

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

November 4, 2018 – 23rd Sunday After Pentecost

Venerable Joannicius the Great

Saint Joannicius the Great was born in Bithynia in the year 752 in the village of Marikat. His parents were destitute and could not provide him even the basics of an education. From childhood he had to tend the family cattle, their sole wealth. Love for God and prayer completely dominated the soul of the child Joannicius. Often, having shielded the herd with the Sign of the Cross, he went to a secluded place and spent the whole day praying, and neither thieves nor wild beasts came near his herd.

By order of the emperor Leo IV (775-780), a multitude of officials went through the cities and towns to draft young men for military service. Young Joannicius was also drafted into the imperial army. He earned the respect of his fellow soldiers for his good disposition, but he was also a brave soldier who struck fear in the hearts of his enemies. Saint Joannicius served in the imperial army for six years. More than once he was rewarded by his commanders and the emperor. But military service weighed heavily on him; his soul thirsted for spiritual deeds and solitude. Saint Joannicius, having renounced the world, longed to go at once into



the wilderness. However, on the advice of an Elder experienced in monastic life, he spent a further two years at the monastery. Here the saint became accustomed to monastic obedience, to monastic rules and practices. He studied reading and writing, and he learned thirty Psalms of David by heart.

After this, commanded by God to go to a certain mountain, the monk withdrew into the wilderness. For three years he remained in deep solitude in the wilderness, and only once a month a shepherd brought him some bread and water. The ascetic spent day and night in prayer and psalmody. After each verse of singing the Psalms Saint Joannicius made a prayer, which the Orthodox Church keeps to this day in a somewhat altered form, “The Father is my hope, the Son is my refuge, the Holy Spirit is my protection.”

By chance, he encountered some of his former companions from military service. The saint fled the wilderness and withdrew to Mount Kountourea to hide himself from everyone. Only after twelve years of ascetic life did the hermit accept monastic tonsure. The saint spent three years in seclusion after being tonsured. Then he went to a place called Chelidon to see the great ascetic Saint George (February 21). The ascetics spent three years together. During this time Saint Joannicius learned the entire Psalter by heart. As he grew older, Saint Joannicius settled in the Antidiev monastery and dwelt there in seclusion until his death.

Saint Joannicius spent seventy years in ascetic deeds and attained to a high degree of spiritual perfection. Through the mercy of God the saint acquired the gift of prophecy, as his disciple Pachomius has related. The Elder also levitated above the ground when he prayed. Once, he crossed a river flooded to overflowing. The saint could make himself invisible for people and make others also hidden from sight.

Once, Saint Joannicius led Greek captives out of prison under the very eyes of the guards. Poison and fire, with which the envious wanted to destroy the saint, did him no harm, and predatory beasts did not touch him. He freed the island of Thasos from a multitude of snakes. Saint Joannicius also saved a young nun who was preparing to leave the monastery to marry; he took upon himself the agonized maiden’s suffering of passion, and by fasting and prayer, he overcame the seductive assault of the devil. Foreseeing his death, Saint Joannicius fell asleep in the Lord on November 4, 846, at the age of 94. (*from oca.org*)

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

Brethren, God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might

show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 8:41-56

At that time, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace." While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." But when Jesus heard *it*, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, John, and James, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given *something* to eat. And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The beloved Theologian says... "There is sin which leads to death, and there is sin which does not lead to death." 1 Jn. 5:16-17. He is indeed referring here to the death of the soul. And the great Paul says, "worldly grief produces death," (2 Cor. 7:10) meaning certainly the death of the soul. And again: "Awake, O sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ shall shine on you." Eph. 5:14. From what kind of death does he command them to arise? Surely from the death due to "fleshly

passions which wage war against the soul." 1 Pet. 2:11. For this reason, the Lord also called dead those who live in this vain world. For when one of the disciples asked Him to let him go in order to bury his own father, He did not permit him but ordered him to follow, and "to leave the dead to bury their own dead." Mat. 8:22. Here the Lord calls dead those who are yet living, but indeed have died according to the soul. For just as the soul separated from the body is the death of the body, so too the separation of God from the soul is the death of the soul. And this is real death - the death of the soul.

