

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

(301) 638-5035 Church
4419 Leonardtown Road
Waldorf, MD 20601

Rev. Father Joseph Edgington, Pastor
(703) 532-8017

fredgington@gmail.com

www.apostlethomas.org

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.

September 1, 2019 – 11th Sunday After Pentecost

Church New Year (Indiction) | St. Simeon the Stylite

On this day, when the Jews celebrated the new summer, the Savior, came to Nazareth where He was brought up and entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day as was His custom, and read these words of the Prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed Me ... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4, 18:19). On the first of September 312 the Emperor Constantine the Great won a victory over Maxentius. After this Christians were granted complete freedom to confess their faith. In commemoration of these two events the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council decided to begin the New Year on the first of September. In its hymns for this day the Holy Church prays "Creator and Fashioner of all things visible and invisible" "bless the crown of the year," "grant fruitful seasons and rains from heaven for those on earth," "bless our comings and goings, direct the works of our hands and grant us forgiveness of offences," "grant peace to Your churches," "overthrow heresies," "protect our cities unbesieged, make glad our faithful Sovereigns by Your power, giving them victories against enemies." (*from Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., by S. V. Bulgakov (Trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris)*)



Saint Simeon the Stylite was born in the Cappadocian village of Sisan of Christian parents, Sisotian and Martha. At thirteen years of age he began to tend his father's flock of sheep. He devoted himself attentively and with love to this, his first obedience.

Once, after he heard the Beatitudes in church, he was struck by their profundity. Not trusting to his own immature judgment, he turned therefore with his questions to an experienced Elder. The Elder readily explained to the boy the meaning of what he had heard. The seed fell on good soil, and it strengthened his resolve to serve God.

When Simeon was eighteen, he received monastic tonsure and devoted himself to feats of the strictest abstinence and unceasing prayer. His zeal, beyond the strength of the other monastic brethren, so alarmed the igumen that he told Simeon that to either moderate his ascetic deeds or leave the monastery.

Saint Simeon then withdrew from the monastery and lived in an empty well in the nearby mountains, where he was able to carry out his austere struggles unhindered. After some time, angels appeared in a dream to the igumen, who commanded him to bring back Simeon to the monastery.

The monk, however, did not long remain at the monastery. After a short while he settled into a stony cave, situated not far from the village of Galanissa, and he dwelt there for three years, all the while perfecting himself in monastic feats. Once, he decided to spend the entire forty days of Great Lent without food or drink. With the help of God, the monk endured this strict fast. From that time he abstained from food completely during the entire period of the Great Lent, even from bread and water. For twenty days he prayed while standing, and for twenty days while sitting, so as not to permit the corporeal powers to relax.

A whole crowd of people began to throng to the place of his efforts, wanting to receive healing from sickness and to hear a word of Christian edification. Shunning worldly glory and striving again to find his lost solitude, the monk chose a previously unknown mode of asceticism. He went up a pillar six to eight feet high, and settled upon it in a little cell, devoting himself to intense prayer and fasting.

Reports of Saint Simeon reached the highest church hierarchy and the imperial court. Patriarch Domninos II (441-448) of Antioch visited the monk, celebrated Divine Liturgy on the pillar and communed the ascetic with the Holy Mysteries.

Elders living in the desert heard about Saint Simeon, who had chosen a new and strange form of ascetic striving. Wanting to test the new ascetic and determine whether his extreme ascetic feats were pleasing to God, they sent messengers to

him, who in the name of these desert fathers were to bid Saint Simeon to come down from the pillar.

In the case of disobedience they were to forcibly drag him to the ground. But if he was willing to submit, they were to leave him on his pillar. Saint Simeon displayed complete obedience and deep Christian humility. The monks told him to stay where he was, asking God to be his helper.

Saint Simeon endured many temptations, and he invariably gained the victory over them. He relied not on his own weak powers, but on the Lord Himself, Who always came to help him. The monk gradually increased the height of the pillar on which he stood. His final pillar was 80 feet in height. Around him a double wall was raised, which hindered the unruly crowd of people from coming too close and disturbing his prayerful concentration.

Women, in general, were not permitted beyond the wall. The saint did not make an exception even for his own mother, who after long and unsuccessful searches finally succeeded in finding her lost son. He would not see her, saying, "If we are worthy, we shall see one another in the life to come." Saint Martha submitted to this, remaining at the foot of the pillar in silence and prayer, where she finally died. Saint Simeon asked that her coffin be brought to him. He reverently bid farewell to his dead mother, and a joyful smile appeared on her face.

