

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

Sunday School 9:30 AM | Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

October 7, 2018 – 19th Sunday After Pentecost

Holy Martyrs Sergius & Bacchus

The Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus in Syria were appointed to high positions in the army by the emperor Maximian (284-305), who did not know that they were Christians. Envious people informed Maximian that his two trusted counsellors did not honor the pagan gods. This was considered to be a crime against the state.

The emperor, wanting to convince himself of the truth of the accusation, ordered Sergius and Bacchus to offer sacrifice to the idols, but they replied that they honored the One God and worshiped only Him.

Maximian commanded that the martyrs be stripped of the insignia of military rank (their belts, gold pendants, and rings), and then dressed them in feminine clothing. They were led through the city with an iron chains around their necks, and the people mocked them. Then he summoned Sergius and Bacchus to him again and in a friendly manner advised them not to be swayed by Christian fables, but to return to the Roman gods. The saints refuted the emperor's words, and demonstrated the folly of worshiping the pagan gods.

The emperor commanded that they be sent to the governor of the eastern part of Syria, Antiochus, a fierce hater of Christians. Antiochus had received his position



with the help of Sergius and Bacchus. “My fathers and benefactors!” he said. “Have pity on yourselves, and also on me. I do not want to condemn my benefactors to cruel tortures.” The holy martyrs replied, “For us life is Christ, and to die is gain.” The enraged Antiochus ordered Bacchus to be mercilessly beaten, and the holy martyr surrendered his soul to the Lord. They shod Sergius with iron sandals with nails in their soles and sent him to another city, where he was beheaded with the sword. (*from oca.org*)

Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians 11:31-12:9

Brethren, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands. It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Today’s Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 7:11-16

At that time, Jesus went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, “Do not weep.” Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried *him* stood still. And He said, “Young man, I say to you, arise.” So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen up among us”; and, “God has visited His people.”

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The prophets, the historians, the law, give each a special kind of teaching, and the exhortation of the proverbs furnishes yet another. But the use and profit of all are included in the book of Psalms. There is prediction of thing to come. There our memories are reminded of the past. There laws are laid down for the guidance of life. There are directions as to conduct. The book, in a word, is a treasury of sound teaching, and provides for every individual need. It heals the old hurts of souls, and brings about recovery where the wound is fresh. It wins the part that is sick and preserves that which is sound. As far as lies within its power, it destroys the passions which lord it in this life in the souls of men. And all this it effects with a musical persuasiveness and with a gratification that induces wise and wholesome reflection. The Holy Spirit saw that mankind was hard to draw to goodness, that our life's scale inclined to pleasure, and that so we were neglectful of the right. What plan did He adopt? He combined the delight of melody with His teaching, to the end that by the sweetness and softness of what we heard we might, all unawares, imbibe the blessing of the words. He acted like wise leeches, who, when they would give sour draughts to sickly patients, put honey round about the cup. So the melodious music of the Psalms has been designed for us, that those who are boys in years, or at least but lads in ways of life, while they seem to be singing, may in reality be carrying on the education of the soul.

It is not easy for the inattentive to retain in their memory, when they go home, an injunction of an apostle or prophet; but the sayings of the Psalms are sung in our houses and travel with us through the streets. Let a man begin even to grow savage as some wild beast, and no sooner is he soothed by psalm-singing than straightway he goes home with passions lulled to calm and quiet by the music of the song.

A psalm is souls' calm, herald of peace, hushing the swell and agitation of thoughts. It soothes the passions of the soul; it brings her license under law. A psalm is welder of friendship, atonement of adversaries, reconciliation of haters. Who can regard a man as his enemy, when they have lifted up one voice to God together? So Psalmody gives us the best of all boons, love. Psalmody has bethought her of concerted singing as a mighty bond of union, and links the people together in a symphony of one song.

A psalm puts fiends to flight, and brings the aid of angels to our side; it is armor in the terrors of the night; in the toils of the day it is refreshment; to infants it is a protection, to men in life's prime a pride, to elders a consolation, to women an adornment. It turns wastes into homes. It brings wisdom into marts and meetings. To beginners it is an alphabet, to all who are advancing an improvement, to the

perfect a confirmation. It is the voice of the church. It gladdens feasts. It produces godly sorrow. It brings a tear even from a heart of stone.

A psalm is angels' work, the heavenly conversation, the spiritual sacrifice. Oh, the thoughtful wisdom of the Instructor Who designed that we should at one and the same time sing and learn to our profit! It is thus that His precepts are imprinted on our souls. A lesson that is learned unwillingly is not likely to last, but all that is learned with pleasure and delight effects a permanent settlement in our souls. What can you not learn from this source? You may learn magnificent manliness, scrupulous righteousness, dignified self-control, perfect wisdom. You may learn how to repent, and how far to endure. What good thing can you not learn? There is a complete theology; a foretelling of the advent of Christ in the flesh; threatening of judgment; hope of resurrection; fear of chastisement; promise of glory; revelation of mysteries.