For this was explained through the commandment in paradise, when God spoke with Adam: "For in the day that you eat from the forbidden tree, you shall suffer death." Gen. 2:17. For through this transgression, his soul, then, became dead, having become separated from God. However, he lived after this for a period of time, "until he was nine hundred and thirty years old." Gen. 5:5. The death which permeated the soul through this transgression not only damaged the soul and brought condemnation upon humankind, but also the body itself became subjected to great pain and great suffering and corruption - and in the end was given over to death. For then, after the internal death of the human being as a result of this transgression, the earthly Adam heard: "Cursed is the ground because of your deeds; thorns and thistles it shall bring to you. In the sweat of your face you shall eat your bread, until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Gen. 3:17-19.

Although, according to that future renewal - at the resurrection of the righteous - the bodies of the lawless and sinners will also be raised, nevertheless they will be given over to the second death, by eternal torment, "where the worm does not sleep," (Mark 9:48) "by the gnashing of teeth," "being cast into outer darkness," (Mat. 8:12), "into the dark and inextinguishable fire of hell," (Mat. 5:22) according to the prophetic saying: "The transgressors and sinners shall be burned together, with none to quench them." Is. 1:31. For this is the second death as John taught us through the Revelation (20:14). Listen to what the great Paul says: "If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live." Rom. 8:13. For here he speaks on the life and death in the age to come. By life he means the enjoyment of the everlasting kingdom, and by death that eternal punishment.

For the transgression of the commandment became by all means the cause of death to both the soul and the body, either now during this age, or during that unending punishment. This is real death, the soul's withdrawal from divine grace and its attachment to sin. To those who practice contemplation this is the death from which to flee and of which to dread. To those who have good understanding it is more dreadful than torment in Gehenna. That is why we flee it with our every

power. We have cast out everything, left everything, renounced everyone, both relationships and business, and desires, that is, everything that destroys us and separates us from God and from everything out of which such a death exists. For one who fears and guards against this, the coming death of the flesh is not so terrible, for having real life in oneself, it moreover at death becomes unalterable from the person. For just as the death of the soul is real death, so too the life of the soul is real life. The life of the soul is its union with God, just as the life of the body is its union with the soul. And just as through the transgression of the commandment, the soul, being separated from God, was put to death; likewise its reunification with God, through obedience to the commandments, grants it life. For this reason, the Lord said in the Gospels: "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." John 6:63. Learning this through experience Peter said to Him, that "You have the words of life." John 6:68. But the words of eternal life are for those who are obedient; to the disobedient this commandment of life brings death. See Rom. 7:10. For in the same manner the apostles, being an aroma of Christ, "were to one a fragrance from death to death, and to the other a fragrance from life to life." 2 Cor. 2:16.

On the other hand, this life does not pertain only to the soul, but also to the body. For through the resurrection it makes the body passionless, delivering it not only from mortality, but also, with this, from unending death, that is, from that future punishment. It also grants to the body the eternal life in Christ, which is "without sickness, without sighing, without sorrow, being truly immortal." (kontakion from the funeral service)

Just as in the death of the soul, that is, as a result of transgression and sin, follows the death of the body and afterwards its decay in the earth and its becoming dust - and after this bodily death the soul is also condemned to hell; likewise, in the resurrection of the soul which returns to God through obedience to the divine commandments, resurrection will be granted afterwards to the body, by its reunification with the soul. And in this resurrection will be granted real incorruption and eternal unified living with God to those who are worthy - these ones becoming spiritual instead of fleshly, dwelling in heaven like angels of God. For he says, "We shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we always be with the Lord." 1 Thes. 4:17.

As the Son of God became a human being out of love for humankind, and suffered in the flesh, His soul separated from the body, yet did not separate from divinity - as a result His own body was raised and ascended into heaven in glory; likewise, such will occur to those who live here on earth according to God. In the soul's separation from the body, but not separating from God, the body, too, in the resurrection, will ascend to God, entering into inexpressible joy where our

Forerunner Jesus has already entered, thus enjoying the future glory in Christ that shall be revealed. They, then, will not only become sharers of the resurrection, but also of the Lord's ascension and of all the divinely-given life. This, however, has nothing to do with those who live here according to the flesh, who, in the hour of their passing, have been found possessing no such fellowship with God. For although all shall be raised, "but," as he says, "each in one's own order." 1 Cor. 15:25. The one who has put to death here, in the spirit, the works of the flesh will live there with Christ in the divine and truly everlasting life. The one who puts to death here the Spirit by fleshly desires and passions, will be condemned, alas, in the age to come, together with the creators and makers of evil, and will be given over to the endless and unabolishable punishment. This is the second and final death.

