

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

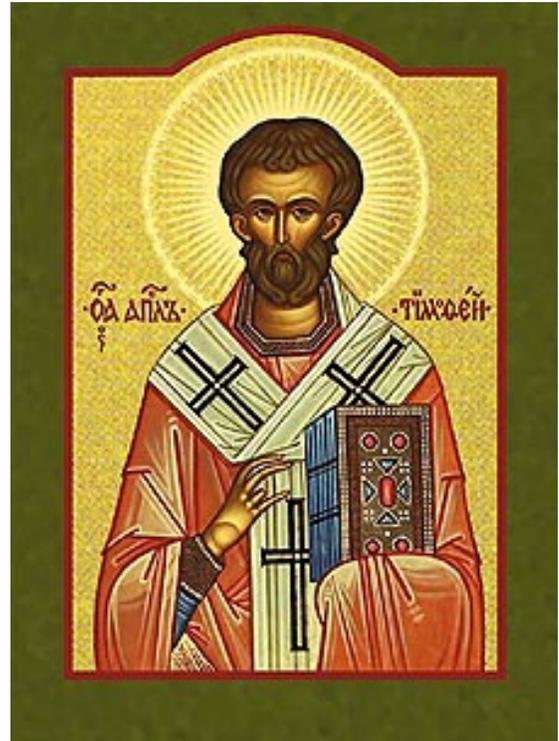
Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.



January 22, 2017 – 31st Sunday After Pentecost Apostle Timothy of the Seventy

The Holy Apostle Timothy was from the Lycaonian city of Lystra in Asia Minor. Saint Timothy was converted to Christ in the year 52 by the holy Apostle Paul (June 29). When the Apostles Paul and Barnabas first visited the cities of Lycaonia, Saint Paul healed one crippled from birth. Many of the inhabitants of Lystra then believed in Christ, and among them was the future Saint Timothy, his mother Eunice and grandmother Loida (Lois) (Acts 14:6-12; 2 Tim. 1:5). The seed of faith, planted in Saint Timothy's soul by the Apostle Paul, brought forth abundant fruit. He became Saint Paul's disciple, and later his constant companion and co-worker in the preaching of the Gospel.

The Apostle Paul loved Saint Timothy and in his Epistles called him his beloved son, remembering his devotion and fidelity with gratitude. He wrote to Timothy: "You have followed my teaching, way of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, and patience" (2 Tim. 3:10-11). The Apostle Paul appointed Saint Timothy as Bishop of Ephesus, where the saint remained for fifteen years. Finally, when Saint Paul was in prison and awaiting martyrdom, he summoned his faithful friend, Saint Timothy, for a last farewell (2 Tim. 4:9).

Saint Timothy ended his life as a martyr. The pagans of Ephesus celebrated a festival in honor of their idols, and used to carry them through the city, accompanied by impious ceremonies and songs. Saint Timothy, zealous for the glory of God, attempted to halt the procession and reason with the spiritually blind idol-worshipping people, by preaching the true faith in Christ. The pagans angrily fell upon the holy apostle, they beat him, dragged him along the ground, and finally, they stoned him. Saint Timothy's martyrdom occurred in the year 93.

In the fourth century the holy relics of Saint Timothy were transferred to Constantinople and placed in the church of the Holy Apostles near the tombs of Saint Andrew (November 30) and Saint Luke (October 18). The Church honors Saint Timothy as one of the Apostles of the Seventy. In Russian practice, the back of a priest's cross is often inscribed with Saint Paul's words to Saint Timothy: "Be an example to the believers in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). (*from oca.org*)

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 First Letter to Timothy 1:15-17

My son Timothy, this *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus was coming near Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God.

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – 110: Generosity



“For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints...” (2 Corinthians 8: 3-4 RSV)

I believe that I can in all truth say that everybody loves a generous giver! We all enjoy receiving gifts from others: we merely have to look at Christmas morning to experience *the joy of receiving*. The joy of receiving has its place in our lives. But it is contingent on the *generosity* of others - people and God. Without generosity there is no joy of receiving.

What do the Holy Scriptures say about *generosity*? Galatians 5: 12 states, “But the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, **generosity**, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; against such there is no law.” Generosity is a *fruit of the Spirit*, one of the seven great virtues of the Church. If you desire to know what God wants you to do with your life, assess if what you are doing is aligned with the fruits of the Holy Spirit. If that which you are doing is not one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, then, you are not doing what God wants of you.

Jesus commanded us to give *freely*, expecting nothing in return. This applies to the whole of our life, not just money. God, through the Holy Spirit, endows us continually with time, talents and treasures. He asks us to freely and cheerfully give back a portion of all that He has given to us. Do we?