Everything is stored in the book of the Psalms as in some vast treasury open to all the world. There are many instruments of music, but the prophet has fitted it to the instrument called Psaltery. I think the reason is that he wished to indicate the grace sounding in him from on high by the gift of the Spirit, because of all instruments the Psaltery is the only one which has the source of its sounds above. In the case of the cithara and the lyre the metal gives forth its sound at the stroke of the plectrum from below. The Psaltery has the source of its melodious strains above. So are we taught to be diligent in seeking the things which are above, and not to allow ourselves to be degraded by our pleasure in the music to the lusts of the flesh. And what I think the word of the Prophet profoundly and wisely teaches by means of the fashion of the instrument is this,—that those whose souls are musical and harmonious find their road to the things that are above most easy.

— St. Basil the Great, *In Praise of the Psalms*

Also Commemorated Today: Martyrs Julian the Presbyter and Caesarius the Deacon at Terracina

The Martyr Julian the Presbyter suffered martyrdom for Christ with Saint Caesarius the Deacon at Terracina, Italy in the first century.

Saint Caesarius was thrown into prison for insulting the pagan gods. They later took him in bonds to the temple of Apollo, but before they got him near the pagan temple it collapsed, killing the pagan priests and many of the people.

About the same time the idolators arrested the Christian priest Julian. At the emperor's orders, the holy martyrs were cast into the sea, but their bodies floated to the surface, and Christians buried the sufferers. The relics of Saint Caesarius are kept in Rome. (*from oca.org*)

St. John the Presbyter of Chaldia

Fr. John Triantaphyllides was born on 10 February 1836 in the village of Loria (Mouzena) in the region of Trebizond, from pious parents, who were named Triantaphyllos and Kyriaki. Because there was no school in his hometown, he learned from someone who was literate the common letters in six months, being very intelligent.

At the age of fourteen he became fatherless, wherefore he was forced to migrate to the coast of Pontus for work, where he occupied himself in a bakery during the winter and in agricultural work in the summer. At the age of seventeen he married a humble and revered young woman named Helen, with whom he had one son and daughters.

One summer he traveled with his wife to his village by foot. On their way they met three Angels in the form of people. John was walking ahead. The Angels looked at him carefully but did not speak to him. After they encountered his wife and one of them said to her: "The villagers are waiting for John to become a priest. This is the will of God." The second said to her: "After thirty years you will be found worthy to venerate in the Holy Land." And the third said: "After his repose he will be numbered among the Saints." Helen asked in amazement: "How can you as people know about the future, and what will happen thirty years from now?" They answered: "We are not people but Angels of God, who came to warn that John not deny the mystery of the priesthood." With fear and emotion she replied: "May the will of God take place."

In 1870, at the age of thirty-four, John was called to the majestic office of the priesthood and was obedient to the will of God, according to the angelic prediction, and he was ordained a priest by the late Metropolitan Gervasios of Chaldia. He was placed as a parish priest in the village he was born in and celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Churches of Saint Panteleimon, the Most Holy Theotokos and the Monastery of Saint George (Lermouchou and Zando). Although little educated, due to his interest and intelligence he learned very well the rubrics of the Services and the Priesthood from the monks of the Monastery of Saint George in Choutoura. He had a gift of speaking and with whomever he spoke with they felt joy. And when he preached the word of God, his words exuded sweetness and grace. Although uneducated, he was a great preacher, which is why he was called "the New Chrysostom". Fr. John was dedicated after his ordination to pastoral work and tried to establish the virtues and observe with precision the commandments of God, especially merciful almsgiving.

Although he was modest in material goods, he fed the hungry, clothed the poor and orphans, and gave hospitality to strangers in his home. He helped the poor in his

village pay their taxes, and for the good of the village made roads, bridges and fountains.

In 1877, during the Russo-Turkish War, Fr. John, the good shepherd, took care that the basic foods were not absent. He wrote letters to friends who were rich and gathered what was necessary, which he distributed to the poor and saved them from starvation. His virtue and philanthropy became known in Pontus and he came to be called "the New Merciful".

Fr. John had the gift to reconcile people who had animosity between them. As a peacemaker he became the district court of the Holy Metropolis. When individuals or entire villages went to the Metropolitan to hear their differences, he referred them to the Fr. John saying, "Go to him. He will reconcile you because he is wise, he has a sweet tongue and divine grace." And indeed he pacified them. They would come as enemies seeking revenge and they left as beloved brethren. He was an enemy and opponent of hatred, vengeance and scandals, but a friend and teacher of love and peace.

Fr. John had a grandchild from his daughter who had died and left him an orphan. One day he went to school and made a certain mess, so his teacher beat him with a rod and with kicks. A few days later his orphaned grandchild died. The child's father and relatives wanted to take revenge on the teacher and kill him. Fr. John did a lot of praying. In court he sought and managed to pacify the enraged relatives and had the teacher released from prison. As the grandfather of the dead orphan he hurt, but as a disciple of Christ and as a preacher of love he forgave and had the teacher released.

