

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.

June 18, 2017 – 2nd Sunday After Pentecost

Commemoration of the Saints of Carpatho-Rus

On August 28, 2005, +Metropolitan Nicholas (of thrice-blessed memory) of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese proclaimed that starting in 2006 the second Sunday after Pentecost will be commemorated as the Synaxis of the Carpatho-Rusyn Saints in the Holy Orthodox Faith. On the Orthodox Church calendar, the first Sunday after Pentecost is dedicated to All Saints of the Orthodox Church. The Kondak for that Sunday tells us: “The universe offers You the God-bearing martyrs as the first-fruits of great creation, O Lord and Creator. Through the Theotokos and their prayers establish Your Church in peace.” The Second Sunday after Pentecost is designated in some calendars as the Sunday of Regional Saints, so it is appropriate that the Carpatho-Rusyn saints are commemorated on this day.

Cyril (+869) and Methodius (+885) and their Disciples Gorazd, Clement, Naum, Sava, and Angelar

These two brothers from the Byzantine city of Thessalonica had been involved with both religious and civic affairs. When King Rastislav of Greater Moravia asked for Slavic-speaking clergy to work among his subjects, St. Photios, patriarch of Constantinople, sent Cyril and Methodius. They, along with their disciples,



arrived in the year 863. Their work laid the foundations for Slavic Christianity, leaving the Slavonic language and two alphabets (Glagolitic and Cyrillic) as their legacy. According to legend, the holy brothers (or their disciples) helped establish the town of Mukačevo as a diocese. While the historical evidence for this is minimal, the fact remains that the Carpatho-Rusyns have always looked at the ministry of Cyril and Methodius as the start of their Christian heritage. After the deaths of Cyril and Methodius, when the Slavonic-speaking clergy were no longer welcome in Greater Moravia, the disciples moved to the south, and established Ohrid (in present-day Macedonia) as a center of Slavic learning and literature. This continuation of the ministry of Cyril and Methodius made it possible, in turn, for Byzantine missionaries to be dispatched to Kiev in 988, at the request of Saint Vladimir.

Rastislav, King of Greater Moravia (+870)

As ruler of Greater Moravia, he sent to Constantinople for missionaries to preach in the Slavic tongue. He supported the work of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

Moses Uhrin (“the Hungarian”) (+1043) and his brothers Ephrem of Novy Torzhok (+1053) and George (+1015)

All three brothers were called “Hungarian” since they came to Rus’ from lands ruled by the Hungarians, but given that they were Eastern Christian Slavs, they are accounted as Rusyns. The three brothers entered into the service of the holy prince of Rostov, Boris, son of Saint Vladimir. George died first, being killed along with Boris. Ephrem fled and went on to lead a monastic life. He lived in the town of Novy Torzhok, where he founded a monastery dedicated to Saints Boris and Gleb. Moses, on the other hand, fled to Kiev. After Kiev was captured by the Poles, he was taken as a prisoner to Poland. He was “ransomed” by a wealthy widow who wanted Moses to become her husband. Moses, however, had already set his mind on living a monastic life, and thus refused all her advances. For this, she had him tortured on numerous occasions. His freedom came when the widow was killed during a time of civil unrest. He joined the brotherhood of the Kiev Caves Monastery, where he labored for a decade. A portion of Saint Moses’ relics are enshrined at the monastery of Saint Nicholas (“Černeča Hora”) in Mukačevo.

Stephen, King of Hungary (+1038)

Most of the lands of Carpatho-Rus were part of his kingdom in the 10th century. His status as a saint was recognized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the year 2000.

Joseph (Stojka) of Maramoroš (+1711)

After the Diocese of Mukačevo accepted Union with Rome in 1646, the region of Maramoroš (today split today between Ukraine and Romania) became a center for

the Orthodox hierarchy. Joseph was one of the last Orthodox Bishops in Carpatho-Rus until the 20th century, and is known as “the Confessor” for his defense of the Orthodox faith.

Alexis (Toth) of Wilkes-Barre (+1909)

Alexis, a Greek Catholic priest from the Eparchy of Prešov, came to the United States to minister to the large numbers of Rusyn Greek Catholic immigrants. After being shamefully treated by the local Roman Catholic bishop, in 1891, he and his parish in Minneapolis were received into the Orthodox Church. He spearheaded a “Return to Orthodoxy” movement and established many parishes.