Do we give cheerfully and freely expecting nothing in return? Well, each of you can answer for yourself. But, let me comment that most people, given their humanity, expect something in return when they give. We expect to be thanked. We expect a change of heart in people to whom we show kindness. We expect people to change their ways by our act of generosity. We expect good things, as defined by us, to happen. This is wrong. Our human expectations are owned by us, not by God, and when our expectations *precede* God’s expectations, we are making ourselves a god *before* God. We are not aligned with God demands. The preceding attitude is dangerous.

If we were giving freely in accord with the fruits of the Holy Spirit, *we would be yielding our life to God* and expecting nothing in return. Give freely of your time, talent, and treasure as did the Macedonians in 2nd Corinthians. Although they were suffering severe hardships of their own, they gave to support those in Jerusalem that were suffering even more. They even **begged** Paul to allow them to give to the cause! God loves a *cheerful* giver who gives freely and *lovingly*, expecting nothing in return. (from *acrod.org*)

ANNUAL PARISH RETREAT, SKI TRIP TO WEST VIRGINIA



THINK SNOW! Mark your calendar for **3-5 March 2017** to join our annual parish retreat to Davis, West Virginia, for a weekend of fellowship, skiing and fun at Timberline Resort and Blackwater Falls State Park. All families and guests are welcome. **PLEASE ATTEND A SHORT ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING AFTER LITURGY ON 5 FEBRUARY.** *See Carol or Anna if you are interested, but you cannot attend this meeting.* This very affordable trip has been planned for those who have never skied before, and for experienced skiers, too. It's also a great opportunity for any non-skiers to get away for a relaxing weekend in the scenic Canaan Valley area of wild and wonderful West Virginia! We'll stay at Canaan Valley Baptist Church in Davis, WV. We'll have use of their fellowship hall, kitchen, Sunday school rooms, and bathrooms, including showers. Timberline resort has a great family style atmosphere, and several recent improvements. It has a 1,000+ foot vertical drop, with trails for accomplished skiers and beginners alike - from the double diamond "Drop" to the gentle, two mile long "Salamander," and lots of intermediates in between. We'll ski 9AM to 4:30PM on Saturday and on Sunday morning we'll conduct our own worship

service at our host Church, and have an optional tour of nearby Blackwater Falls State Park before returning home. All first time skiers must take a lesson before getting on a lift! We want a perfect safety record, and this is where it starts! You can get a free lesson from our certified instructor, Al Harvey, and his crew of helpers. They will also help you throughout the day - ask them to watch you, and to offer helpful tips that can make your skiing easier, safer, and more enjoyable. Experienced skiers will only need a quick safety check run on the beginners' slope before hitting the slopes with their buddies. Spread the word and THINK SNOW!

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Since man clings to life, when he is healthy he forgets, as is natural, that his acts result either in shame or in glory; but when he falls victim to a possibly fatal disease, he forgets everything in this world, and sitting in the workshop of his conscience as a prudent judge of his own deeds, he makes promises to the Judge Whom nothing escapes and Who is no respecter of persons, and is anxious only for his own salvation.... Let us maintain this principle.... Let us give our firm word to God, and if we maintain these three virtues as inviolate as we can, justice, moderation and mercy, then God will help us in other matters. Only let us not turn away from the good, either on account of personal favoritism, or blood ties, or bribes or promises, or fear of the powers that be; for no one is more powerful than God.

– St. Athanasius, Patriarch of Constantinople, Letter 29

ALSO COMMEMORATED TODAY: ST. ANASTASIUS THE PERSIAN

The Monk Martyr Anastasius the Persian was the son of a Persian sorcerer named Bavi. As a pagan, he had the name Magundates and served in the armies of the Persian emperor Chozroes II, who in 614 ravaged the city of Jerusalem and carried away the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord to Persia. Great miracles occurred from the Cross of the Lord, and the Persians were astonished. The heart of young Magundates was inflamed with the desire to learn more about this sacred object. Asking everyone about the Holy Cross, the youth learned that upon it the Lord Himself was crucified for the salvation of mankind. He became acquainted with the truths of the Christian Faith in the city of Chalcedon, where the army of Chozroes was for a certain while. He was baptized with the name Anastasius, and then became a monk and spent seven years in one of the Jerusalem monasteries, living an ascetical life.

Reading the Lives of the holy martyrs, Saint Anastasius was inspired with the desire to imitate them. A mysterious dream, which he had on Great and Holy Saturday, the day before the Resurrection of Christ, urged him to do this. Having

fallen asleep after his daily tasks, he beheld a radiant man giving him a golden chalice filled with wine, who said to him, "Take this and drink." Draining the chalice, he felt an ineffable delight. Saint Anastasius then realized that this vision was his call to martyrdom. He went secretly from the monastery to Palestinian Caesarea. There he was arrested for being a Christian, and was brought to trial. The governor tried in every way to force Saint Anastasius to renounce Christ, threatening him with tortures and death, and promising him earthly honors and blessings. The saint, however, remained unyielding. Then they subjected him to torture: they beat him with rods, they lacerated his knees, they hung him up by the hands and tied a heavy stone to his feet, they exhausted him with confinement, and then wore him down with heavy work in the stone quarry with other prisoners.

