

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

**Wednesdays in Great Lent: Liturgy of
Presanctified Gifts 7:00 PM**

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

March 31, 2019 – 3rd Sunday in Great Lent (Veneration of the Precious & Life-Giving Cross) | St. Innocent of Moscow

Saint Innocent (Veniaminov), Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomensk (August 26, 1797—March 31, 1879), was glorified by the Russian Orthodox Church on October 6, 1977. He was born in the village of Anginsk in the Irkutsk diocese. The Apostle of America and Siberia proclaimed the Gospel “even to the ends of the earth”: in the Aleutian islands (from 1823), in the six dialects of the local tribes on the island of Sitka (from 1834), among the Kolosh (Tlingit); in the remotest settlements of the extensive Kamchatka diocese (from 1853); among the Koryak, Chukchei, Tungus in the Yakutsk region (from 1853) and North America (in 1857); in the Amur and the Usuriisk region (from 1860).

Having spent a large part of his life in journeys, Saint Innocent translated a Catechism and the Gospel into the Aleut language. In 1833, he wrote in this language one of the finest works of Orthodox missionary activity INDICATION OF THE WAY TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. In 1859, the Yakut first heard the Word of God and divine services in their native language. Twice (in 1860 and 1861) Saint Innocent met with Saint Nicholas the Apostle to Japan (February 3), sharing with him his spiritual experience. A remarkable preacher,



Saint Innocent said, “Whoever abounds in faith and love, can have mouth and wisdom, and the heart cannot resist their serving it.” Having begun his apostolic work as a parish priest, Saint Innocent completed it as Metropolitan of Moscow (January 5, 1868—March 31, 1879). He obeyed the will of God all his life, and he left behind a theme for the sermon to be preached at his funeral: “The steps of a man are rightly ordered by the Lord” (Ps 36/37:23). (*from oca.org*)

Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews 4:14-5:6

Brethren, seeing that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron *was*. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but *it was* He who said to Him: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.” As *He* also *says* in another *place*: “You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Today’s Gospel Lesson – Saint Mark 8:34-9:1

At that time, when Jesus had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” And He said to them, “Amen, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

INSPIRATION FROM THE LENTEN TRIODION

O Lord, who by Your Cross has slain the deceiver, deliver me from his delusion, for I have sinned and been beguiled. Cleanse me by the Fast and grant me to do Your will, O Master, that I may look with joy upon Your Holy Passion.

(Vespers, *Tuesday in the Third Week*)

CAMP NAZARETH SUMMER CAMP 2019

The time for Summer Camp is Rapidly Approaching!!! The clock is ticking!!

REGISTER ONLINE STARTING MAR. 1, 2019!!!

Dates for the Summer Camping Program

Week 1: July 14-20, 2019

Pittsburgh, Mid-Atlantic, Tri-State and Washington D.C. Deaneries

Register Online Starting March 1, 2019

Register at – *campnazareth.org*

From the Home Page, From the 2019 Summer Camp Icon, or From the Diocesan Summer Camp Tab found under the Summer Camp Tab and look for Camper Registration.

If you are Clergy or a Volunteer go to the 2019 Summer Camp Icon on the Home Page or the Diocesan Summer Camp Tab found under the Summer Camp Tab and look for the paper forms under Clergy/Volunteers.

\$20 Early Bird Discount Per Child!!!!

(one-time only, not per week)

Register & pay by May 15, 2019!!!!

Online Registration MUST be complete AND payment must be submitted by May 15 in order to qualify for the Early Bird Discount.

Registrations after June 15 will incur an additional \$20 late fee.

- When you register online please note that **you will still need to submit a paper copy of the Medical Examination Form (i.e. Camper Physical)** which must be filled out and signed by a licensed medical professional (licensed physician or physician's assistant). This form will be emailed to you after you complete the online registration process.
- **Payment by check, money order, or credit card is accepted.** Checks and Money Orders are to be made payable to *Camp Nazareth* and sent to *Camp Nazareth at 339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137.*

