

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

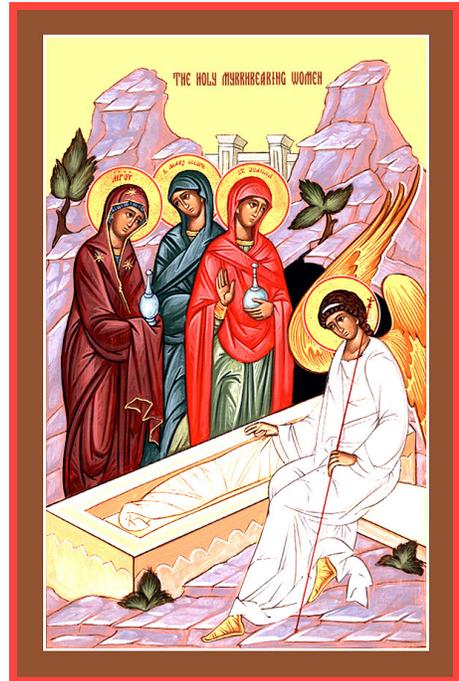
Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

**May 12, 2019 – Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women
(2nd Sunday After Pascha)**

We remember today the Myrrh-bearing women, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, people who in the course of the Gospel are hardly mentioned, yet who, when Christ was seemingly defeated, when death, rejection, betrayal and hatred had conquered, proved to be people of faithfulness and courage, the faithfulness of the heart and the courage that can be born only of love. At the moment of the Crucifixion all the Apostles had fled save one, John, who stood at the foot of the Cross with the Mother of God. Everyone else had abandoned Christ, only a small group of women stood at a short distance from the Cross, and when He had died, they came to anoint His Body which Joseph of Arimathea had sought from Pilate, unafraid of being recognized as a disciple, because in life and in death love and faithfulness had conquered.

Let us reflect on this. It is easy to be Christ's disciples when we are on the crest of the wave, in the security of countries where no persecution, no rejection is endured, no betrayal can lead us to martyrdom, or simply to becoming the victims of mockery and rejection.



Let us think of ourselves not in regard to Christ alone but with regard to one another, because Christ has said that what we have done to any one of us, to the smallest, to the most insignificant, we have done to Him.

Let us ask ourselves how we behave when someone is rejected, mocked, ostracized, condemned by public opinion or by the opinion of those who mean something to us, whether at that moment our heart remains faithful, whether at that moment we find courage to say, ‘He was, and he remains my friend whether you accept or reject him’.

There is no greater measure of faithfulness than that faithfulness which is made manifest in defeat. Let us consider this, because we all are defeated, we are defeated in so many ways. We all strive, with whatever energy we have - a little or much, to be what we should be, and we are defeated at every moment. Should we not look at one another not only with compassion, but with the faithfulness of friends who are prepared to stand by a person who falls, falls away from grace, falls away from his own ideal, frustrates all hopes and expectations which we have set on him or her? At that time let us stand by, at that time let us be faithful and prove that our love was not conditioned by the hope of victory but was a wholehearted gift, gratuitous, joyful, wonderful. Amen.

– Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

Today’s Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7

In those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Today’s Gospel Lesson – Saint Mark 15:43-16:8

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and

summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where He was laid.

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

My children, we have the fear of God and his perfect love in our hearts. Let us not despise anyone, especially since the apostle says, 'Why do you judge your brother, and why do you despise your brother? He stands or falls before his own Lord. He will be upheld, for God is able to make him stand' (Rom 14:4). And the Lord says, 'Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?' (Mt. 7:3) It is a great sin, brothers, for someone to condone his own would while he rebukes his neighbor for the same wound; or for someone to weigh carefully the deeds of another while he overlooks his own, as though he himself were free from sin. This is not possible. 'Heaven itself,' it is said, 'is not pure in your presence' (Job 15:15).

If a loathsome and rotten person has a certain passion, why is that important? And if one of you boasts that he has a new heart, although he has lived the monastic life so many years, this fellow most certainly deceives himself with his impious behavior. But no, this fellow accuses the one who has left the world! Look, we have spent all these years cutting ourselves to pieces in the monastic life in the desert, and we haven't even grasped the first run on the cord: that is, to hold

ourselves as sinners and to worry about our own evils, and not to get puffed up with self-righteousness and rebuke our neighbor.

