

# 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 25, 2018 – 26<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**

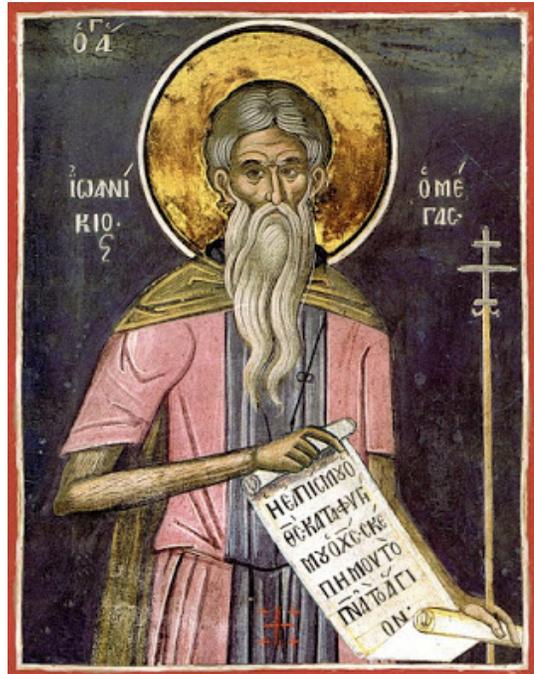
**Leavetaking of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple**

**Hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome**

The Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple (Nov. 21) foretells God's blessing for the human race, the preaching of salvation, the promise of the coming of Christ.

The Hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome, was born at Rome into a rich and illustrious family. Separated from his parents from childhood by force of circumstances, Clement was raised by strangers. Living in Rome, the youth received a fine education, he was surrounded by luxury, and had access to the imperial court. But these comforts brought him no joy, and pagan wisdom failed to attract him. He began to ponder the meaning of life.

When the news of Christ and His teaching began to reach the capital, Saint Clement left his home and estate and went to the lands where the Apostles were preaching. At Alexandria Saint Clement met the holy Apostle Barnabas, listening to his words with deep attention, and perceiving the power and truth of the Word of God. Arriving in Palestine, Saint Clement was baptized by the holy Apostle Peter and became his zealous disciple and constant companion, sharing his toil and



sufferings with him. Shortly before his own sufferings and death, Saint Peter consecrated Saint Clement as Bishop of Rome. After the death of the Apostle Peter, Saint Linus (67-79) was the next Bishop of Rome, succeeded by Saint Anacletus (79-91), and then Saint Clement (92-101).

The virtuous life, charitable works and prayerful activity of Saint Clement converted many to Christ. He once baptized 424 people on the day of Pascha. Among the baptized were people of all social classes: slaves, officials, and even members of the imperial family.

The pagans, seeing the success of his apostolic preaching, denounced Saint Clement to the emperor Trajan (98-117), accusing the saint of insulting the pagan gods. The emperor banished Saint Clement from the capital, sending him to the Crimea, to work at a stone quarry near the city of Cherson. Many of the saint's disciples followed after him voluntarily, preferring to go into exile rather than live without their spiritual Father.

When he arrived at the place of exile, Saint Clement found many Christian believers there, sentenced to labor under harsh conditions amidst a scarcity of water. He prayed together with the condemned, and the Lord appeared to him in the form of a lamb and revealed the location of a spring, from which gushed forth a veritable river of water. This miracle attracted a multitude of people to Saint Clement. Hearing the zealous preacher, hundreds of pagans were converted to Christ. Each day 500 or more men were baptized. And there in the stone quarry, a church was built, in which he served as priest. The apostolic activity of the saint aroused the wrath of the emperor Trajan, and he ordered that Saint Clement be drowned. They threw the martyr into the sea with an anchor tied to his neck. This occurred in the year 101.

The saint's faithful disciples Cornelius and Fibius asked the people to pray that the Lord would permit them to see the martyr's body. The sea drew back a distance of three miles from the shore and the people walked out on the seabed until they found a marble cave shaped like a church. There they found the incorrupt body of their archpastor in this "Angelic Church" formed by God. After this, each year on the anniversary of Saint Clement's martyric death the sea receded, and for seven days Christians were able to venerate his holy relics.

During the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus (802-811), by divine providence, the sea failed to withdraw, and the relics of Saint Clement became inaccessible for fifty years. In the time of the emperor Michael and his mother Theodora (855-867), Saints Cyril and Methodius visited Cherson. When they learned of the concealed relics of Saint Clement, they asked Bishop George of Cherson to pray that the Lord would show them the relics of the hieromartyr.