Finally, the governor summoned Saint Anastasius and promised him his freedom if he would only say, "I am not a Christian." The holy martyr replied, "I will never deny my Lord before you or anyone else, neither openly nor even while asleep. No one can compel me to do this while I am in my right mind." Then by order of the emperor Chozroes, Saint Anastasius was strangled, then beheaded. After the death of Chozroes, the relics of the Monk Martyr Anastasius were transferred to Palestine, to the Anastasius monastery. (*from oca.org*)

ST. . JOSEPH SAMAKOS THE SANCTIFIED

By His Grace Bishop Joseph of Arianzos

Our Venerable Father Joseph the Sanctified, surnamed Samakos, was born and raised in Crete. He came into the world a short time before the destruction of Constantinople, around the year 1440, from pious and Godfearing parents in a village called Keramoi. Most people believe that Keramoi is today's small village of Azokeramos, which is found at the easternmost end of the province of Siteia that is distinguished even today by the piety of its people. His good parents brought him up with the pure milk of godliness and educated him with the beginning of wisdom, which is the fear of God. So, from a young age he learned holy writ and filled his soul with holy zeal running like a thirsty deer to the revered Monastery of Panagia Akroteriane.

Under the protection of the Theotokos, he fed his soul with the solid food of the neptic tradition (ascetic fathers) and learned to fight the invisible war against the three-headed monster: flesh - worldliness - the devil. He was initiated into the sweetest secrets of pure prayer and God-loving loquacity, filling his heart with divine love for Christ. When he at last reached a suitable age and with the blessing of his Spiritual Father he left the monastery and went to Handaka, where there was the small Monastery dedicated to St. John the Theologian. Today the Church of the Holy Trinity stands at that spot. There he put himself under the direction of the Geronda (Spiritual Father or Abbot) of that monastery.

Being next to his holy Geronda and with blessed in the Holy Spirit obedience, he started the ascetic endeavors and fasting, the hardships and discipline of the body for the taming of the old man (sinful nature), and gradually became a clean and roomy vessel, ready to accommodate the Grace of God. When his pious parents slept in the Lord, he distributed his inheritance to the poor according to the words of the Lord: "If you want to be perfect, go and sell your belongings and give the money to the poor; you will then have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me" (Matt. 19:21). He then bid the world and its pleasures farewell and offered his whole self to Christ, wearing the holy habit of a monk.

With the angelic habit of monasticism, with great and honest struggle and patience he attracted upon himself Divine Grace, which blessed his efforts and tears, and increased in the field of his soul the flowers and trees of the holy evangelical virtues he cultivated there. Decorated thus with these Christimitating virtues he stood apart within the monastic brotherhood and, despite his youthfulness, he had arrived at spiritual heights as if he were a white-haired elder. He was, as is said in these circumstances, a young-elder. All respected and esteemed him seeing his spiritual progress, his virtue and his Godly wisdom and prudence. Therefore, very soon, with the exhortation of his Elder, he received the grace of Priesthood. He put on the holy epitrachelion (stole) and was established as a minister and steward of God's Mysteries.

When his affectionate Geronda peacefully passed away, the holy Fr. Joseph executed his duties and orders to the letter, with every piety and care as a devoted son. At the same time he increased his holy zeal and any talents and charismata he had been given by God and cultivated them with an even more sense of honor and self-respect. He lived his monastic life as a bodiless angel, having in his mind exclusively the thought of how to please the Lord everywhere and always. He pushed himself with hardship, he attended his emotions very carefully, he purified his body, he kept his tongue from any evil words, he prayed unceasingly and always had the memory of death to bridle the human passions and distance the danger of sin. At the same time he honorably cultivated the charisma of the holy Priesthood, pastoring the logical sheep of Christ with love and self-denial, comforting, supporting, advising, teaching, reprimanding, according to circumstance. He especially took utmost care to cultivate love, practicing charity and brotherly love.

