereupon his hand immediately withered, seized with paralysis, and he recovered the use of it only at the prayer of his disciple before the tomb of the Saints of the monastery. To escape the vain admiration of men, Saint George then fled and made his way to Calamon, where for many years he shared his brother's cell and admirable way of life. He was obedient to him in everything and regarded him as his father in God rather than as his brother according to the flesh. With never an idle word, they persevered ceaselessly in prayer, and for food they made do with moldy leftovers covered in worms that were kept for them from week to week. George's prayer soon found such favor with God that he was able to make a barren tree bear fruit or approach a formidable lion without fear. Heraclides fell asleep in peace at the age of seventy, renowned as the very model of humility, and George, alone in their cell now, carried on in his brother's footsteps, while always remaining ready to serve his brethren in the Lavra.

On the death of the Abbot, the troubles which disturbed the community over the election of his successor caused George to leave Calamon and, on a sign from God, to return to Chozeba, the monastery of his tonsure. Abbot Leontius received him there with joy and assigned him an isolated cell, leaving him free to lead the kind of life that suited him. Remaining in seclusion throughout the week and keeping his spiritual labors a close secret, he joined the cenobitic community on Sundays, spoke of things useful to the soul, and would receive with especial care the confession of thoughts of the brethren. He used to collect leftovers from the common table during the week, which he dried in the sun and ate. In spite of numerous assaults of demons aimed at interrupting his rule of prayer, he would never break it for any reason, and he never spoke a word without an inspiration from God; he thus won great power over unclean spirits. His ascetic life did not prevent him from being eager to serve his brethren, and on breadbaking days he was always ready to look after the oven, whose heat was all the more stifling in the climate of the region. Although there was nothing of him of the spirit of judgement, when he compared contemporary monks with those of old, he would often lament their lack of fervor and fear of God, and their indiscipline during the services; above all, he found fault with those who, taking credit for the many years they had spent in the monastery, treated their lay brethren and sinners with disdain. "Believe me," he said, "even if someone were able to make heaven and earth anew, but regarded his neighbor with proud contempt, he would labor in vain and his portion would be with the hypocrites (cf. Matt. 24:51). A man cannot approach God unless he is at peace with his neighbor. The sins and passions all have pride as their common source and they lead to death; while obedience and submission to the Lord are life, joy and light." He taught his monks to free themselves of their

passions by fear of God shown in labor, tears, prayer, and fasting; and he exhorted them to vie with one another in humility by keeping themselves from all criticism or jealousy of one another so as thus to attain holy charity, the "bond of perfection" (Col. 3:14).

Following a vision on the eve of the Persian invasion (614), he predicted the fall of Jericho and the siege of Jerusalem. The Abbot and brethren therefore had time to flee, some to Arabia, others to caves. He himself was unwilling to leave the place where God had placed him, although the entreaties of his disciples prevailed with him at last to take refuge at Calamon. Most of the monks were discovered by the invaders and massacred or taken into captivity. Saint George, however, commanded the respect of the barbarians and was left at liberty. He returned to Chozeba, where he lived as a recluse in the monastic enclosure for the remainder of his days, served by Anthony, his faithful disciple and biographer. Thanks to his prayers, the Monastery never lacked bread and oil for its guests, despite the famine and misery which followed the fall of the Holy City. In extreme old age, he fell ill and, realizing that the moment of his departure from this life had come, he sent for Anthony. The latter was busy looking after the guests and was unable to come to his bedside immediately. The Elder therefore sent to say to him, "Don't worry, I shall wait until you have finished your duty." When his disciple arrived towards midnight, he embraced him and said, "Depart, my soul! Go to the Lord!" And he fell asleep. (*From The Synaxarion: The Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church (Vol. 3), by Hieromonk Makarios of Simonos Petras (2001)*)

Parish News

Holy Water was consecrated on Theophany. If you would like to take some home for personal use, please bring a container to fill. Please contact Fr. Joseph or Pani Stacey if you would like your house blessed.