In 1900 he was made worthy together with his presvytera to go and venerate the All-Holy Sepulchre, Golgotha and the All-Holy Shrines of the Holy Land. They spent six months there and returned to their village. Their pilgrimage took place thirty years after the meeting and prediction of the Angels.

His good presvytera Helen reposed on 26 July 1902. Fr. John, who shepherded for thirty-three years in a God-pleasing manner the rational flock of Christ, reposed in the Lord on 13 June 1903, a Friday, and was buried at the Church of Saint Panteleimon. He departed bearing good works that followed him, and left consolation, support and a valuable treasure to the faithful in his sacred relic. After his burial, a daughter-in-law of Fr. John saw the Holy Spirit descend as a dove on his grave.

Three years later Fr. John appeared in a dream to a woman named Panagila, and told her to translate his relic with her brother, which took place on 7 October 1906 in the following manner: When they went to the cemetery they saw Fr. John standing above his grave with his priestly vestments reading the Gospel. His face

shined like the sun, and he urged them to dig. Many people had gathered, and they saw Panagila speaking with someone but they did not see with whom she spoke and they considered her crazy. When the relic of Fr. John was found, they saw that his two hands were incorrupt. They wept with joy and emotion, and they venerated him and were informed of his sanctity, glorifying God.

The event quickly became known in Chaldia. Every day crowds of people arrived, even entire villages with their priests, as well as Turkish agas, in order to venerate the holy relic, and they brought oil and candles as gifts to the Saint. The Turks would say: "This priest effendi, even alive was a Saint and also after his death appears more so. If you build a church for him we also will make an offering."

Miracles also took place at that time. Many who were sick were healed. A young man who was twenty years old from the city of Michailova near Tbilisi in the Caucasus, who had gone mad, was tied up in order not to cause himself or others harm. They brought him to many doctors and magicians and churches, but in the end without being healed he was brought to a mental facility in Tbilisi. One night there appeared in the dream of the mother of the mad child Saint John, who told her to not weep because her child would become well. He told her to have him drink water in which she was to put soil from his grave, and to burn a piece from his phelonion and cense with it. She did as the Saint told her and her child became well.

An Armenian family had only one child that was twelve years old, and had been speechless for four years due to fear. His father was a communist and the child had gone for the exam at the University of Tbilisi, but to no avail. His mother was a pious Christian and secretly from her husband she would go to many churches, but the child would not become well. When she learned of the above miracle, with faith and reverence she asked for soil from the grave of the Saint, dissolved it in water, had her speechless child drink from it, and immediately he started talking. With great joy the mother of the child announced the miracle to her atheist husband and proclaimed her Christian faith. Then her husband also came to believe and remorseful he thanked God. The descendants of Saint John came to Greece as refugees and brought with them the hand and skull of the Saint. The relics of the Saint continue to work miracles.

Anastasia, the granddaughter of the Saint, narrates: "Around 1930 a certain doctor who was known to a friend of mine here in Thessaloniki became sick. His hands had become paralyzed and his parents became inconsolable because he was still young in age, around thirty-five years old. They took him to many doctors and churches, but could not obtain his healing. When they found out from my friend about the relics of my grandfather Saint John, he asked to venerate them. I did the

cross over him with his holy hand and then the sick man moved his paralyzed hands. Then he took the holy relics and gripped them to his chest with great faith, thanking God and Saint John for his healing."

Saint John Triantaphyllides is recognized as a Saint by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and registered in the books of the local list of Saints of the Patriarchate. His memory is honored on June 13 (repose) and October 7 (translation of relics). There is a Service of Praise composed for him by an unknown hymnographer. The former Metropolitan of Rodopolis Leontios Choutouriotis (1844-1926) worked to establish his annual commemoration in Chaldia.

Note: What we know about Saint John Triantaphyllides survived from his grandson Spyridon Triantaphyllides in handwritten notes in the katharevousa language. Spyridon was a teacher in Trebizond and reposed in 1942 in Thessaloniki. His son John gave it to Mr. Klimentidis Panagiotis and he gave it to the author of the book *Ascetics in the World*, in which this story was published. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

College Student Sunday

On Sunday, October 7th, we will take a collection, along with parishes across the USA, to support the good works of Orthodox Christian Fellowship, an Orthodox campus ministry endorsed by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. As Bishop Gregory, Episcopal Liaison to the Assembly for OCF, has pointed out on numerous occasions, statistics show us that more than 6 out of 10 of all young adults, including Orthodox, leave the Church after graduating from high school and college. To help counteract this trend, OCF is on the frontlines of over 350 college campuses engaging our students in the Orthodox faith through fellowship, education, worship, and service. Through this four-tiered approach, college students who participate in OCF make their way from schools to parishes spiritually stronger and ready to serve. Please give what you can to help keep our children faithful – something which has been near and dear to His Grace's heart from the beginning of his episcopacy.

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Grace Bishop GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbytera Katie Baker and family, Santiago Alzugaray, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Domieniecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, 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, Alexander Shostko, Bernie Takabayashi & family, 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, the newly reposed handmaiden of God Alicia Barosio, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)