His priestly conscience was never tainted with the smear of greed, and whatever gifts of money were given to him by the faithful he distributed to the poor. Indeed not only the money but even the Prosphora (oblation bread) that were left over from the Liturgy he gave away, not keeping even the basic needs for his own sustenance. He was totally poor for Christ, absolutely faithful to the monastic rule

of total poverty! At one time, it is said, he had distributed the Prosphora to the poor in advance forgetting to keep one for the Liturgy. When the time came for Liturgy, his helper sadly informed him that there was no Prosphora. St. Joseph was not fazed but replied to his helper that God would provide Prosphora for the Eucharist, and then started to pray. In this way Abraham had at one time replied to his son Isaac's question in regard to the lamb that was to be sacrificed: "God will provide the sacrificial lamb, my child!" (Gen. 21:8). Truly God did provide a ram in a bush, which Abraham sacrificed, instead of Isaac. Similarly now God provides for the Prosphora at the bloodless sacrifice by a miracle! The server had barely entered the holy Sanctuary when he found a heap of warm well-baked Prosphora ready for the Liturgy! You see, our God, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever!" (Heb. 13:8). Thus He acts accordingly to the petition and the needs of His saints.

The whole life of the humble Hieromonk Joseph was a Christ-life. His thoughts were Christ-thoughts and his feelings were Christ-feelings. Whatever was his was first Christ's then his, his own soul was Christ's firstly then his. To him everything everywhere was Christ the Lord! In this way his life was the life of Christ extended through him to his times, which is the life of the incarnate Divine Word, the God-man Jesus, who became man so as to present and offer us, as a man, His divine life. But because Christ said to his followers "you will have affliction in the world" (John 16:33), in other words - "the world will make you suffer", Venerable Joseph was allowed to be tested. One day some vulgar-mannered Jews from the Great Castle, acting polite and courteous, offered him a cup of wine as he passed by their way seemingly to offer hospitality but in reality to mock him. He graciously accepted it, he blessed it with the sign of the cross, being a priest, drank a little for love and wished them the best, thanked them and poured the rest back into the container from which it came. They on the other hand considered this blessing of St Joseph an offensive insult. They fell upon him and insulted him in a vulgar and barbarous way dragging him by force to the courthouse of the Duke, where they accused him of insult against their religion. The man of God though was justified by the impartial judge and his accusers went away, thoroughly ashamed and embarrassed.

Blessed Joseph lived 71 years on this earth. He came, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to be clothed with Christ (through his constant prayer and extensive sacramental life on the one hand, and with the systematic cultivation of the evangelical virtues together with his imitation - according to his ability - of the Lord within the angelic monastic community on the other). He was filled completely by the Grace of the God-man Christ and was transfigured gradually into a God-bearing and God-like human, into a perfect man according to the

prototype of Christ. In this kind of condition the calling of the Lord for the eternal life and kingdom found him on the 22nd of January 1511. Thus his death was a holy sleep in the Lord. It was a pascha, a passing over from corruption and vanity to immortality and eternity, from this valley of tears, to the place of never ending joy, where the pure sound of those who always feast and have happiness singing with delight the "Glory to You O Lord" is found! He passed from the Egypt of death to the Land of Promise (the eternal Life and Kingdom of the All-holy Triadic God).

Many miracles and signs followed the falling asleep of Hieromonk Joseph. Many persons saw holy visions again and again. Thus a few years later his venerable body was exhumed and was found to be incorrupt and whole, giving off a divine aroma, which gave great joy to those who venerated it. In conjunction to this were many miracles, especially healings of illnesses and sicknesses for many who approached and venerated in faith and piety. This is indeed proof that God in His great goodness and loving kindness, can be touched or partaken through His uncreated divine energies as the Holy Fathers, divinely inspired, teach us. For what else but participation, not only spiritual but physical, in these divine energies, is witnessed by the incorruption, the aroma, and the miracles which are done by the holy relics of the Saint? Glorified, therefore, is the most-praised and worshipful Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit! Which God is great as our God?

When the impious Muslims invaded the island of Crete in 1669, a pious priest called Antonios Armakis took the relics with him and escaped to Zakynthos. There he placed it on the 29th of August that year in the Convent of St. John of Mantinea, in the region called Xerovounia. From there, in 1915 it was transferred to the Church of the Pantocrator in the suburb Gaitani of Zakynthos City, where it is still treasured today whole and complete. This is where pious people come and venerate the relics and receive spiritual support and divine blessing and where supernatural miracles happen at certain times according to the faith of those who approach. May the grace of the Venerable Saint protect both Crete that begot him, Zakynthos that keeps his relics and every faithful and saint-loving person, from every want and affliction. Amen. (*abridged from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

We'll have a deacon next week!

However, we won't have a priest. Fr. Joseph will be out from January 26th to February 1st on vacation. Therefore there will be no Friday or Saturday services this week. Deacon Stephen Hall will serve Third Hour and a Deacon Service on Sunday in his absence, beginning about 9:30. If a priest is needed, Fr. Peter Zarynow can be reached at 301-299-5120.

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.

Camp Nazareth

Registration for Camp Nazareth for the coming summer is opening soon. More details will be in the bulletin next week and are available at the Camp website below.

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, Presbytera 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. 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.)