Tell me, brothers, why have we completely left the world, with its wealth and glory and luxury, and come to this desert where these things don't exist? Is it on account of our sins and passions, in order to repent of them? Or is it because we are sinless and have fled those who are sinners and subject to the passions? And if, filled with passion, we have come to repent, we are not the rulers and arbiters of ourselves so that whenever we have the desire, we make ourselves free and glorify ourselves, already cleansed of passion. No! This happens when the righteous judge wishes it.

If, however, we act like righteous persons freed from the passions who are fleeing sinners - while we still trample upon our neighbor and boast about ourselves - we have a mighty accuser, the tax collector, who was derided by the self-important Pharisee, but who had already been preferred by God who knows what's in the heart (cf. Luke 18:14). These two, then, humility and arrogance, stand in opposition to each other. Arrogance continually boasts, 'I shall ascend above the clouds of heaven, I shall place my throne upon the stars, I shall be equal to the Most High' (cf. Is. 14:13-14).

The reward for such insolence is this: now you will be thrown into hell. But humility, like a father, comforts us, says, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls' (Mt. 11:28-9). Believe me, children, that if a person makes a new heaven and new earth, (cf. 2 Pet. 3:13) while he loudly boasts and denigrates his neighbor, his labor is for nothing and his lot will be with the hypocrites. But if we confess our sins, as John the Theologian says, God can be trusted to forgive us our transgressions (cf. 1 Jn. 1:9).

But why, brothers, does he not free us equally from both small and great passions? What, then, do I say? There is one, and only one, passion, one sin that seems to be worthless, that is able to destroy us: he who insults his brother will be liable to the council, and he who says, 'You fool,' will be liable to the hell of fire for the least little thing (cf. Mt. 5:22). Do you see, beloved? The one sin that does not seem to be a sin leads directly to the fire of hell. Drunkards and revilers will not inherit the kingdom of God (cf. 1 Cor. 6:10). What destroyed the sons of Eli? Wasn't it when they ate beforehand the sacrificial meats (1 Sam 2)? And what destroyed Ahab[Achan]? Didn't the theft of some small thing cause his whole household, along with his cattle and possessions, to be stoned to death (Jsh. 7)? Therefore

brothers, we who are in sin, even if it seems to be a small one, let us not reproach the greater sin of our neighbor. For this would gain us nothing.

Tell me; if someone were cut to pieces in front of us while we were pricked with a needle, which would we feel - the suffering of the person cut to pieces before us, or the pain of the needle wounding our own body? And if a city surrounded by soldiers has a single enemy within its walls, which has harmed it more? Isn't it the enemy within rather than those waging war outside? So too it is with us, my little children: we are not harmed so much by our neighbor - even if he's a fornicator or an adulterer or a murderer or a magician (which is the worst of all evils) - as we are by some tiny passion that we have within us. We are full of passion! Who among us will be able to boast that he is without passion or sin? And the passion of arrogance is the most vain and wretched, for the more it wanders about in the mind, the more it makes its captive what we call 'lightheaded.'

Therefore keep up the struggle, my brothers, to help one another for the sake of humility. For each person who is righteous (without being perfect) and receives those who are sick is conspicuous because he lives his life by advancing in true knowledge. But whoever thinks he is great, and perfect in righteousness, as though he were one of the saints, on top of all this, if he boasts and in trampling upon his neighbor denigrates him, this person's intentions and righteous deeds and boasting are a foolish vanity. Brothers, take hold of the beginning of virtue, which is the fear of God (as it is said: 'The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord' (Prov. 9:10)), grounded in humility and made secure in the bond of the love of God most perfect, who became perfect man in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory forever.

– St. George the Chozebite

Also Commemorated Today: Saint Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus

Saint Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus, “a last relic of ancient piety,” as Saint Jerome calls him, lived during the fourth century in Phoenicia. The Roman empress Honoria was his sister. He was of Jewish descent, and in his youth he received a fine education. He was converted to Christianity after seeing how a certain monk named Lucian gave away his clothing to a poor person. Struck by the monk’s compassion, Epiphanius asked to be instructed in Christianity.

He was baptized and became a disciple of Saint Hilarion the Great (October 21). Entering the monastery, he progressed in the monastic life under the guidance of the experienced Elder Hilarion, and he occupied himself with copying Greek books.