Saint Simeon spent 80 years in arduous monastic feats, 47 years of which he stood upon the pillar. God granted him to accomplish in such unusual conditions an indeed apostolic service. Many pagans accepted Baptism, struck by the moral staunchness and bodily strength which the Lord bestowed upon His servant.

The first one to learn of the death of the saint was his close disciple Anthony. Concerned that his teacher had not appeared to the people for three days, he went up on the pillar and found the dead body stooped over at prayer. Patriarch Martyrius of Antioch performed the funeral before a huge throng of clergy and people. They buried him near his pillar. At the place of his ascetic deeds, Anthony established a monastery, upon which rested the special blessing of Saint Simeon. We pray to Saint Simeon for the return to the Church of those who have forsaken Her, or have been separated from Her. (*from oca.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 2:1-7

My son Timothy, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For *there is* one God and one

Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 4:16-22

At that time, Jesus came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: “The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to *the* poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to *the* captives and recovery of sight to *the* blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Joshua the son of Nun obeyed the Lord in everything to the end, not turning either to the right or to the left of the Lord's commandments. He was surrounded by great horrors and fears while leading the people through an unknown land and through thick ranks of enemies, but he was neither afraid nor dismayed. He considered himself the weapon of God, and knew that his battles were God's battles. As a faithful soldier obeys the commands of his commander, so Joshua listened for and hearkened to the will of the Living God. He did not ascribe any good thing, any power, any merit to himself, but he ascribed all to God and only to God. He did not depend in the least on his own army, his own weapons and his own wisdom, but he depended on God and only on God, the Almighty and All-wise.

See, brethren, with what sort of men God walks. Oh, if only Christian rulers and commanders could see this and learn from God's servant Joshua how to serve God! Oh, if they would understand, once and for all, that the people are best served when God is served; and that the people cannot be served if God is not served!

The Lord God fulfilled His promise and was with Joshua the son of Nun to the end of his labors and life. And that the Lord was with him is shown by the great and awesome miracles that He manifested through His faithful servant. God divided the river Jordan so that the people crossed over on dry land without a bridge; God made the walls of Jericho fall at the sound of the trumpet; God delivered powerful

enemies into the hands of the Israelites; God caused the sun to stand still over Gibeon and the moon to stand still over the valley of Ajalon. Truly, never and nowhere did God forsake His servant Joshua, for Joshua did not leave unfulfilled a single commandment of God.

A witness of the Living God and a type of the Savior of the world, when he was old and stricken in years, he instructed his people as God had taught him in the beginning: "Turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left ... but cleave unto the Lord your God" (Joshua 23:6, 8).

O Lord Jesus, Son of God, Who showed most glorious wonders through Joshua, the son of Nun, Thy faithful servant. Strengthen and encourage us that we not turn away from Thee, either to the right or to the left, for the sake of Thy glory and our salvation. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen. – St. Nikolai Velimirovich

Also Commemorated Today: Righteous Joshua the Son of Nun (Navi)

Saint Joshua (Jesus), the son of Navi, was leader of the Israelites after the death of the Prophet Moses. He was born in Egypt around 1654 B.C. and succeeded Moses when he was eighty- five. He ruled the Israelites for twenty-five years.

Joshua conquered the Promised Land, and led the Hebrew nation into it. The Lord worked a great miracle through Joshua. He stopped the Jordan from flowing, allowing the Israelites to cross over on foot as if on dry land (Joshua 3). Saint Michael, the Leader of the Heavenly Hosts, appeared to Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15). The walls of Jericho fell down by themselves after the Ark of the Covenant was carried around the city for seven days (Joshua 6:20). Finally, during a battle with the enemy, Joshua, by God's will, halted the motion of the sun (Joshua 10:13) and prolonged the day until victory was won.

After the end of the war, Joshua divided the Promised Land among the Twelve Tribes of Israel. He died at 110 years of age (1544 B.C.), commanding the nation to preserve the Law of Moses. All these events are recounted in the Book of Joshua, the sixth book of the Old Testament. (*from oca.org*)

The Month of September in the Orthodox Church

by John Sanidopoulos

September marks the beginning of the ecclesiastical and liturgical year in the Eastern Orthodox Church. This is due to the Roman dating of the Indiction. An indiction is any of the years in a 15-year cycle used to date documents in Roman times. Indictions originally referred to the periodic reassessment for an agricultural or land tax in late third-century Roman Egypt.... The reason for beginning the year at that time was that the harvest would be in, and so it was an appropriate moment to calculate the taxes that should be paid.

