

# 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 26, 2019 – Sunday of the Samaritan Woman  
(5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha)**

By Met. Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh

The Holy Gospel has not given us the name of the Samaritan woman. But the Tradition of the Church remembers, and calls her in Greek - Photini, in Russian - Svetlana, in the Celtic languages - Fiona, in Western languages - Claire. And all these names speak to us of one thing - of light.

Having met the Lord Jesus Christ she has become a light shining in the world, a light that enlightens those who meet her. Every Saint is offered us as an example; but we cannot always emulate the concrete ways in which a Saint lived, we cannot always repeat their way from earth to heaven. But we can learn from each of them two things. The one is that by the grace of God we can achieve what seems humanly impossible; that is, to become a person in the image and likeness of God, to be - in this world of darkness and tragedy which is in the power of lies - a word of truth, a sign of hope, the certainty that God can conquer if we only allow Him access to our souls. Because if the Kingdom of God is not established within us, if God is not enthroned in our minds and hearts, a fire that destroys everything unworthy of ourselves and of Him, we cannot spread God's light around.



And the second thing which the Saints can teach us is to understand the message which their names convey to us. And today's Samaritan woman speaks of light. Christ has said that He is the Light of the world, the light that enlightens all men; and we are called to give shelter within our souls, minds and hearts - indeed, within our whole self - to this light; so that the word spoken by Christ, "Let your light so shine before all men, that seeing your good deeds they may give glory to your Father who is in heaven", may be fulfilled and accomplished in and through us.

It is only through seeing our deeds, through seeing how we live that people can believe that the light is God's light; it is not in our words, unless they are words of truth and of power like those of the Apostles, or of Christ Himself indeed. And let us reflect, each of us, on the meaning of our name and on the way in which we can become what we are called.

The Samaritan woman came to the well without any spiritual purpose; she came, as she came daily, to fetch water - and she met Christ. Each of us may meet our God at any turn in our life, when we are about our most homely tasks, if our hearts are turned in the right direction, if we are prepared to receive a message, to listen; indeed - to ask questions! Because the Samaritan woman asked a question of Christ, and what she heard transcended her question in such a way that she recognized in Him a prophet, and later - the Christ, the Savior of the world.

But the light must not be pushed under a bushel. Having discovered that the Light had come into the world, that the word of divine truth was resounding now amidst men, that God was among us, she left behind all concerns and ran to share the joy, the wonder of what she had discovered with others. She brought her fellow-citizens to Christ. She told them first why she believed; and when perhaps curiosity, or the convincing power of her words, and the change that had occurred in her brought them to Christ, they saw for themselves and said to her, It is no longer because of what you say that we believe - we have seen, we have heard.

And this is what the Samaritan woman teaches all of us: be open at every moment of life, while we are busy with the simplest things, to receive the divine word, to be illumined by the divine light, to be cleansed by His purity, to receive it in the depths of our souls, receive it with all our life, so that people seeing what we have become may believe that the light has come into the world.

Let us pray to the Samaritan woman to teach us, to guide us, to bring us to Christ in the way in which she came, and to serve Him in the way in which she served Him, being the salvation of all who were around her. And may the blessing of God be upon you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, now and forever and world without end! Amen.

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 11:19-26, 29-30**

In those days, those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 4:5-42**

At that time, Jesus came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a

prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.” Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.” Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”

And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?” The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?” Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I *ever* did.” So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

## *A Word From the Holy Fathers*

*Prooimion:* Since You have by Your power changed water into wine, change into joy the affliction of the sins which oppress me, through the mediation of the Virgin, O Christ God, Who has in wisdom created all things.

God, honoring virginity, inhabited a virgin's womb, He was born of her without seed; He did not break the seals of her purity; He Himself has espoused the church,

virgin and without stain. The mother of Christ, then, is both virgin and bride. He is also a virgin; but the bridal couch is sacred, for He has made of the bridal chamber a heaven. Even though He was born of a virginal and holy womb, He does not feel disgust at the unions of wedlock, He who has in wisdom created all things.

Hence, He who had no mortal marriage, He who alone is holy and awesome, was present in the bridal chamber, as the divine John taught. He who experienced childbirth without marital union came to the marriage. He who alone is borne upon the wings of the Cherubim, He who exists in the bosom of the Father, inseparable from Him, reclined in a mortal home; He who knew no sin dined with sinners, in order that He might by His presence show that marriage is to be honored - He who has in wisdom created all things.