Maximus (Sandovič) of Gorlice (+1914)

As a young priest, Maxim labored for Orthodoxy among the Lemko-Rusyns in what is today Poland. His missionary work was considered treasonous by the Austrian government, and he was arrested and imprisoned for two years. After being released, he was again arrested, along with his wife and family. Maxim, at the age of 28, was executed by firing squad.

Gorazd (Pavlik) of Prague (+1942)

Of Czech background and raised Roman Catholic, Gorazd’s interest in the mission of Ss. Cyril and Methodius pushed him towards Orthodoxy. He was eventually consecrated a bishop by the Serbian Orthodox Church and worked at spreading Orthodoxy among the Czechs. Additionally, he assisted the growth of Orthodoxy in Slovakia and Carpatho-Rus. For giving refuge to resistance fighters during World War II, he was executed by the Nazis.

Dositheus (Vasić) of Zagreb (+1945)

When the movement to return to Orthodoxy began in Carpatho-Rus, it turned to the Church of Serbia, since all Orthodox in Austro-Hungary fell under its jurisdiction. Several Serbian clergy helped in that formative period. Dositelj served as bishop for three years, ministering to the Carpatho-Rusyn flock. He later served as Metropolitan of Zagreb in Croatia. During World War II, he was imprisoned and tortured, and eventually died because of this treatment.

Alexis (Kabal’uk) of Chust (+1947)

He was the leading figure in the renewal of Orthodoxy in Carpatho-Rus in the 20th century. While being raised a Greek Catholic, his piety drew him to numerous Orthodox shrines and monasteries. On a visit to Mount Athos, he became Orthodox. He was later tonsured a monk, and became a priest under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church. His work for Orthodoxy opened him up to accusations of “pro-Russian” activities, and thus he fled to Russia and then, for a time, worked in the United States. He returned to Europe in order to stand with the other Orthodox at the Maramoroš-Sihot Trial, and then served time in prison. With

the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he was released from prison, and became even more active promoting Orthodoxy among the CarpathoRusyns.

Justin (Popović) of Čelije (+1979)

A well-known Serbian monastic and theologian, from 1930 to 1932, Justin served in Carpatho-Rus.

Job (Kundrja) of Mala Uhoľka (+1985)

The most recently canonized Rusyn saint, Job was tonsured a monk by Saint Alexis (Kabal'uk). He became a renowned spiritual father, and after the closure of several monasteries by the Soviets, served a small village parish. He continued his ministry as an elder, giving spiritual direction, preaching, and offering the divine prayers and services, while continuing his own ascetic efforts.

The following holy individuals are awaiting glorification:

Dositheus (Feodorovič) of Ugl'a (+1733)

He was the last Orthodox bishop of Carpatho-Rus until the 20th century. In 1721, his clergy voted for Union with Rome, and he lived his remaining days in the Ugl'a monastery, abandoned by his clergy and without his flock. He is venerated locally as a confessor and ascetic.

Nina (Prokop) (+1967)

Schema-Abbess Nina was born Juliana Prokop and, early in life, she embraced asceticism. In 1914, she organized a group of young girls in her village to live the monastic calling. On several occasions, they were abused and persecuted by the civil authorities for this. Later, she later became the abbess and founder of the Convent of Lipcha and abbess of the Monastery of St. Nicholas in Mukačevo, where she is buried.

Basil (Pronin) (+1997)

Born in Kiev, his family left for Serbia at the time of the Russian Revolution. Following his vocation in Serbia, he was tonsured a monk and ordained a priest in 1939, and began working as part of the Orthodox mission in Carpatho-Rus. He was a disciple of St. John (Maximovich) and never lost touch with him. In 1946, he became the spiritual father of the St. Nicholas Monastery in Mukačevo, a role which he fulfilled for 50 years, becoming wellknown and beloved. (*from acrod.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 2:10-16