The indiction was first used to date documents unrelated to tax collection in the mid-fourth century. By the late fourth century it was being used to date documents throughout the Mediterranean. In the Eastern Roman Empire outside of Egypt, the first day of its year was September 23, the birthday of Augustus. During the last half of the fifth century, probably 462 AD, this shifted to September 1, where it remained throughout the rest of the Roman Empire until its fall in 1453. In 537 AD, Justinian decreed that all dates must include the indiction via Novella 47, which eventually caused the Roman year to begin on September 1. But in the western Mediterranean, its first day was September 24 according to Bede, or the following December 25 or January 1, called the papal indiction.

With the close association between the Church and the State in the Eastern Roman Empire, the Church also adopted September 1 as the beginning of its ecclesiastical and liturgical year, having gathered the spiritual harvest of the previous ecclesiastical year. And in the month of September the beginning of the entire cycle of major fixed feast days begins, specifically on September 23rd with the Conception of John the Baptist. Since the Conception of John the Baptist took place during the Jewish Day of Atonement, as indicated in the Gospel of Luke, we know that Zechariah received the revelation from the angel Gabriel that his wife Elizabeth would conceive and give birth to John the Baptist around the time of September 23. When you count nine months, we are brought to the Birth of John the Baptist on June 24th (with a day added to show that he was not the Lord Jesus Christ, whose perfection alone is indicated by having a perfect nine month period in the womb). Since the Gospel of Luke indicates that the Virgin Mary visited Elizabeth after she received the Annunciation by the angel Gabriel of the conception of Christ, when Elizabeth was already six months pregnant, we know that the Annunciation took place some time around March 25th. And when you calculate exactly nine months of pregnancy for the Virgin Mary, we know that the Birth of Christ took place on December 25th. Thus the major fixed feast days of the Church are first indicated to us by the Conception of John the Baptist on September 23.

We begin the ecclesiastical year by setting up on a pedestal, literally, the ultimate model of dedication to Christ - Saint Simeon the Stylite. When we read the life of Saint Simeon on September 1st, we see a man who left everything to devote his entire life to being pleasing to the Lord, to the point that when great crowds came to visit him in the remote wilderness, his only option was to mount a tall column, in order to flee the praises of the people which he saw as a danger for himself falling into the sin of pride. He did not do this because he disdained people, but did everything to preserve virtue and purity for the Lord, in order to make himself a worthy temple of the Holy Spirit, to the point that he suffered much for it, but the

suffering was greatly rewarded. His humble feat of mounting the column to flee every form of vice became known throughout the world, to the point that the Roman emperor even sought his counsel. It was a feat that proclaimed the gospel like no other, and showed by example that the love of God is shown by keeping His commandments, no matter what the cost.

We also begin the ecclesiastical year on September 1 by commemorating a scene from the Gospel of Luke in the fourth chapter, when Jesus entered a synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, after having been tempted forty days in the wilderness by the devil, and He read before the Jews the prophecy of Isaiah, which described the mission of the Messiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." This event sparked the entire ministry of the Lord on earth, a ministry which we will follow over the course of the liturgical year. And in our prayers this day, we also pray that it will likewise be "an acceptable year of the Lord."

The next major event commemorated in the month of September is the Birth of the Mother of God on September 8th. The reason this feast is celebrated on September 8th is due to the fact that the liturgical year is also a cycle of feasts honoring the life of the Virgin Mary, who played a great and pivotal role in our salvation. For this reason, the first major feast to be celebrated in the new ecclesiastical year is the Birth of the Mother of God, which preceded the events of the New Testament, while the last major feast of the ecclesiastical year is her Dormition on August 15th, which came after the events of the New Testament. The reason we do not celebrate the Conception of Saint Anna in September is because this feast was established by the Church a few centuries later, therefore when you calculate back nine months, you come to December 9th, which is the feast of the Conception of Saint Anna (also not a perfect nine month period, like John the Baptist, and a liturgical indictment on the concept of an Immaculate Conception).

The first established liturgical fast of the year falls on September 14th for the Exaltation of the Honorable and Life-Giving Cross. In the month of September, we also lift up the Cross before the congregations while keeping a strict fast, to remind us that we also must bear our crosses in order to indeed make each year an "acceptable year of the Lord." Exalting the Cross before all in the first liturgical month of the year, we are reminded what our Lord did for our salvation, and we are to work towards this salvation throughout the year by being focused on the rich meaning of the Cross of our Lord. With the Conception of John the Baptist on September 23rd, the Birth of the Mother of God on September 8th, the first proclamation of Christ that He was the Messiah to the Jews on September 1st, and

the Exaltation of the Honorable Cross on September 14th, we observe that September is a month in which we commemorate events that indicate a beginning of our salvation. We also are therefore called in September to renew our efforts towards salvation, after evaluation of our failures of the previous year. To inspire us and inflame our zeal for this new effort, the Church presents us with the lives of the saints each and every day, men and women like you and me who fought the good fight to the end. September is thus a month of our own personal renewal.

