

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

Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

June 23, 2019 – 1st Sunday After Pentecost (All Saints)

By Met. Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh

The Mother of God and the Saints whose memory we keep today, those who are known to us because God has revealed them and because they have been understood and recognized, either by their contemporaries, or years, at times - centuries later, all the Saints are the response of the earth to the love of God. And this response is given by them not only in their own name but in the name of all creation and in our names also; because each of us has the privilege to be called by one name, our Christian name, the name of one of those Saints. And the Saints whose names are ours stand before God and pray that their name should not be made unworthy in the eyes of the Lord. The Saints of God embrace the whole of Creation in their love, in their intercession, in their prayer, in their real, continuous presence. How wonderful it is that we belong to this vast family of men, of women, of children who have understood what the Lord meant when He came, and lived, taught and died for us! They responded with their own heart, they understood with all their mind, and they accepted His message with all their determination, to overcome in themselves all that has been the cause of the crucifixion; because if only one person on earth had strayed, fallen away from



God, Christ would have come to save at the cost of His life. This is His own testimony to a Saint of the early centuries who had been praying that the sinners should be confounded; and Christ appeared to him, and said, "Never pray that way! If one sinner have existed, I would have died for him."

The Saints are people who responded to love by love, people who realized that if someone can die for them, their only response of gratitude is to become such that he should not have died in vain. To take up our cross means exactly this: to turn away from all those things which are Christ's death and crucifixion, from all those things which surrounded Christ with hatred and lack of understanding. We are all free to do this, more than those who lived in His time because they could be mistaken in Him in those days; but in our days, after two thousand years, when we can read the Gospels, and see emerging from the story the stature, the Person of Christ, when we have got millions of witnesses that tell us that He truly gave His life for us, and that the only response we can give is to give our lives for one another in His name - how can't we respond?

Let us therefore, on this day make a new resolve: to listen in the way in which they listened, with all their heart, all their mind, all their will, all their self to see what happened, to hear what He said, to respond by gratitude and by determination. And then, if we offer this little to God - our gratitude and our good will - the strength, the power for us also to grow into the stature which God has willed, dreamt for us, - the power will be of God; as He had said, "My strength deploys itself in weakness, My grace suffices..." And Paul, who knew that, added, in another passage, "All things are possible unto us in the power of Christ Who sustains us..."

Let us make a new start, so that the Saints whose names we wear should rejoice in us, so that the Mother of God Who gave Her Son unto death that we may respond, that we may understand, that we may be saved should rejoice, and that Christ should see that it is not in vain that He lived, taught, and died. Let us be His glory, a light; it may be a small light, just like a small candle, it may be a bright light as one of the great Saints - but let us be a light that lights the world and makes it less dark! Let us be joy so that others may learn to rejoice in the Lord. Amen!

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-12:2

Brethren, all the saints through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were

sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in dens and caves* of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30

The Lord said to his disciples, "whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Amen I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

He is not just everywhere, but also above all, not just in every age and time, but before them all. And, according to the promise, the Holy Spirit will not just be with us until the end of the age, but rather will stay with those who are worthy in the age to come, making them immortal and filling their bodies as well with eternal glory, as the Lord indicated by telling His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

– St. Gregory Palamas



Commemorated Today: Martyr Agrippina of Rome

The Holy Martyr Agrippina, was by birth a Roman. She did not wish to enter into marriage, and totally dedicated her life to God. During the time of persecution against Christians under the emperor Valerian (253-259) the saint went before the court and bravely confessed her faith in Christ, for which she was given over to torture. They beat the holy virgin with sticks so severely that her bones broke. Afterwards they put Saint Agrippina in chains, but an angel freed her from her bonds. The holy confessor died from the tortures she endured. The Christians Bassa, Paula and Agathonike secretly took the body of the holy martyr and transported it to Sicily, where many miracles were worked at her grave. In the eleventh century the relics of the holy Martyr Agrippina were transferred to Constantinople. *(from oca.org)*

FAST OF THE HOLY APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL (JUNE 24-28)

The Podvig of the Apostles' Fast is less strict than during Great Lent: We abstain from eating meat and dairy products throughout the Fast. The Church *ustav* also provides that, on **Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays** during the Apostles' Fast, we **abstain from consuming fish, wine and oil**; on the other days of the week, **Tuesday and Thursday, we abstain from eating fish**. Eating **fish is permitted on the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (24 June)**. The monastic originators (hence the extension of strict fasting to Mondays) of these rules also prescribed 100 prostrations on weekdays during the Fast.

Teachings of St. Seraphim of Sarov on Fasting

Fasting consists not just of eating rarely, but also of eating little. And not just in eating only one meal, but in not eating much. Foolish is the faster who waits for a specific time [to eat a meal], but then at the time of the meal is completely consumed, body and mind, with insatiable eating.

In proportion to how the body of the faster becomes thin and light, so the spiritual life attains perfection and reveals itself in wonderful ways. Then the soul acts as if in an incorporeal body. Carnal feelings are shut off, and the spirit, released from the world, ascends to heaven and completely immerses itself in contemplation of the spiritual world.

Every day one should partake of just enough food to permit the body, being fortified, to be a friend and helper to the soul in performing the virtues. Otherwise, with the body exhausted, the soul may also weaken. *(adapted from stjohndc.org)*

Social Team for June 30

Team 2 is up next week – Cooper, Dewey, Hanbury, Kish. Thank you!

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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, Presbyteria 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. Nectaros and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)