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13

Brethren, to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 4:12-17

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – 108: Well Done!



“Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.” (Matthew 25: 23 RSV)

The Parable of the Talents is one of the several parables relating to stewardship in the New Testament. Christ tells an inquiring scribe and his disciples in another parable that there are two great commandments, love the Lord God with all your heart and being and love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12: 29-31). Christ goes on to say that there are no commandments greater than

these two.

If you love somebody will you not take care of that person? Will you not be happy when they are happy, sad when they are sad? Will your heart not break when their heart breaks? Will you not DO everything possible to help that person you love? The key word here is DO, just as in the scripture verse above. Christ says, “well done” to the faithful servant. He did what was asked of him.

Notice that in the parable, Christ does not say, “Well said, well planned, well thought, or well-intended.” He says, “**WELL DONE.**” What will Christ say to you when you stand before Him? And we will all stand before His judgment.

Have you done what our Master has asked us to do? Have you given back a portion of what Christ has given you in time, talents and resource so that it might multiply and bear fruit? You, brothers and sisters, will have to stand before Christ and answer that question.

How **DO** you thank God for your blessings? The emphasis for us Christians is on **doing**. (from acrod.org)

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Scripture, with the desire to describe to us the perfect man, the man who is ordained to be the recipient of blessings, observes a certain order and method in the treatment of points in him which we may contemplate, and begins from the simplest and most obvious, ‘Lord, who shall sojourn in Your tabernacle?’ A sojourning is a transitory dwelling. It indicates a life not settled, but passing, in hope of our removal to the better things. It is the part of a saint to pass through this world, and to hasten to another life. In this sense David says of himself, ‘I am a stranger with you and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.’ Abraham was a sojourner, who did not possess even so much land as to set his foot on, and when he needed a tomb, bought one for money. The word teaches us that so long as he lives in the flesh he is a sojourner, and, when he removes from this life, rests in his own home. In this life he sojourns with strangers, but the land which he bought in the tomb to receive his body is his own. And truly blessed is it, not to rot with things of earth as though they were one’s own, nor cling to all that is about us here as though here were our natural fatherland, but to be conscious of the fall from nobler things, and of our passing our time in heaviness because of the punishment that is laid upon us, just like exiles who for some crimes’ sake have been banished by the magistrates into regions far from the land that gave them birth. Hard it is to find a man who will not heed present things as though they were his own; who knows that he has the use of wealth but for a season; who reckons on the brief duration of his health; who remembers that the bloom of human glory fades away.

“‘Who shall sojourn in Your tabernacle?’ The flesh that is given to man’s soul for it to dwell in is called God’s tabernacle. Who will be found to treat this flesh as though it were not his own? Sojourners, when they hire land that is not their own, till the estate at the will of the owner. So, too, to us the care of the flesh has been entrusted by bond, for us to toil with diligence therein, and make it fruitful for the use of Him Who gave it. And if the flesh is worthy of God, it becomes truly a tabernacle of God, accordingly as He makes His dwelling in the saints. Such is the flesh of the sojourner. ‘Lord, who shall sojourn in Your tabernacle?’ Then there come progress and advance to that which is more perfect. ‘And who shall dwell on Your holy hill?’ A Jew, in earthly sense, when he hears of the ‘hill,’ turns his thoughts to Zion. ‘Who shall dwell on Your holy hill?’ The sojourner in the flesh shall dwell on the holy hill, he shall dwell on that hill, that heavenly country, bright and splendid, whereof the Apostle says, ‘You are come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,’ where is the general assembly of ‘angels, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.’” (Heb. 12:22-23)

– St. Basil the Great, Homily on Psalm 14

THE LIFE OF CHRIST WITHIN US

By His Eminence Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

We are at the beginning of the year and we are used to exchanging well wishes, which are always pleasant, hopeful and encouraging. Yet things in peoples' lives do not come as they wish. There are voices today who speak of a difficult year ahead and, of course, there are serious grounds to support this view that there will be difficulties. But a person has to face all the problems of life with an elevated sense of meaning. This should be done particularly by Christians.