Saints Cyril and Methodius walked along the shore in procession with the clergy who came with them from Constantinople. Through the fervent prayers of everyone gathered there, the holy relics of Saint Clement miraculously appeared on the surface of the sea at midnight. They solemnly took them to the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople.

A portion of the relics were then brought to Rome by Saints Cyril and Methodius, but a large portion of the relics was later brought to Kiev by the holy Prince Vladimir and placed in the Desyatin-Tithe church, together with the relics of Saint Fibus, where a chapel dedicated to Saint Clement had been built. The hieromartyr Clement is widely venerated in Russia. From ancient times, many churches have been dedicated to him.

Saint Clement, who belongs to the Apostolic Fathers, has left to us a spiritual legacy (two Epistles to the Corinthians) the first written examples of Christian teaching after the writings of the holy Apostles. (*from oca.org*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 5:9-19**

Brethren, the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 13:10-17**

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise *herself* up. But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, "There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day." The Lord then answered him and said, "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead *it* away to water

it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him.

## *A Word From the Holy Fathers*

These things, dearly beloved, we write, not only as admonishing you, but also as putting ourselves in remembrance. For we are in the same lists, and the same contest awaits us. Therefore let us forsake idle and vain thoughts; and let us conform to the glorious and venerable rule which has been handed down to us; and let us see what is good and what is pleasant and what is acceptable in the sight of Him who made us. Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ and understand how precious it is to His Father, because being shed for our salvation it won for the whole world the grace of repentance.

Let us review all the generations in turn, and learn how from generation to generation the Master has given a place for repentance to those who desire to turn to Him. Noah preached repentance, and those who obeyed were saved. Jonah preached destruction to the men of Nineveh; but they, repenting of their sins, obtained pardon of God by their supplications and received salvation, even though they were aliens from God. The ministers of the grace of God through the Holy Spirit spoke concerning repentance, and truly, the Master of the universe Himself spoke concerning repentance with an oath: *“for, as I live, says the Lord, I desire not the death of the sinner, so much as his repentance,”* and He added also a merciful judgment: *“Repent, O house of Israel, of your iniquity; say to the sons of My people, ‘Though your sins reach from the earth even unto the heaven, and though they are redder than scarlet and blacker than sackcloth, and you turn to Me with your whole heart and say “Father,” I will give ear to you as unto a holy people.’”* And in another place He says on this wise, *“Wash, be clean. Put away your iniquities from your souls out of My sight. Cease from your iniquities; learn to do good; seek out judgment; defend him who is wronged: give judgment for the orphan, and execute righteousness for the widow; and come and let us reason together, He says; and though your sins be as crimson, I will make them white as snow; and though they be as scarlet, I will make them white as wool. And if you are willing and will hearken to Me, you shall eat the good things of the earth; but if you are not willing, and do not hearken to Me, a sword shall devour you; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things.”* Seeing then that He desires all His beloved to be partakers of repentance, He confirmed it by an act of His almighty will.

Therefore, let us be obedient to His excellent and glorious will; and presenting ourselves as suppliants of His mercy and goodness, let us fall down before Him and betake ourselves to His compassions, forsaking the vain toil and the strife and the jealousy which leads to death. Let us fix our eyes on those who ministered perfectly to His excellent glory. Let us set before us Enoch, who being found righteous in obedience was translated, and his death was not found. Noah, being found faithful, by his ministration preached regeneration to the world, and through him the Master saved the living creatures which entered the ark in concord.

Abraham, who was called the 'friend,' was found faithful in that he rendered obedience unto the words of God. He through obedience went forth from his land and from his kindred and from his father's house, that leaving a scanty land, a feeble kindred and a lowly house he might inherit the promises of God. For He said to him, *“Go forth from your land and from your kindred and from your father's house to the land which I shall show you, and I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you and will magnify your name, and you shall be blessed. And I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who curse you; and in you all the tribes of the earth will be blessed.”* And again, when he was parted from Lot, God said to him, *“Look up with your eyes, and behold from the place where you are now, to the north and the south and the sunrise and the sea; for all the land which you see I will give to you and to your seed forever; and I will make your seed as the dust of the earth. If any man can count the dust of the earth, then shall your seed also be counted.”* And again He says, *“God led Abraham forth and said to him, ‘Look up to heaven and count the stars, and see whether you can number them. So shall your seed be.’ And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.”* For his faith and hospitality a son was given to him in old age, and by obedience he offered him as a sacrifice to God on one of the mountains which He showed him.