It is from this point that the great Paul reasonably took his point of departure and wrote, saying that marriage is honorable and that the marriage couch is pure; for virgins are radiant because of marriage, since they were born in marriage; indeed the mother of God, the holy Virgin, even though she remained a pure virgin after childbirth, still it was marriage which brought her forth; just so, the multitude of those who remain virgins for Christ were born in wedlock, which sanctified from the womb the One who has in wisdom created all things.

Now we propose to tell of a miracle, the one which He performed in Cana, He who first revealed to the Egyptians and to the Hebrews themselves the power of miracles; for at that time, the nature of the waters was miraculously changed to blood. He vented His anger on the Egyptians in ten plagues; He made the sea passable for the Hebrews; they traveled through it as though it were dry land. In the arid land He furnished for them water from a rock; and now at the marriage feast, again He transforms nature, He who has in wisdom created all things.

When Christ was present at the marriage feast, and the crowd of guests were faring sumptuously, the supply of wine failed them, and their joy was turned into distress; the bridegroom was upset; the cupbearers muttered unceasingly; there was this one sad display of penury, and there was no small clamor in the room. Recognizing it, the all-holy Mary came at once and said to her son: "They have no wine, but I beg you, my son, show that you can do all things, since You have in wisdom created all things."

We beg of you, holy Virgin, from what sort of miracles did you know how your son would be able to offer wine when He had not harvested the grapes and had never before worked wonders, as John, inspired of God wrote? Teach us how, when you had never gazed upon and never made trial of His miracles, how did you summon Him to this miracle? For the question now posed to us in this matter is

not simple, as to how you said to your son: "Give them wine," He who has in wisdom created all things.

Let us learn the word which the mother of the God of all said to us: "Listen," she said, "my friends, instruct yourselves and know the mystery; I have seen my son working miracles even before this miracle; John was not yet His disciple, John was not yet discipled to Christ at the time when He did those miracles. The first, the very beginning of His miracles, is this one which John beheld in Cana, as my son knew, He who has in wisdom created all things."

"Seeing that no one among men clearly has faith in things written in books by those who were not eyewitnesses of His grace, I shall omit these things; but I shall touch on more important matters of which I have knowledge. For I know that I did not know a husband, and I bore a son - beyond natural law and reason, and I know that I remained a virgin as I had been. Do you, O man, ask for a miracle greater than this birth? Gabriel came to me saying how this one would be born, He who has in wisdom created all things."

"After my conception, I myself saw Elizabeth call me Mother of God before the actual birth; after the birth, Simeon praised me in song; Anna greeted me with joy; the Magi from Persia hastened to the manger, for a heavenly star proclaimed the birth in advance; shepherds with angels heralded joy, and creation rejoiced with them. What would I be able to ask for greater than these miracles? Indeed from them I have faith that it is my son Who has in wisdom created all things."

But Christ, seeing His mother saying, "Grant me this request," at once said to her: "What do you wish, woman, my hour has not come." Certain men made use of this saying as a pretext for impiety; they said that Christ submitted to necessity, they said that He was a slave to periods of time; but they do not understand the meaning of His phrase. However, the mouth of the impious who practice evil has been stopped, since straightway He performed the miracle, He who has in wisdom created all things.

"Now answer, my child, said the all-holy mother of Christ, "Since you control with measurement the periods of time, how, my son and Lord, do You await a time? Since you have regulated the division of the seasons, how do You await a season? Since you are the creator of the visible and the invisible, and you, as master, regulate day and night the ceaseless revolutions, as You will them – and have defined the years in beautifully ordered cycles - How, then, do You await a time for the miracle which I ask of You, as You have in wisdom created all things?"

"I knew before you told me, revered Virgin, that the wine was just beginning to give out for them," the Ineffable and Merciful straightway answered His holy mother. "I know all the concerns of your heart which you set in motion in this

matter; for within yourself you reasoned as follows: 'Necessity now summons my Son to a miracle, and He puts it off under the pretext of "the time".' Holy mother, learn now the meaning of the delay, for when you know it, I shall grant you this favor, I, who have in wisdom created all things."

"Lift up your heart at these words, and know, chaste one, what I am saying. At the time when I brought forward heaven and earth and all things from a state of nonexistence, I would have been quite capable at that time to arrange in order at once all that I had produced; but I introduced a certain well-regulated order. Creation was accomplished in six days - not that I did not have the power, but in order that the chorus of angels, seeing what I did, each deed in turn, would deify me, singing a hymn: 'Glory to You, Powerful One, who has in wisdom created all things'."

"Listen carefully, holy one, how I was able in another way to ransom the fallen and not take on the form of a poor slave; however, I did allow being conceived and born as a man, and taking milk at your breasts, O Virgin, and everything in me progressed in order; for as far as I am concerned nothing is without order. And so now I am willing to accomplish the miracle in a well-regulated order, a thing which I consent to do for the salvation of man, I, who have in wisdom created all things."