The thoughts below refer to how the Church urges Christians to live every day of their lives and, therefore, this year. Our model should be Christ and our continuing aim will be how to live in Christ.

Christ, after His baptism in the Jordan River and the arrest of John the Forerunner, began His ministry preaching repentance: "Repent, for the reign of heaven is near" (Matt. 4:17). This refers to the Gospel reading on the first Sunday after the Baptism of Christ, basically the first Sunday of each new year. This is important because it determines in our lives the course for every new year.

The sacred Gospels, although not a complete biography of Christ, do present a general outline of "what Christ said, did and suffered." As to what He "said" refers to His teachings, and a primary place for this is given to His Sermon on the Mount, as well as His speeches presented in the Gospel of John, which are full of theology. As to what he "did" refers to His miracles, namely the healing of sicknesses, the remission of sins and the raising from the dead. As to what He "suffered" refers to the persecution by the Scribes and Pharisees, and especially His Passion and Crucifixion. Of course, the Gospels describe His Resurrection and Ascension into the heavens as well as the coming of the All-Holy Spirit.

If we notice carefully we will find that these three actions of Christ reveal His divine-human person. That is, Christ preached as a Prophet, worked wonders as a King, and suffered and was crucified as a High Priest. In other words, Christ united in Himself these three categories of people who were in the Old Testament, that of the Prophet, King and High Priest.

However, the entire work of Christ we live again within the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, which is the sacramental repetition of the work of divine economy. We come to the church, participate in the Divine Eucharist (we do not only pray as individuals), but we also live the sacramental event of the divine incarnation of Christ.

The Small Entrance symbolically shows Christ entering the world to preach the Gospel of repentance and salvation. The Priest holds the Gospel in which is

contained the teaching of Christ and after the Entrance he reads the passage prescribed by the Fathers, and so we experience what Christ said and is saying, that is, the prophetic identity of Christ is declared.

During the course of the Divine Eucharist we pray that God would send His mercy. We feel that we are sick in soul and body, and have been hurt by demonic influences and the excitement of the passions, and so we see our unworthiness, our spiritual leprosy, as well as spiritual deadness and internal situation, and we pray that God would send His mercy. That is, we come to the Divine Eucharist hurt, frustrated, and many times we feel miracles take place, that there are internal changes. By this we are living within us the wonderworking identity of Christ, what Christ did and does. We are experiencing the sovereignty of Christ over all creation.

Then, during the Divine Liturgy with the Great Entrance, the gifts are moved from the sacred Prothesis where they were suitably prepared and deposited on the holy Altar where the bloodless mystagogy will take place, to experience the Passion of Christ. The holy Altar is terrible Golgotha on which is performed this great bloodless sacrifice of Christ. In this sense in the Divine Eucharist we also experience what Christ suffered for our salvation, and so we experience His high priestly identity.

Indeed, the Divine Eucharist is the center of our spiritual life, because in it we see Christ acting as Prophet, King and High Priest. And when we are apprenticed into the mysteries of the Reign of God, we are ruled by the great King and nourished by His Body, and we can live the mystery of the Divine Economy. Finally, the Divine Eucharist is not an individual or even a common prayer, but it is an initiation into the mystery of the Divine Economy, which is the mystery of the Incarnation of Christ and the deification of man.

Yet, this entire life of Christ does not end with the celebration of the Divine Eucharist, but it continues also in our personal life. After the Divine Liturgy there begins another internal liturgy. When one communes of the Body and Blood of Christ, after necessary preparation, then they receive within them Christ as Prophet, King and High Priest and so the Divine Liturgy continues.