A Word From the Holy Fathers

In our commemoration, my brethren, let us not be occupied with meats, but let us glorify the Lord, let us become fools for Him who died for us, even as Paul said; ‘For if we are foolish, it is to God; or if we are sober-minded, it is to you; since because one died for all men, therefore all were dead to Him; and He died for all, that we who live should not henceforth live to ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again (2 Cor. 5:13–15).’ No longer then ought we to live to ourselves, but, as servants to the Lord. And not in vain should we receive the grace, as the time is especially an acceptable one (2 Cor. 6:1, 2), and the day of salvation hath dawned, even the death of our Redeemer. For even for our sakes the Word came down, and being incorruptible, put on a corruptible body for the salvation of all of us. Of which Paul was confident, saying, ‘This corruptible must put on incorruption (1 Cor. 15:53).’ The Lord too was sacrificed, that by His blood He might abolish death. Full well did He once, in a certain place, blame those who participated vainly in the shedding of His blood, while they did not delight themselves in the flesh of the Word, saying, ‘What profit is there in my blood, that I go down to corruption (Ps. 29:9 LXX)?’ This does not mean that the descent of the Lord was without profit, for it gained the whole world; but rather that after He had thus suffered, sinners would prefer to suffer loss than to profit by it. For He regarded our salvation as a delight and a peculiar gain; while on the contrary He looked upon our destruction as loss.

. . . Now when the Lord had cursed [the unbelieving Jews] because of their negligence, He removed from them the new moons, the true lamb, and that which is truly the Passover.

But to us it came: there came too the solemn day, in which we ought to call to the feast with a trumpet, and separate ourselves to the Lord with thanksgiving, considering it as our own festival. For we are bound to celebrate it, not to ourselves but to the Lord; and to rejoice, not in ourselves but in the Lord, who bore our griefs and said, ‘My soul is sorrowful unto death (Matt. 26:38).’ For the heathen, and all those who are strangers to our faith, keep feasts according to their own wills, and have no peace, since they commit evil against God. But the saints, as they live to the Lord also keep the feast to Him, saying, ‘I will rejoice in Your salvation,’ and, ‘my soul shall be joyful in the Lord.’ The commandment is common to them, ‘Rejoice, you righteous, in the Lord (Ps. 9:14, 34:9; 32:1 LXX).’—so that they also may be gathered together, to sing that common and festal Psalm, ‘Come, let us rejoice (Ps. 94:1),’ not in ourselves, but, ‘in the Lord.’

The whole creation keeps a feast, my brethren, and everything that hath breath praises the Lord (Ps. 150:6), as the Psalmist [says], on account of the destruction of the enemies, and our salvation. And justly indeed; for if there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents (Luke 15:7), what should there not be over the abolition of sin, and the resurrection of the dead? Oh what a feast and how great the gladness in heaven! How must all its hosts joy and exult, as they rejoice and watch in our assemblies, those that are held continually, and especially those at Easter? For they look on sinners while they repent; on those who have turned away their faces, when they become converted; on those who formerly persisted in lusts and excess, but who now humble themselves by fastings and temperance; and, finally, on the enemy who lies weakened, lifeless, bound hand and foot, so that we may mock at him; ‘Where is your victory, O Death? where is your sting, O Grave (1 Cor. 15:55)?’ Let us then sing unto the Lord a song of victory.

Who then will lead us to such a company of angels as this? Who, coming with a desire for the heavenly feast, and the angelic holiday, will say like the prophet, ‘I will pass to the place of the wondrous tabernacle, unto the house of God; with the voice of joy and praise, with the shouting of those who keep festival (Ps. 41:4 LXX)?’ To this course the saints also encourage us, saying, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob (Is. 2:3).’ But not for the impure is this feast, nor is the ascent thereto for sinners; but it is for the virtuous and diligent; and for those who live according to the aim of the saints; for, ‘Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place, but he that has clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not devoted his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully to his neighbor? For he,’ as the Psalmist adds, when he goes up, ‘shall receive a blessing from the Lord (Ps. 23:3 LXX).’ Now this clearly also refers to what the Lord gives to them at the right hand, saying, ‘Come, blessed ones, inherit the kingdom prepared for you (Matt. 25:34).’ But the deceitful one, and he who is not pure of heart, and possesses nothing that is pure (as the Proverb says, ‘To a deceitful man there is nothing good (Prov. 13:13, LXX)), shall assuredly, being a stranger, and of a different race from the saints, be accounted unworthy to eat the Passover, for ‘a foreigner shall not eat of it (Ex. 12:43).’ Thus Judas, when he thought he kept the Passover, because he plotted deceit against the Savior, was estranged from the city which is above, and from the apostolic company. For the law commanded the Passover to be eaten with due observance; but he, while eating it, was sifted of the devil, who had entered his soul.