– St. Gregory Palamas, *Treatise on the Spiritual Life*

A prayer for the unity of the Orthodox Church

~Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!~
O Lord Jesus Christ our God, head of the Church that is thy Body, who prayed for your disciples to the Father, "That they all may be one; as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that you have sent me": To you we confess that your Church is one, and cannot be divided; we mourn for all who separate themselves from Her; we pray that you may make the schisms to cease. We put not our trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation; rather, we put all our hope in you, and we beg of you, send your Holy Spirit to guide our hierarchs, that they may rightly divide the word of your truth, and that they may bear witness to the unity of the Church in all their decisions. Preserve us, O Lord, from the Evil One and all his attempts to divide us, from the machinations of governments, from the ambitions of fallen men, and from the sin of pride. Heal the wounds caused by our lack of love, and fill us, and our hierarchs, with love for one another as brothers in Christ. Keep us in your truth; your word is truth. To you, and your Father, and the Holy Spirit: the Holy Trinity, the source and manifestation of all unity, one in essence and undivided, do we ascribe all praise, honor, and glory, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Curing the Sickness of Pharisaism by Met. Athanasius of Limassol

(continued from last week – Ed.) Another important element that I would like to say something more about (also because some of you have asked me to) is the matter of time.

Did you notice during these days that we have been spending on this ship, how we had no external distractions? We had nothing to draw our attention elsewhere, like

at home - for example television. Did you see how much time we had available? We even conversed among ourselves. You who are married had time to talk to each other - the spouses and the children. The children played together, they talked amongst themselves, and we had lots of time to ourselves and we communicated with each other, and that is the most important element of all: that we could communicate. The most tragic thing is at home, when everyone is sitting in front of the television and they don't talk to each other... time slips away and people do not communicate with each other. And the worst of all? It is the things we see on television... that's the source of the worst corruption for the ones close to us, our children and our souls. One of these days, when we had disembarked and were walking about the place, I noticed in one of those places where the youngsters serve different things, where they are offered refreshments, that they had a television switched on which was playing, and even though nobody was paying attention to it, it was still on. So I stood there for a moment, to see what it was showing - although I don't know what kind of film it was... I guess it was something... it was showing some people who were chasing after some other people all the time, and there was a constant chase.... there were guns, bullets, cars, explosions, jumping from one house to another... But these are things that your children - your young children - sit and watch; so much violence... and I'm not even talking about all the other obscenities that I don't want to mention, which have even destroyed elderly people. And don't you tell me that it's not like that, because I know it is, first hand: these are admissions that we hear during confession. Elderly people, very old people, who are otherwise very respectable, have been ruined by television, from all that vulgarity that they are exposed to every day. I'm not referring to that specific damage right now; I am referring to all the other things - all the violence that the television projects. How do expect the children to not become familiarized with violence? They will naturally become unruly and disobedient and do things that are entirely foreign to their nature!

Have you any idea what an ugly sight it is, when you see young children mimicking older people? They mimic adults, and they destroy their innocent childishness. Sometimes, when I 'm invited to an event, they bring along tiny toddlers and tell them to dance. And you see these little girls or boys, ten or twelve years old, full of innocence, making dance moves that they have seen older women do - women who are entirely disgraceful, with another morality altogether. You can actually see how those children are being destroyed, with their emulations of the adults that they see on television. And also doing all sorts of things and entertaining themselves with choices that are catastrophic. And I am not saying this from the spiritual aspect only, but from every aspect - psychological and social and family. Keep them as far away as you can from all these things. Help your

children to not be dependent on television, because they will be filled with all those obscene images, and so will you. If you don't allow your children to watch obscene movies, but you the adult does, then what's the use? And what about those silly warnings that they write on screen - that the movie is not suitable under 18 or something... or whatever else it says... younger than 12 or something like that... Does that mean that if they turn 12 the sight is a suitable one? Of course those warnings only arouse the youngsters' curiosity and every one of them will inevitably watch the film. They think to themselves that if this movie is forbidden for those younger than 12, it must have something that is deserving of every curiosity...