BRETHREN, glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are

righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 4:18-23

At that time, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Pity your fellow-servant, that you may make the common Lord indebted to you. For it is He who says, "Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these my brethren, you have done it to me." (Mt. 25:40) Do not pass the poor by, and do not let his tattered rags incite you to contempt, but let them rather move you to pity your fellow-creature. For he is also a man, a creature of God, clothed in flesh like yourself, and perhaps in his spiritual virtue mirroring the common Creator more than you do. Nature has not made him indigent in this way, but it is the tyranny of his neighbors that has reduced either him or his parents to indigence, while our lack of pity and compassion has maintained or even aggravated his poverty. Give thanks that you have not been caught yourself by the same ills they suffer by making the unfortunate share in your ease, for the greatest thanks to God is compassion towards our fellow-servants. Acquire for yourself a sure prosperity by removing the misfortune of the poor. Preserve your good condition by visiting the sick. If you are ill, regain your health by alleviating in those who are ailing the hardship caused by indigence. If you see one whose body is withered, bruised, wounded and cast down on the ground do not turn away, but pay heed to it, safeguarding yourself against the uncertainty of misfortune. Tend the sick, so that you too may not need similar charity in diseases like theirs. It is a great boon for you to not need it; but your guilt is equally great if you do not help those who do. For the measure of your joy at having overcome your own troubles will be the

same as your guilt, if you refuse aid to those whom you see in distress. Take pity on the poor, and do not push him aside when he begs, nor make him through the pitilessness of your manner into a Lazarus down here, that he may not show you from over there to be the rich man. Consider the rich man's unquenchable fire, and extinguish in yourself the flame of avarice; do not withdraw your hand from the poor, that you may not be refused when begging for the finger that refreshes by bringing drops of water. Have the poor man share your goods, that you may not hear, "You received your good things in your lifetime." Take pity on man, beware of the judgment, look to the recompense (Heb. 11:26), reverence the adoption (Gal. 4:5). Give little things here, that you may receive great things over there. Shed here drops of sympathy, that you may draw for yourself streams of mercy. Do not hold humanity cheap, that you may escape condemnation; propitiate the Judge, that you may receive the recompense, or even be deemed worthy of the adoption. What is more valuable or more painless than this transaction? And what is more wretched than to disregard these things? If therefore your hand is prosperous, give money to him who begs. If, however, you have kept yourself in a middling state, and entrenched yourself in self-sufficiency in such a way that nothing superfluous or unnecessary is stored away in your chests, then from what you eat as luxury give also food to the poor, or rather, from what you nourish yourself nourish also the poor. Cast a garment about him who shivers; receive the roofless in your house; show yourself hospitable to strangers, remembering Abraham's hospitality, while entertaining and cherishing the hope of the blessing that was repaid to him by God. But if you lack even these things, then give a cup of cold water. Christ receives that from you no less than the luxurious gifts of the rich; for He accepts the willingness, not weighing the bulk of the gift, but the manner of the intention.

Thus far He extends the bounds of charity! Or rather, He does not stop them even here. If you lack even these things, and although your inclination moves you to compassion, indigence keeps your willingness in check, then go to the sick, visit the prisoner, sympathize heartily with your fellow-sufferer, sigh from your very soul at the misfortune that has befallen him, shed a tear to refresh the victim: for a neighbor's sincere sympathy is a great consolation for the sufferer. If you also have at one time been overtaken by the same ills, then lighten his misfortune by your personal story; for even the mere conversation of those who have suffered the same is found to be comforting to those in distress. God does not turn away from any of these things: He accepts everything, everything He repays with mercy, on everything He pours compassion, by every means He calls us together to the kingdom of heaven. Do you see how the Lord of all has set this common gift before everyone, rich, middle-class, poor, destitute? How He has not forbidden anyone to draw from the springs of pity? Just as He has afforded the light of the

sun and the splendor of the moon equally to all, and has compounded the temperance of the air for everyone to breathe alike, and has wisely devised the orderly succession of the season, and poured out the timely showers of fructifying rain, making the enjoyment of these common to all, so also He has spread out evenly the boon of charity and mercy to all men, thereby both granting a useful wealth to the rich, and affording poverty to the poor not as an obstacle, but indeed as a helper to salvation.

– St. Photius the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Homily 2.4*

Also Commemorated Today: Martyrs Leontius, Hypatius, and Theodulus

The Holy Martyrs Leontius, Hypatius, and Theodulus were Roman soldiers. The holy Martyr Leontius, a Greek by origin, served as a military-chief in the imperial army in the Phoenician city of Tripoli during the reign of Vespasian (70-79). Leontius was distinguished for his bravery and good sense, and the people of Tripoli held him in deep respect because of his virtue.