Therefore let us not celebrate the feast after an earthly manner, but as keeping festival in heaven with the angels. Let us glorify the Lord, by chastity, by righteousness, and other virtues. And let us rejoice, not in ourselves, but in the

Lord, that we may be inheritors with the saints. Let us keep the feast then, as Moses. Let us watch like David who rose seven times, and in the middle of the night gave thanks for the righteous judgments of God. Let us be early, as he said, ‘In the morning I will stand before You, and You will look upon me: in the morning You will hear my voice (Ps. 5:3).’ Let us fast like Daniel; let us pray without ceasing, as Paul commanded; all of us recognizing the season of prayer, but especially those who are honorably married; so that having borne witness to these things, and thus having kept the feast, we may be able to enter into the joy of Christ in the kingdom of heaven. But as Israel, when going up to Jerusalem, was first purified in the wilderness, being trained to forget the customs of Egypt, the Word by this typifying to us the holy fast of forty days, let us first be purified and freed from defilement, so that when we depart hence, having been careful of fasting, we may be able to ascend to the upper chamber with the Lord, to sup with Him; and may be partakers of the joy which is in heaven. In no other manner is it possible to go up to Jerusalem, and to eat the Passover, except by observing the fast of forty days. . . . Resting on that day, let us ever keep Easter joy in Christ Jesus our Lord, through Whom, to the Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

– St. Athanasius the Great, *Festal Letter V* (333)

Homily on Holy Cross Sunday by Met. Anthony of Sourozh

In today’s Gospel the Lord says to us that if we want to be followers of His, disciples, we must take up our crosses and follow Him. And when we think of the Cross of the Lord, we think of His gradual, painful ascent to His Crucifixion, we think of the way of the Cross, of His death. And indeed, the Lord calls us, if we want to be faithful to Him, if we want to be His disciples, to be prepared to walk all the way with Him – all the way.

But on the other hand, we must remember that He does not call us to follow a road which He has not trod Himself. He is a Good Shepherd that walks ahead of His sheep, making sure that all is clear, that dangers have been removed, that they can walk safely in His footsteps. His call to take up our cross and to follow Him is a call, at the same time, to accept to be true disciples of Him, and also to do it in the certainty that He will never ask from us what He has not done or endured Himself. We can follow Him safely; we can follow Him with assurance, but also with a sense of peace in our heart and our mind.

And yet, this following is not devoid of tragedy because to be disciple of Christ we must, as the reading of the Epistle at our baptism warned us, die with Him in order to be risen with Him. To die means to renounce, in an act of loyalty, of friendship, of solidarity with Him, of respect and veneration for Him, of recognition of the

cost to Him for His love of us, to renounce everything which was the cause of His death. We must reflect on everything which is within us which makes us alien to God, unworthy of ourselves, unworthy of His love.

And when we discover something, whatever it may be, we must set out to reject it out of our lives. It may be things that seem to be easy, or small, it may be things that are very heavy and difficult to reject. But we must not imagine that things which seem to be small things separate us less from God than those things which appear to be great to us. There is story in the life of one of the ascetics to whom two persons came; the one have committed a grievous sin and the other one recognized only a multitude of little sins. And to make them understand that both matter and could be as destructive of life of the one as the other, he told the first one to go into the field and to find the biggest boulder that was to be found and bring it, and to the other one to collect pebbles, everywhere. The one found easily a boulder and brought it; the other one as easily found a multitude of little pebbles. And when they came back, he said to them, and now – go, and put them back exactly in the way where you found them. The first that brought the big boulder found easy to find the place, it was deeply imprinted in the earth, and to place the boulder exactly where it had lain. The other one, after hours, and hours, and hours came back with all the pebbles, because they had been collected at random, and yet, it was impossible to remember where. So is it with our sins: there is nothing which is small, and there is nothing which is great, if – and the ‘if’ is important – if we do not find a way of putting it aside.