For his hospitality and godliness Lot was saved from Sodom, when all the country round about was judged by fire and brimstone; the Master having thus foreshown that He does not forsake those who set their hope on Him, but appoints to punishment and torment those who swerve aside.

For when his wife had gone forth with him, being otherwise minded and not in accord, she was appointed as a sign for this, so that she became a pillar of salt to this day, that it might be known to all men that those who are double-minded and those who doubt concerning the power of God are set for a judgment and for a token to all the generations.

For her faith and hospitality Rahab the harlot was saved. For when the spies were sent forth to Jericho by Joshua the son of Nun, the king of the land perceived that

they were come to spy out his country, and sent forth men to seize them, that being seized they might be put to death. So the hospitable Rahab received them and hid them in the upper chamber under the flax stalks. And when the messengers of the king came near and said, *“The spies of our land entered in to you: bring them forth, for the king so orders:”* then she answered, *“The men truly, whom you seek, entered in to me, but they departed forthwith and are sojourning on the way;”* and she pointed out to them the opposite road. And she said to the men, *“Of a surety I perceive that the Lord your God delivers this city to you; for the fear and the dread of you is fallen upon its inhabitants. When therefore it shall come to pass that you take it, save me and the house of my father.”* And they said to her, *“It shall be even so as you have spoken. Therefore, when you perceive that we are coming, you shall gather all your folk beneath your roof and they shall be saved; for as many as shall be found without the house shall perish.”* And moreover they gave her a sign, that she should hang out from her house a scarlet thread, thereby showing beforehand that through the blood of the Lord there shall be redemption unto all those who believe and hope on God. You see, dearly beloved, not only faith, but prophecy, is found in the woman.

Let us therefore be lowly minded, brethren, laying aside all arrogance and conceit and folly and anger, and let us do that which is written. For the Holy Spirit says, *“Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, nor the strong in his strength, nor the rich in his riches; but he who boasts let him boast in the Lord, that he may seek Him out, and do judgment and righteousness”* most of all remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which He spoke, teaching forbearance and long-suffering: for thus He spoke, *“Have mercy, that you may receive mercy: forgive, that it may be forgiven to you. As you do, so shall it be done to you. As you give, so shall it be given to you. As you judge, so shall you be judged. As you show kindness, so shall kindness be shown to you. With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you.”* With this commandment and these precepts let us confirm ourselves, that we may walk in obedience to His hallowed words, with lowliness of mind.

– First Epistle of St. Clement, Pope of Rome, to the Corinthians 7:1-13:3

### **Also Commemorated Today: Hieromartyr Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria**

The Holy Hieromartyr Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, was born and raised at Alexandria. He was a highly educated man, and was head of the school of Alexandria. In the year 300 he became the archpastor of the Alexandrian Church, succeeding his teacher and spiritual guide, the holy Bishop Theonas.

Forced into exile from the city during the anti-Christian persecutions under the emperors Diocletian and Maximian, Saint Peter traveled through many lands,

encouraging his flock by letter. Again returned to his city, in order to guide the Alexandrian Church personally during this dangerous period. The saint secretly visited Christians locked up in prison, encouraging them to be steadfast in faith, assisting the widows and orphans, preaching the Word of God, constantly praying and officiating at the divine services. And the Lord kept him safe from the hands of the persecutors.

During this time of unrest the iniquitous heretic Arius, who denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, sowed the tares of his impious teaching. When Arius refused to be corrected and submit to the truth, Saint Peter anathematized the heretic and excommunicated him from the Church. Arius then sent two of Saint Peter's priests to beg the saint to lift the excommunication from him, pretending that he had repented and given up his false teachings. This was not true, for Arius hoped to succeed Saint Peter as Archbishop of Alexandria. Saint Peter, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, saw through the wickedness and deceit of Arius, and so he instructed his flock not to believe Arius nor to accept him into communion.

Under the wise nurturing of Saint Peter the Church of Alexandria strengthened and grew in spite of the persecutions. But finally, on orders from the emperor Maximian (305-311), the saint was arrested and sentenced to death. A multitude of people gathered at the entrance of the prison, expressing their outrage. Wanting to avoid bloodshed and a riot by the people, the saint sent a message to the authorities, in which he suggested that they make an opening in the back wall of the prison, so that he might be taken away secretly to execution. In the dark of the night Saint Peter went with the executioners, who took him beyond the city walls and beheaded him at the same spot where formerly Saint Mark had been executed.