Scripture in the Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy is replete with quotations and allusions to Scripture. There is always at least one Gospel (from one of the four Gospels) and Epistle (from The Acts of the Apostles, an epistle of St. Paul, or a catholic epistle) reading. The following are taken from the Psalms: the first, second, and third (when sung) antiphons, the prokeimenon verse and response, the Alleluia verses, and the communion hymn (except for those during the Paschal season referring explicitly to the Eucharist).

Here are some other references found throughout the service: **Opening Doxology** [“Blessed is the Kingdom...”] Mark 11:10; Luke 22:29-30, Matthew 28:19; Revelation 7:12. **The Great Litany** – Philippians 4:6-7; Psalm 51:1; Luke 18:13; John 14:27; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Hebrews 13:7; Psalm 109:26; Luke 1:42. **The Hymn to Christ Incarnate** – [“Only-begotten Son...,”] John 1:1, 3:16, 17:5, 19:18; Luke 1:35; Hebrews 2:14; Matthew 8:25. **The Beatitudes:** Matthew: 5:3-12. **The Little Entrance** – [“Come let us worship...,”] Psalm 95:1-6; Revelation 7:11-12. **The Trisagion** – [“Holy God, Holy Mighty...,”] Isaiah 6:1-5; Revelation 8:8. **The Cherubic Hymn** – [“We who mystically...,”] Colossians 3:12; Psalm 24; Revelation 19:1-6. **The Great Entrance** – Psalm 43:4; Matthew 5: 23-24; Hebrews 5:1. **The Peace** – [“Peace be unto all...,”] John 20:9,21,26; 1 John 4:7; 1 Peter 3:8; Philippians 2:2. **The Eucharistic Canon** – [“Let us stand aright”] Leviticus 3:1; Hebrews 13:14-15; Hosea 6:6; Psalm 49:19; Matthew 9:13; Corinthians 13:14; 2 Timothy 4:22; Lamentations 3:41. **The Eucharistic Prayer** [“Holy, Holy, Holy...” through the Consecration] – Isaiah 6:3; Mark 11:10; Matthew 21:9; Corinthians 11:23-24; Matthew 26:26-28; John 6:51; Luke 22:20; Mark 14: 23-24; Corinthians 29: 14, 16; Roman: 21:1. **Hymn to the Theotokos** [“You are truly deserving...,”] – Luke 1:28, 42, 48. **The Concluding Eucharistic Prayers** – 2 Maccabees 12:44-45; 1 Timothy 2:2; 2 Timothy 2:15; Romans 15:6; Titus 2:13; Revelation 22:21. **The Litany before the Lord’s Prayer** – Ephesians 5:2; Philippians: 4:18; 1 Peter 3:15; Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 2:1. **The Lord’s Prayer** – Matthew 6:9-13; **The Elevation of the Holy Gifts** – [“Holy things are for the Holy.”] Leviticus 11:44; Philippians 2:10-11. **The Eucharist** – 1 Corinthians 11:27-29; Matthew 16:16; 1 Timothy 1:15; Mark 14:45;

Luke 23:42- 43; Isaiah 6:7; 1 Timothy 1:14; James 4:8; Psalm 118:26-27; Psalm 34:8; 1 Peter 1:19; John 6: 32-35, 48-58; Psalm 116:13; Psalm 28:0. **Hymns after Holy Communion** – [“We have received the true Light..”]. John 1:9; Revelation 3:14; Psalm 71:8; 1 Chronicles 16:9; Ephesians 3:9. **Litany after Communion** – Judges 18:6; Colossians 3:17; Mark 11:9. **Ambon Prayer** – [“O Lord, who blesses those who...”]. Genesis 12:3; Psalm 28:9, Psalm 26:8; Psalm 138:81, 1 Timothy 2:2; James 1:17. **“Blessed be the name of the Lord....”** Psalm 113:2. **“The blessing of the Lord...”**. Psalm 129:8; 2 Corinthians 13:14. **The Dismissal** – 1 Timothy 1:1. *(adapted from a list compiled by V. Rev. John J. Matusiak St. Joseph Russian Orthodox Church, OCA, Wheaton, IL)*

August Treasurer's Report

Glory to Jesus Christ! For August, we had expenses of \$10,100 and income of \$7,400. We were able to meet all our obligations and give \$1,450 to charitable causes. Thank you for your generous support of the Church! In Christ, Josh Moore, Treasurer

Social Team for September 8

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

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, Dn. Steve Hall, 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.)