The emperor appointed the Roman senator Adrian as governor of the Phoenician district, with full powers to hunt out Christians, and in case of their refusal to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods, to give them over to torture and death. And on his way to Phoenicia Adrian received a report that Saint Leontius had turned many away from worshipping the pagan gods. The governor sent the tribune Hypatius with a detachment of soldiers to Tripoli so as to find and arrest the Christian Leontius. Along the way the tribune Hypatius fell seriously ill, and being near death, he saw in a dream an angel, which said: “If you wish to be healed, you and your soldiers should say

three times: ‘God of Leontius, help me.’”

Opening his eyes Hypatius beheld the angel and said: “I was sent to arrest Leontius, how is it that I should appeal to his God?” At this moment the angel became invisible. Hypatius told his dream to the soldiers, among whom was his friend Theodulus, and all of them together asked for help from the God Whom Saint Leontius confessed. Hypatius was immediately healed to the great joy of his soldiers, but only Theodulus sat aside, pondering the miracle. His soul was filled with love for God, and he told Hypatius to proceed twice as quickly to the city in search of Saint Leontius.

Upon their arrival in the city, a stranger met them and invited them to his house, where he lavishly hosted the travellers. Learning that their hospitable host was Saint Leontius, they fell on their knees and asked him to enlighten them with faith in the True God. They were baptized here, and when Saint Leontius prayed over them calling on the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, a luminous cloud overshadowed the newly-baptized and poured forth rain. The remaining soldiers in search of their commander arrived in Tripoli, where the governor Adrian had also arrived. Learning what had happened, he ordered Saints Leontius, Hypatius, and Theodulus to be brought to him. After threatening them with torture and death, he demanded that they renounce Christ and offer sacrifice to the Roman gods.

All the martyrs firmly confessed their faith in Christ. Saint Hypatius was put under a column and raked with iron claws, and Saint Theodulus was mercilessly beaten with rods. Seeing the steadfastness of the saints, they beheaded them. And after torture, they sent Saint Leontius to prison. In the morning he came before the governor. Adrian tried to entice the holy martyr with honors and rewards, and accomplishing nothing, he gave him over to new tortures. The holy martyr was suspended head downwards from a pillar with a heavy stone about his neck, but nothing could make him renounce Christ. The governor gave orders to beat the sufferer with rods until he died. They then threw the body of the holy Martyr Leontius outside the city, but Christians reverently gave it burial near Tripoli. The death of the holy martyrs occurred between 70-79.

The accusation against Saint Leontius, and his sufferings and death are recorded on tin tablets prepared by the court scribe [commentarius]. These tablets were placed at the grave of the holy martyr. (*from oca.org*)

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Parts 136-138:

Being in Communion



“...and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:19 RSV)

Many of us throw around the terms “Communion” and “Being in Communion” but, do we understand what they mean? This will be the first of a three-part series on “being in communion.” Being in communion has everything to do with Stewardship and also with

Salvation. In the first book of the Old Testament, we learn that God made man to be in “communion” with God. Man was to think of God at every moment of the day worshipping and giving thanks to Him, being grateful for all that God has

gifted him. God walked with Adam in the cool of the day; they were in communion with each other, sharing.

Communion is defined as a sharing of an intimate feeling or thought with another. Notice that the word 'relationship' is not used in the bible. Relationships are choices in our earthly lives, and we may selectively ignore others. The bible uses the Greek work, "koinonia (communion)" or "henosis (union)" which denote true participation. The Holy Trinity is in continual communion with each person of the Trinity through a mutual love. This love is not the love that we know but a kenotic, self-emptying, love, that surpasses anything that we can imagine.

We were made in the image of God and have the "potential" to be in the likeness of God. God knows Himself as "Person in Communion" therefore being in His image we should know ourselves as persons in communion. Being in communion with God we must work at being the likeness, a synergistic relationship with God. Being in total communion with God (Theosis) opens us to the knowledge of all truth. Not just the spiritual truth but of ALL truth.

We, therefore, being in communion with God, know the self-emptying love by God's grace. Just before Christ went to the cross, Christ tells us that we are not only to love Him but also our neighbors as He loves us (John 13:34). In other words, we are to be in communion with each member of the body of Christ. We are to share in that self-emptying love with each member of the body of Christ. That means sharing of all that we have been gifted with, time, talents and treasures with the body of Christ out of love. By doing this then we attain to the likeness of God. Archimandrite Zacharias in his book, *Man, the Target of God*, states, "the measure of spiritual gifts man receives in this world is always commensurate to the degree of kenosis which preceded and thus to the degree of likeness he has attained in Christ."