That night a certain pious virgin heard a Voice from heaven saying, "Peter was first among the Apostles; Peter is the last of the Alexandrian Martyrs." This took place in the year 311. In the morning, when people learned of the death of their bishop, a crowd gathered at the place of execution. They took up the body and head of the martyr and went to the church, dressing him in his bishop's vestments, they sat him in his throne at the high place in the altar. During his life Saint Peter never sat on it, but sat on a footstool instead. The saint once explained that whenever he approached his throne he beheld a heavenly light shining on it, and he sensed the presence of a divine power. Therefore, he didn't dare to sit there.

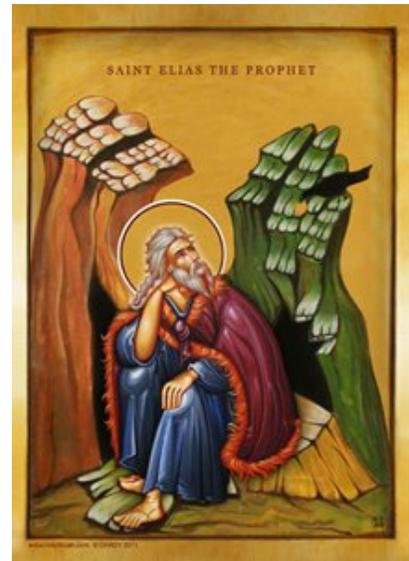
The Lord Jesus Christ once appeared to Saint Peter as a twelve-year-old child wearing a robe that was torn from top to bottom. Saint Peter asked the Savior who had torn his garment, and He replied, "That madman Arius has torn it by dividing the people whom I have redeemed by My blood. Do not receive him into Communion with the Church, for he has worked evil against Me and My flock."

Saint Peter, a great champion of Orthodoxy, is known also as a profound theologian. Passages from his book, “On the Divinity (of Jesus Christ)”, were consulted at the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Of all his works, the most widely known and highly esteemed by the Church are his “Penitential Canons”.  
*(from oca.org)*

## St. Thomas Welcomes Another Member



On Saturday, November 17, St. Thomas welcomed its newest member, Elias, by baptism. Congratulations to parents Josh and Kelsey and godparent Rebecca (holding Elias). May God grant them all many blessed years!



## Encyclical of Archbishop Demetrios for Thanksgiving Day

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We give thanks to God on this blessed day as we do and should on every day for His gift of life. This is a day to reflect on the many aspects and experiences of our lives for which we are grateful; but at the foundation of all of this is life we have been given by God and our gratitude to Him for what He has done for us. As we offer all honor and glory, we *praise the name of God with a song, and we magnify Him with thanksgiving* (Psalm 69:30).

Our thanksgiving is offered to our Creator because the life He has given us is sacred. He has created us in His likeness and image. He has given us the breath of life. He is the source of our very being and the reason for our existence. Our great and gracious God has created us in His love to commune with Him and to experience the blessedness and holiness of this life and fellowship.

We offer our gratitude to God for the abundant life that He offers to us. Our Lord affirmed *He came that we might have life and have it abundantly* (John 10:10). This is the life we can have now. It is life lived each day in communion with God, guided by His presence and grace, and offering a witness to the world of our faith in Him. Abundant life is a life that is lived in the joy of the Resurrection, the hope of salvation, and the anticipation of the fulfillment of God's promises. It is life that is always grateful, giving thanks to Him in all things.

Our continuous offering of thanksgiving in hymn and prayer, through our celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and through our witness, is also our response to the promise of eternal life. Our faith in the promise of salvation offers a witness to all people, because we know *that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also and bring us together into His presence. We know that as grace extends to more and more people, it will increase thanksgiving to the glory of God* (2 Corinthians 4:14-15).

As you gather together with your families and friends, as you worship in your communities on this blessed day during this holy season of the Nativity of our Lord, may our voices be lifted in thanksgiving to God for life, life that is sacred, abundant, and eternal. In Him we have life, and for our lives we are grateful.

With paternal love in Christ,

† **DEMETRIOS**, Archbishop of America

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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, 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 Dominiecki, 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. 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.)