"Mark what I say, holy one; for at this time I was willing first to announce to the Israelites and to teach them the hope of faith, in order that in the presence of miracles they might learn thoroughly who has sent Me and that they might know with certainty the glory of My Father, and His will, for He desires that in every way I be glorified along with Him by all men. For what He who engendered me has done, these things I also do, since I am consubstantial with Him and His Spirit, I, who have in wisdom created all things.

"For if they had understood all these things at the time when they saw the awesome miracles, they would understand that I am God from before time, even though I have become man. But now, contrary to order, before the teaching, you have asked for miracles; and it is for this reason that I delayed a short time in answer to you: if I was waiting for the time to perform miracles, it was for this reason alone. But since it is necessary that parents be honored by their children, I shall pay observance to you, mother, for I am able to do all things, I, who have in wisdom created all things."

"Quickly, then, tell the members of the household that they are to serve under my directions, and they will thereafter be the witnesses of a miracle for themselves and for others. For I do not now wish Peter to serve me, nor yet John, nor Andrew, nor any one of my disciples, so that no suspicion of lack of accomplishment come to

men because of them. But now I want these servants to assist me so that they themselves may be witnesses that I can do all things, I, who have in wisdom created all things."

Yielding to these words, the mother of Christ at once spoke out with earnestness to the servants of the wedding feast: "Whatever my Son says to you, do it." There were at the time six jars in the house, as the Gospel says, then Christ ordered the servants: "Fill up the jars with water," and straightway the work was done; they filled up all the jars with fresh water, and they stood there to know what He wished to do about it, He who has in wisdom created all things.

Now I shall praise the jars, telling how they were shown to be full of wine, how suddenly and quickly the change took place. Then the Master spoke out clearly to the servants, as it is written: "Draw the wine which was not harvested, and after that, offer drink to the guests; replenish the dry cups; let all the crowd and the bridegroom himself enjoy it for I have in marvelous fashion given pleasure to all, I who have in wisdom created all things."

When Christ, as a sign of His power, clearly changed the water into wine, all the crowd rejoiced, for they considered the taste marvelous. Now we all partake at the banquet in the church, for Christ's blood is changed into wine and we drink it with holy joy, praising the great bridegroom, for He is the true bridegroom, the Son of Mary, the Word before all time who took the form of a servant, He who has in wisdom created all things.

O Holy Savior of all, dwelling on high, who sees all, guard the wine in us, keep it unadulterated. Drive off from here all who are of ill repute, the villains who dilute Your holy wine with water. The ones who always water down Your dogma are condemned to hell fire. But deliver us, O sinless One from the lamentations of Your judgment, O Merciful God, by the prayers of the holy Virgin and Mother of God, since You have in wisdom created all things.

– St. Romanos the Melodist, *Kontakion 7 - On the Marriage at Cana*

## **Also Commemorated Today: Apostles Carpus and Alphaeus of the Seventy**

Saint Carpus was one of the Seventy Apostles chosen and sent forth to preach by Christ (Luke 10:1). He was a disciple and companion of the holy Apostle Paul. In the 2nd Epistle to Timothy, the apostle mentions the name Carpus, at the house of whom in Troias he left a phelon and books (2 Tim. 4: 13). Knowing Carpus as a man of virtue and possessing a mind of lofty purity, the Apostle Paul made him bishop of Thracian Bereia. St. Carpus died at Bereia in peace. The Holy Apostle

Alphaeus of the Seventy came from the Galilean city of Capernaum and was the father of the Apostles James and Matthew. He died in peace. According to Tradition, the Holy Martyrs Abercius and Helen were other children of the holy Apostle Alphaeus. For confessing faith in Christ, Saint Abercius was tied naked to a beehive and died from the bees' sting, and Saint Helen was pelted with stones.  
*(adapted from oca.org and holytrinityorthodox.com)*

## June Anniversaries and Birthdays



### Anniversaries:

Steve & Nancy Hall 4<sup>th</sup>

Larry & Gail Hartenstein 6<sup>th</sup>

Bernie & Carol Vallandingham 8<sup>th</sup>

Michael & Phyllis Kopan 9<sup>th</sup>

### Birthdays:

Rebecca Vallandingham 6<sup>th</sup>

Chris Nicolaus 25<sup>th</sup>

Marlena Chopic 28<sup>th</sup>

Ron Wright 30<sup>th</sup>



### Social Team for June 2

Team 5 is up next week – Vallandingham, Maher, McNeil, Osborne. Thank you!

### Follow Our Diocese On-Line

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

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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 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.)