In my opinion, the destruction that is inflicted on people's inner world is incalculable. Because, as we said yesterday, all positive images, all the good images that one absorbs are extremely beneficial in one's spiritual life. The same applies in reverse, with the bad images that a person observes - they create so many bad situations, that the damage caused is literally incalculable and sometimes we can't tell if it can be cured. But if someone were to observe matters and study them, he will see just how great a catastrophe television can wreak on a person's psyche, and especially in younger people. But it is not only that; you see, one evil will bring on another. It will be a whole chain of evils, because it destroys communication, it destroys time, it destroys the innocence of a person's soul, and then man becomes exhausted, and being exhausted, he has no desire to do anything. Because his soul was filled with things that wearied him, and then he wonders why he is tired - he can't understand why... Try to experiment, by eliminating or at least minimizing these evils, and you will see how much more relaxed you will become and how much free time you will have at your disposal, which will be far more fruitful for anything else that you may do.

Naturally, these things are not unrelated to our spiritual life, because a person's spiritual life is a product of all the activities that a person has. By this, I don't mean to say stop watching television altogether. I am not against it per se; it's just that things like these make our life more difficult instead of making it easier, and they destroy it, the way it was destroyed by technological "progress" which has - otherwise- facilitated our lives. You catch a plane, and you're there. You get on a ship, and you get there quickly - you don't need to row with oars like they used to do in olden times... or a thousand other conveniences... which in the long run are conveniences that may have facilitated our lives, but they also trapped us inside one big difficulty and made us lose ourselves, they made us lose the beauty of our life and we eventually destroyed the world we live in, and now we want even more sciences and discoveries, to see if we can salvage what is left of it...

Of course all these things that constitute the tragedy of our Fall and the mangling of our personality make it abundantly clear just how impossible it is to humanly tackle the problem, and yet, if one turns to God, then we will see that which Christ had said: that whatever is impossible for man to accomplish, is possible by God. Whatever seems impossible for people is possible for God - and we can see around us that miracle by God, which, even in our day, with all the information and all these provocations taking place around us, and the accessibility to sin, still, there are people who love God and from among the thorns, we see roses spring forth... Roses blossom from among the thorns, and the immense miracle of man's salvation becomes reality, regardless of our own human weaknesses, our wretched state, our problems, the difficulties with our self, our church, our family, our society and the other elements that unfortunately bombard every person. That is why - to return from all these things - we need to return where we started from, when we said that the solution and the answer to all problems is for man to turn towards loving God, and that when man loves God, then God will cure him, God will resurrect him - even if that person is dead and decomposing - God will restore him, provided man discards from inside him all that is useless and put in his heart a love for God, and build his life around that love for God, and atop that love for God - to build his life, his marriage, his family, his path, his studies, his course. If man does that, then he will truly come to enjoy life and his life will become a paradise, because paradise is nothing more than God's love, whereas "hell" is nothing more than the absence of God's love.

So, it is my wish... that the love of God will always accompany all of you, and that we should not forget that everything we do, we must do for that reason, and not just to be religiously behaving people. We must become God-loving people, so that our lives can be transformed correctly and we ourselves be transformed into Jesus Christ our Lord. God be with you.

(adapted from findingthewaytotheheart.blogspot.com)

October Treasurer's Report

Glory to Jesus Christ! For October we had an operating income of \$9,840 and expenses of \$8970. Once again we were also blessed to provide nearly \$700 in charitable giving while meeting our monthly obligations. Thank you again for taking care of our Church and our neighbors!

In Christ, Josh Moore, Treasurer.

P A R I S H N E W S

♠ The Parish is in need of extra virgin olive oil for the lampadas. If you'd like to donate some, give it to Kari David or one of the altar servers.

♠ There's been interest expressed in going to pray at the myrrh-streaming Kardiotissa icon of the Theotokos in Taylor. Contact Fr. Joseph if you can make the trip on November 28. It's a good 4 hour trip, so plan on staying overnight.



November Anniversaries and Birthdays



Anniversaries:

none

Birthdays:

Pani Stacey Edgington 3 rd	Karen Blaydoe 3 rd	Brad Karbowski 8 th
Jennifer Brady 11 th	Tabitha Single 20 th	Michael Kopan 22 nd
Herman Blaydoe 24 th	Alex Makowelski 30 th	Lydia Vita 30 th

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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, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)