God wants to share His kingdom with you, to be in total communion with you but it will take work on your part to show that you are worthy of the greatest gift He can give, eternal salvation. Be a steward of the gifts of God, be in communion with the body of Christ and with God Himself!

"Or what shall a man give in return for his life? For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay every man for what he has done" (Matthew 16: 26-27 RSV)

Being in communion with the Body of Christ allows us to develop and cultivate our personal gifts that we received from God and to receive also from the collective wealth of the body of Christ. We are sustained by the other members of the body of Christ so that we may work on perfecting our personal gifts for

developing our personhood (**hypostasis**) and restoring ourselves to the likeness of God and also for using them for sustaining others on their journey to personhood and Theosis.

When talking about personhood, we must remember that our concept of person is different from that of God and the Holy Fathers. Person or **hypostasis** was discussed and repeatedly contested in the early church. St. Basil the Great in his treatise, *On the Holy Spirit*, defines it convincingly. St. Basil describes each person or hypostasis of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) as being in communion with each other. The three persons being in communion (being in continual participation) with each other form the essence of God. You cannot be a person without being in communion with another. The love that they share for each other is what binds them.

Likewise, we are to be persons in communion not only with God but with each member of the body of Christ. Archimandrite Zacharias in his book, *Man, the Target of God*, states, “Our salvation cannot not be a personal attainment but a gift of God in communion with all that are His, whereby, He is glorified eternally.”

Unfortunately, many of us believe that church is something we come to on Sunday for 1-1 ½ hours and then go home to our secular lives in our secular world. In doing so, we are not “being in communion” with the members of the body of Christ. Rather we are engaging in an act of **self-centeredness** so prevalent in our modern society. We rely on our own merits and intelligence in all matters. You form relationships with others in that world but, this is not the same as communion. Being a person, or a potential for being a person, means that your communion with God and others must rely wholly on God. You can only grow into a person, the Holy Fathers call it the **hypostatic principle**, as a member of the church, the body of Christ. Here you are nourished and will nourish others by the gifts God has given you as all journey on the road to Theosis. We are all in a constant stated of being. Our journey does not end but will continue eternally.

Your stewardship is essential not only for your salvation but also for the salvation of each member of the body of Christ.

“All things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.” (2 Corinthians 4: 15 RSV)

In this final part of “Being in Communion” I would like to concentrate on communion as it relates to the Divine Liturgy. As **persons in communion**, we come to the Divine Liturgy with **gratitude** for what God has given us. All that we have is a gift from God, **ALL**, not just some! We sometimes fall into the misconception that **WE** are responsible for what we have and what we have

become. As persons in communion, we know that God has given us everything and we come to praise Him in gratitude for His gifts.

During the Divine Liturgy, we bring our gifts to be offered to Christ. Originally the first fruits of the harvest were brought, oil, wine, wheat, bread, fruits. What was not offered during the Liturgy was distributed to the poor, needy, widows and orphans. Today we bring our gifts of money, our time and our talents which are used to purchase and make the bread and wine to be offered as gifts and what is left over to help those less fortunate. Too often the gifts given are not sufficient enough to carry on any outreach.

We bring our gifts and offer them to God **communally**, as the body of Christ. We approach the chalice not as an individual but as the body of Christ; we are in communion with God and each member of the body of Christ. As members of the body of Christ and you made a **covenant** with God at your baptism to become a member of the body of Christ, you are committed to the journey to **Theosis**, total communion with God, as well as helping others on that journey to find their **hypostatic principle**, their personhood. We are all in a constant state of becoming: “We are not yet what we shall be” (1 John 3: 2).

When not using the gifts that God has given us we fall out of communion with God and each other. We put our salvation at risk as well as those who we do not assist. We fall back into **self-centeredness** and begin to rely on our rational mind to resolve all issues in our lives “falling into a deep sense of loneliness and alienation that marks modern human beings” as stated by Fr. Stephen Freeman, *Glory to God for All Things*.

As Paul stated in Galatians 2: 20, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ in me.” Can you say that in all **honesty**? When you can make that statement, you will be in communion with God and with the body of Christ. You will be a good steward freely and lovingly giving of your gifts in gratitude for what God has given you! (from *acrod.org*)

E-book on American Orthodox Monasteries Available

The electronic version of the widely popular [*Atlas of American Orthodox Christian Monasteries*](#) has been released by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA and made available **FREE OF CHARGE** to everyone.