So, let us reflect on this. In the weeks of preparation for Lent, we were confronted in one parable after the other, in one reading after the other with images of sin; the blindness of Bartimeus, the pride of the Pharisee, the rejection of his father – our God! – by the prodigal son; we were confronted with the reading of the judgement in which it was so clearly set out that we are not going to be judged on the faith we professed, but on whether we were human throughout our lives, whether we were simply human, perceptive, cruelly sensitive to the sufferings of other people, and whether we have done for them, our neighbor, all that could be done, whether we have loved our neighbor actively as we wish to be loved actively by our neighbor. And then we were confronted with the days of the end of this period of preparation when week after week it was twilight and darkness that was revealed to us within ourselves by the readings if we only had the honesty to respond to the message of God.

And then we entered into a new period of time; into Lent proper; the period which is called ‘the spring’ – because this is the meaning of the word ‘lent’, a time on newness and of renewal, a time when God can make old things new if we only allow Him to. And we are confronted with the Sunday of Orthodoxy, the triumph

of Orthodoxy when the Church proclaimed that God had become man, that man was so great, so vast, and also so precious to God that He gave His life for Him, a God of sacrificial love, a God who was prepared to live and die for us because He treasures us so much.

And then, the next Sunday, the Sunday of Gregory Palamas – the proclamation of the fact that we are truly called to be partakers of the divine nature according to the promise and the word of Saint Peter in his Epistle: that God wants to give Himself to us, that divine grace is God Himself pouring Himself into us and giving us a possibility, a chance, if we are only capable of responding to it, of making Him our King, enthrone Him as a Judge and Ruler of our mind, as the One Who rules our heart, the One Whose will is our will, the One Who may cleanse us even in our bodies of all sins spiritual and fleshly.

And now, we are going to see one after the other what the grace of God accepted, heroically received, can make of people: in the person of Saint John of the Ladder, in the person of Saint Mary of Egypt, in the person of every sinner who is been remembered in these weeks, and who by the power, and the grace, and the love of God, but also by his heroic, wholehearted, sincere response proved capable of receiving what God was giving.

And then, we will come to Holy Week; and from the light which has shone as a promise, which had dimly or brightly in the Saints, we will see the blinding light of love Divine incarnate, of what God means when He says that He loves us. And again, it is judgement, because if men, women, children as frail as we are, could respond as the Saints did, what are we going to say to God if we respond in no manner to His own sacrificial, crucified love?

And so, from the twilight of sin revealed to us, to the light which has shone through the Saints and in the Saints, of the Divine grace, we come to the light pure, perfect, revealed in God, and at each stage we are told by God: are you going to respond to this? Is the horror of darkness not sufficient to make you shudder? Is the vision of what can be done not enough to inspire you? Is My Own life and death for your sake not sufficient to move you? We are given one chance after the other to change, to respond: let us do it! Let us make haste to do it! There is a passage in the Great Canon in which it says, Let the hand of Moses covered with leper convince you that God can cleanse your own life which is covered in leper... Yes – if leper could be washed by an act of God, all leprosy which stains us, destroys us in soul, in body, which undermines the purity of our heart, darkens our soul, makes our will unfaithful to our own vocation and to the calling of God, all that can be healed.

And so we can enter into these days with hope, because one sigh of the Publican was enough to make him a child of the Kingdom, to restore him to wholeness. Let us bring at least one sigh from the depth of our heart – and salvation is ours... Glory be to God, Glory be to God in all things... Amen. *(from preachersinstitute.com)*

Social Team for April 7

Team 5 is up next week – Vallandingham, Maher, McNeil, Osborne. Don't forget!

Church Work Day Scheduled

We are planning to do some yard work, cleaning and organizing in the church and house on April 20 after Divine Liturgy. All are invited and welcome to join in on the fellowship.

Patriarchal Pence – Support Patriarch Bartholomew



During this season of increased prayer, fasting, and charity all the parishes in our Diocese send a token of our affection to support the work of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. To this end we will take a special collection on Palm Sunday (April 21st). Please be generous! [Photo Credit: Nikolaos Manginas]

Follow Our Diocese On-Line

Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org>

Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan 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 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. 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.)