Christ teaches within us what we must do to walk correctly and rule over our passions, giving us His grace and energy, together with our synergy, to be released from the passions and freed from their dynasty. As a Priest He inspires us to pray unceasingly to God. This means that after Divine Communion we live Christ within us as Prophet, King and High Priest, and so we increase our spiritual life. Christ continues to preach, work miracles and perform as a Priest for our salvation.

In this sense the Gospel describes the key events of the life of Christ, mystically illustrated in the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, and it is experienced spiritually in the heart, the center of the inner man, where the love and mercy of God is revealed.

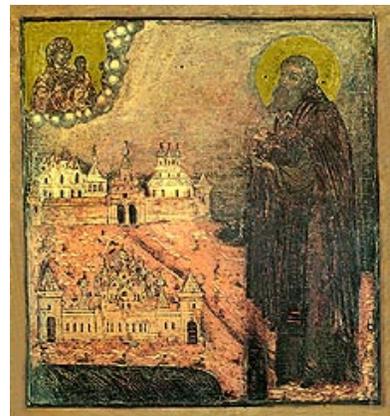
We have many problems in our lives, several anomalous situations, and we face numerous difficulties, but as Christians we should live in Christ, that is, we should enter into the life of Christ and Christ can enter into us.

With these conditions, the new year will be blessed and fruitful and this year will be profitable. We should not only see our external difficulties, but we are interested primarily and above all how we make within our existence a spiritual Divine Liturgy. We should be very interested especially in what the Apostle Paul says: "For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ" (Heb. 3:14).

Happy and blessed New Year! *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

ALSO COMMEMORATED TODAY: ST. PAISIUS OF UGLICH

Saint Paisius of Uglich was igumen of the Protection monastery, near Uglich. He was born in the Tver district near the city of Kashin, and he was a nephew of Saint Macarius of Kalyazin (March 17). Saint Paisius entered his uncle's monastery after the death of his parents, when he was just an eleven-year-old child. Under his uncle's guidance, Saint Paisius led a monastic life of obedience, fasting and prayer, and he was put to work copying soul-saving books. "A man wondrous of spirit, famed teacher of holiness and most



astounding wonderworker, he founded (in 1464) the cenobitic Protection monastery three versts from Uglich at the wish of Prince Andrew, and he was chosen igumen." Saint Paisius was also "founder and organizer of the holy Nikolsky Grekhozaruchnya monastery in 1489. Struggling at the Protection monastery, Saint Paisius lived into old age and died on June 6, 1504. His relics, glorified by miracles, rest beneath a crypt in the Protection monastery. *(from oca.org)*

SAVE THE DATE

The March for Life is a [peaceful, prayerful, and \[massive\] rally](#) that takes place every year in Washington, D.C., on the sorrowful anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* that legalized abortion in the United States over forty years ago. Participants process from the National Mall to the Supreme Court Building where, at the end of the route, Orthodox Christians gather together with

our archpastors and clergy to offer memorial prayers in memory of the departed unborn. This will occur on Friday, January 27. Please see Fr. Joseph for details.

December Treasurer's Report

Glory to Jesus Christ! Our operating income/expenses for **December 2016** and for the **year 2016** were:

December Income \$10,542 | December Expenses \$8,652 | Income Over/Under \$1,890
2016 Income \$127,720.70 | 2016 Expenses \$139,836.82 | 2016 Over/Under \$-12,116.12

There were no major expense for the month of December 2016. In June 2016 we paid off our second mortgage with County First Bank (\$23,716.95) thanks for your hard work and generous support over the years. The funds came from building fund donations, yard sales and Saint Barbara's fund drives.

ASSESSMENTS FOR 2017

We paid our Assessment to the Diocese for 2017. As in previous years, we trust that you will pay your assessments over the course of the year. The Diocesan Assessment remains \$68.00 for each adult over 18 or \$17.00 if paid quarterly. Please remember that without the Diocese and our Bishop we would not be an Orthodox Church. Thank you for being good Stewards of God's House. Kari

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, Presbyteria Katie Baker and family, Alicia Barosio and family, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke 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. 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.)