Because of his ascetic struggles and virtues, Saint Epiphanius was granted the gift of wonderworking. In order to avoid human glory, he left the monastery and went into the Spanidrion desert. Robbers caught him there and held him captive for three months. By speaking of repentance, the saint brought one of the robbers to faith in the true God. When they released the holy ascetic, the robber also went with him. Saint Epiphanius took him to his monastery and baptized him with the name John. From that time, he became a faithful disciple of Saint Epiphanius, and he carefully documented the life and miracles of his instructor.

Reports of the righteous life of Saint Epiphanius spread far beyond the monastery. The saint went a second time into the desert with his disciple John. Even in the wilderness disciples started to come to him, so he established a new monastery for them. After a certain time, Saint Epiphanius made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to venerate its holy shrines, and then returned to the Spanidrion monastery. The people of Lycia sent the monk Polybios to Saint Epiphanius asking him to take the place of their dead archpastor. When he learned of this intention, the clairvoyant ascetic secretly went into the Pathysian desert to the great ascetic Saint Hilarion (October 21), under whose guidance he had learned asceticism in his youth.

The saints spent two months in prayer, and then Hilarion sent Saint Epiphanius to Salamis. Bishops were gathered there to choose a new archpastor to replace one who recently died. The Lord revealed to the eldest of them, Bishop Papius, that Saint Epiphanius should be chosen bishop. When Epiphanius arrived, Saint Papius led him into the church, where in obedience to the will of the participants of the Council, Epiphanius agreed to be their bishop. Saint Epiphanius was consecrated as Bishop of Salamis in 367.

St. Epiphanius won renown because of his great zeal for the Faith, his love and charity toward the poor, and his simplicity of character. He suffered much from the slander and enmity of some of his clergy. Because of the purity of his life, Saint Epiphanius was permitted to see the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Gifts at Divine Liturgy. Once, when the saint was celebrating the Mystery, he did not see this vision. He then became suspicious of one of the clergy and quietly said to him, "Depart, my son, for you are unworthy to participate in the celebration of the Mystery today." At this point, the writings of his disciple John break off, because he became sick and died. The further record of the life of Saint Epiphanius was continued by another of his disciples, Polybios (afterwards bishop of city of Rinocyreia).

Through the intrigues of the empress Eudoxia and the Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria, towards the end of his life Saint Epiphanius was summoned to Constantinople to participate in the Synod of the Oak, which was convened to

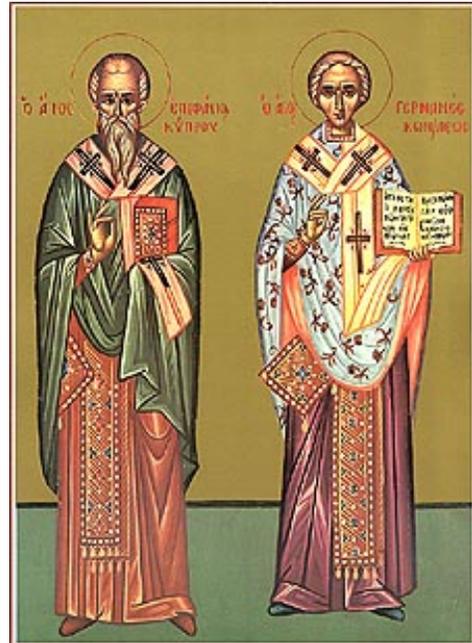
judge the great saint, John Chrysostom (September 14 and November 13). Once he realized that he was being manipulated by Chrysostom's enemies, Saint Epiphanius left Constantinople, unwilling to take part in an unlawful council.

As he was sailing home on a ship, the saint sensed the approach of death, and he gave his disciples final instructions: to keep the commandments of God, and to preserve the mind from impure thoughts. He died two days later. The people of Salamis met the body of their archpastor with carriages, and on May 12, 403 they buried him in a new church which he himself had built.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council named Saint Epiphanius as a Father and Teacher of the Church. In the writings of Saint Epiphanius, the **PANARIUM** and the **ANCHORATUS** are refutations of Arianism and other heresies. In his other works are found valuable church traditions, and directives for the Greek translation of the Bible.