The PDF of the Atlas can be downloaded from the following link: <http://assemblyofbishops.org/assets/files/news/scoba/AtlasOfMonasteriesSecondEditionBookmarkedOptimumSize.pdf>. The hard copy of the Atlas can be purchased directly from the publisher, [Holy Cross Orthodox Press](#).

COMMUNION ETIQUETTE – SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

For cradle orthodox and converts alike, it's good to review from time to time the mechanics of how we are to worship – especially when approaching the Holy Gifts. All Diocesan priests recently received some formal guidance from the Bishop regarding how services are conducted in parishes throughout the Diocese. One of the items noted is how parishioners are to approach the chalice for communion.

Please approach the chalice with your arms folded across your chest, right over left – do not make the sign of the cross as you stand before the chalice or after you receive the precious Body and Blood. Open your mouth wide and allow the priest to place the Eucharist in your mouth; do not close your mouth on the spoon.

After receiving the Holy Gifts, please do not kiss either the chalice or Father's hand. The purpose of these restrictions is to reduce any possibility of the chalice being spilled or dropped.

Secondly, when we leave our seats and form a line for communion, please do not extend along the perimeter of the sanctuary. Rather, form the line in front of the tetrapod featuring the Icon of the day. Once you've venerated the icon, you may proceed to the right of the stand and wait for the person in front of you to take communion, then move forward. This announcement will be repeated for the next several weeks until everyone has heard it.

The Spiritual Aspects of Fatherhood by Al Rossi, Ph.D.

A conference participant once asked the speaker, “What is the best way for a father to love his children?” The speaker replied, “The best way for a father to love his children is to love their mother.” I reflect often upon that superbly accurate statement. And I think the reverse is equally true: the best way a mother can love her children is to love their father. More than anything else in the world, children need a loving family and parents who support each other, even if the parents are apart through separation or divorce.

Christ challenges us to love one another, and that challenge becomes even more compelling within our own families. Even in the best of families, there is brokenness. And that is why the man's call to fatherhood is so important. We fathers are called to show our families strong, manly love and forgiveness, virtues modeled powerfully in the father of the prodigal son (Luke 11:32).

This father is stable, loving, and generous. In his fairness, he avoids violating the freedom of either of his sons. When the prodigal demands his inheritance and decides to leave, the father does not attempt to withhold the money. He does not pressure the son to stay by trying to make him feel guilty. And the father is wise

enough not to send care packages to relieve the son's distress. The father allows both of his adult sons to make their own mistakes and to learn from their failures, an appropriate form of discipline for older adolescents and young adults.

The prodigal's father demonstrates manly leadership by taking loving initiatives, and he takes many such initiatives. He maintains a thriving business to provide the generous inheritance. He creates and supports a loving family for the prodigal to run from and for the older son to remain with. And there was his last generous, joyful initiative as he runs out to embrace the returning son, kiss him, and put on him the best robe, ring, and shoes. He celebrates the return of his son with a feast. And in a scene all of us fathers can recognize, he opens up the conversation with the sulking older son.

The father takes the initiative in bringing about forgiveness and reconciliation in the whole family. He is a model for us in responding to our call to follow the Spirit of Jesus in taking many initiatives in our families, especially that of boundless forgiveness for our children.

When a father takes responsibility for his own spiritual life, for the way he prays, goes to church, and practices virtue in the family, he gives good example. Then his leadership in the family is authentic, based on his own solid relationship with God, and he is less likely to be concerned about any resistance his children may give him. He can lead family prayer. When I suggest that we stand in the living room and pray before a trip or that we pray in a restaurant, I often feel an initial resistance in my children. But quiet cooperation and peacefulness soon follow. Sometimes the children will even tell me that they prayed in a restaurant when I wasn't there. At times the father's role of leading the family to great forgiveness and prayerfulness is an unpopular one. But as a man grows in his own spiritual life, he becomes more sturdy and willing to accept responsibility. Although all this is impossible for us fathers to do alone, God can do all things. God can even bestow the awesome spiritual power of fatherhood upon us. (*from orthodoxchristianparenting.wordpress.com*)

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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, 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, 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, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, Josh Moore, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, 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, the newly departed servant of God Gordon Dewey, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)