In his zeal to preserve the purity of the Orthodox Faith, Saint Epiphanius could sometimes be rash and tactless. In spite of any impetuous mistakes he may have made, we must admire Saint Epiphanius for his dedication in defending Orthodoxy against false teachings. After all, one of the bishop's primary responsibilities is to

protect his flock from those who might lead them astray. We also honor Saint Epiphanius for his deep spirituality, and for his almsgiving. No one surpassed him in his tenderness and charity to the poor, and he gave vast sums of money to those in need. *(from oca.org)*



Saint Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople

Saint Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, was born at Constantinople in the seventh century. His father, a prominent senator, was killed by order of the emperor Constantine Pogonatos (668-685). The young Germanus was emasculated and sent to a monastery, where he studied Holy Scripture.

Because of the sanctity of his life, Germanus was made bishop in the city of Cyzicus. Saint Germanus rose up in defense of the Orthodox Faith against the iconoclast heretics. He was later made Patriarch of Constantinople. Saint Germanus continued to stand up against the iconoclasts and to their spokesman, the heretical emperor Leo III the Isaurian (717-741), but the contest was unequal. He

was forced to put his omophorion upon the altar table in the sanctuary, and to resign the archpastoral throne. Then the enraged emperor, who accused the Patriarch of heresy the day before, sent soldiers, who beat the saint and threw him out of the patriarchal residence. Saint Germanus was Patriarch for fourteen years and five months.

He went to a monastery, where he spent the remaining days of his life. The holy Patriarch Germanus died in the year 740, at age ninety-five, and was buried in the Chora monastery in Constantinople. Afterwards, his relics were transferred to France. At the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787), the name of Patriarch Germanus was included in the diptychs of the saints. He wrote a “Meditation on Church Matters or Commentary on the Liturgy;” also explanation of the difficult passages of Holy Scripture, and another work on the rewards of the righteous after death.

His important work on the various heresies that had arisen since apostolic times, and on the church councils that took place during the reign of the emperor Leo the Iconoclast, provides a wealth of historical information. There are also three letters from the Patriarch about the veneration of icons, which were read at the Seventh Ecumenical Council.

His other works include hymns in praise of the saints, discourses on the Feasts of the Entry into the Temple, the Annunciation and the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, and on the restoration of the church in honor of the Placing of the Venerable Zone of the Most Holy Theotokos. (*from oca.org*)

St. Barbara’s Meeting Next Week

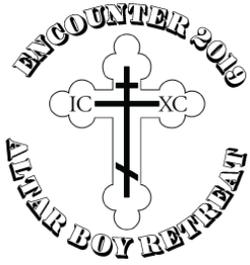
There will be a St. Barbara’s meeting next Sunday after services to discuss meal planning for hosting the monthly local clergy association meeting on June 18. Please plan to attend if you are willing to assist.

We’ll Have A Deacon Next Week!

However, we won’t have a priest. Fr. Joseph will be out of town from May 14-21. If you have an urgent need for a priest, please contact Fr. Peter Zarynow at (301) 299-5120 (except for May 18-19; he will also be unavailable then). In his absence, we will not have Saturday services on May 18; on Sunday, May 19, Deacon Steve Hall will lead us in a deacon’s service at 10:00 and distribute Holy Communion to those who have prepared to receive it. Come a little early & celebrate the Paschal Hours to kick things off.

Social Team for May 19

Team 3 is up next week – Edgington, Chopak, Barzykin, Moore. Thank you!



DIOCESAN ALTAR BOY RETREAT

JUNE 30- JULY 3, 2019



ABR 2019

The Diocese is pleased to announce the dates for this year's Altar Boy Retreat to be held once again at Christ the Savior Seminary, Johnstown, PA. This is an opportunity to come together and be with other Altar Servers from around the Diocese. It is also an opportunity to come and spend time with clergy from around the Diocese as you learn to sing and serve in the Church!

Online Registration is open at
<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=oblwu7zab&oeidk=a07eg95i0mjd06d4684>

Deadline to register: June 7, 2019

We hope to see you at ABR 2019!!!!

**Learn about your
faith!**

**Come pray
together!**

**Come sing
together!**

**Come play
together!**

**Registration Cost
is \$100**

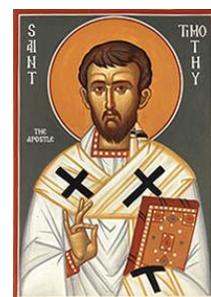
ABR 2019

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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 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.)