

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

(301) 638-5035 Church

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Waldorf, MD 20601

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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

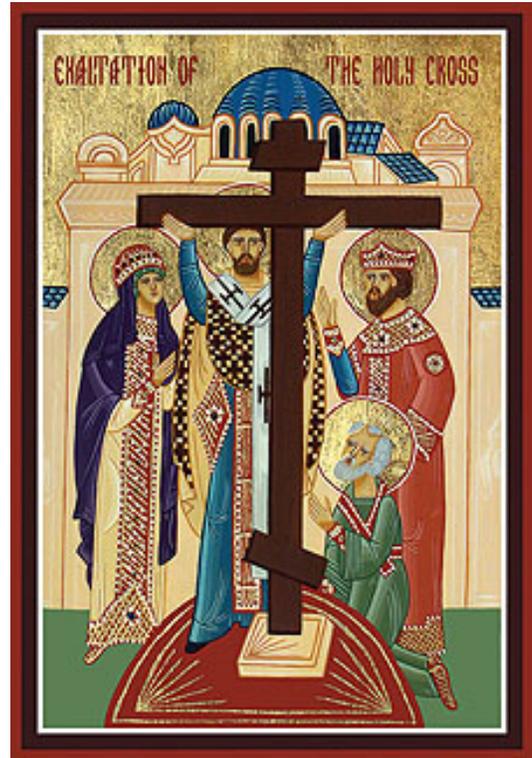
Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM,

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.



September 15, 2019 – 13th Sunday After Pentecost | Saint Nicetas the Goth | Sunday After the Elevation of the Cross

From September 15 until the Leavetaking (September 21), we sing “O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. O son of God crucified in the flesh, save us who sing to You: Alleluia” at weekday Liturgies following the Little Entrance. (oca.org)

Saint Niketas (or Nicetas) was a Goth and soldier who lived on the eastern side of the Danube River within the boundaries of present-day Romania. Bishop Theophilus, the well-known enlightener of the Goths and a participant in the First Ecumenical Synod in 325, converted him to Christianity and baptized him in his youth. Niketas was a devout Orthodox Christian from his youth, and not an Arian as many suppose, for Arianism spread among the Goths through the successor of Theophilus, the bishop Urphilus. Niketas was instructed in the Orthodox faith by Bishop Urphilus (311-383). Urphilus was a native of Cappadocia, who had been captured by the Goths. He was on an embassy to Constantinople when Eusebius of Nicomedia consecrated him bishop of the Goths (341). Besides translating the Scriptures into the Gothic language, he worked hard for the conversion of the Germanic peoples but, since he belonged to the "homoiousian" party of moderate

Arians, he bore some responsibility for the converted Goths siding with the heretics. St. Niketas was his disciple when Urphilus was still Orthodox, and he continued the work of spreading the faith among the Goths.

At that time, intense warfare arose among the Goths. At the head of one hostile side stood Prince Athanarichus, a vehement pagan and a hater of Christians. At the head of the other stood Frigentus, who was a Christian. In the bloody clash of the armies, Athanarichus was victorious, and Frigentus was forced to flee to Constantinople. But soon Frigentus returned to his homeland, reinforced by the fresh troops afforded him by the Emperor Valens (364-378). Frigentus commanded that the image of the Holy Cross be made on the standards of his army, as once did Emperor Constantine the Great. A second bloody battle took place, and this time Frigentus was victorious. But Athanarichus, with a small group of adherents, was saved by flight.

After Frigentus' victory, favorable times ensued for Christianity. Bishop Theophilus' successor, Bishop Urphilus (311-383), created the Gothic alphabet and translated many spiritual books from Greek into Gothic, including the Holy Scriptures. Saint Niketas, by his preaching and his pious life, greatly assisted the confirmation of the Christian faith among the Goths and converted many. A close friend of St. Paulinus of Nola, Niketas became bishop of Remesiana in Dacia (modern Romania and Yugoslavia) and was noted for his successful missionary activities, especially among the Bessi, a race of marauders, which Paulinus commemorates in a poem.

Niketas wrote several dissertations on Faith, the Creed, the Trinity, liturgical singing, and is believed by some scholars to be the author of *Te Deum*. We know little of Niketas himself beyond the fact that on at least two occasions, he made his way from a country which Paulinus regarded as a wild region of snow and ice to visit his friend at Nola in Campania. Saint Jerome also speaks very appreciatively of his work in converting the people of Dacia.

After a few years, Athanarichus returned to his homeland with a numerous army, and intense warfare again started up among the Goths. Having overcome Frigentus, Athanarichus raised up a cruel persecution against the Christians. Niketas, having become a spiritual leader of the Christian Goths, denounced Athanarichus for godlessness and cruelty. He called on the faithful to be firm and not to fear martyrdom. Soon Niketas was seized and given over to cruel tortures. His mind was unceasingly raised up to God, and on his breast under his robe he bore an icon of the all pure Theotokos with the Pre-eternal Christ Child standing and holding the Cross in His hands. Niketas carried this icon because the Holy Theotokos had appeared to him and comforted him. They threw him into a fire,

and he died on September 15, 372. His body remained unharmed by the fire and was illumined by a miraculous light. By night, a friend of the Martyr, a Christian named Marianus, retrieved Saint Niketas' body from the land of the Goths (Wallachia and Bessarabia) to the town of Mopsuestia where he buried it. Afterwards, it was transferred to Constantinople where a church was built in his honor. Part of the relics of the Great Martyr Niketas was later transferred to the Monastery of Vysokie Dechani in Serbia where his incorrupt hand works many miracles. We pray to Saint Niketas for the preservation of children from birth defects.

St. Dimitri of Rostov writes concerning Saint Niketas: "Yesterday we celebrated the Elevation of the Holy Cross, which is the unconquerable emblem of victory; today, we venerate Saint Niketas, whose name means 'one who conquers'. After the token of victory, the honorable and life-giving Cross of the Lord, had been exalted over the whole world, the namesake of victory, Saint Niketas, marched beneath the sacred emblem. This good soldier of Jesus Christ took his stand beneath the Cross as if it were a banner, that he might war against the enemies of the holy Cross, glorifying Him Who was crucified upon it. One soldier fights for the sake of an earthly king, another to protect himself to win empty glory, yet another to acquire fleeting riches; but Saint Niketas fought only for his only Lord, Jesus Christ, Who is the King of all creation, our glory and never-failing treasure." *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 2:16-20

Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Mark 8:34-38, 9:1

The Lord said, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this

adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

If you indifferently admit the thought of lust, it strikes root in you by its suggestions, and enthralls your mind, and drags you down into a pit of evils. But perhaps you say, I am a believer, and lust does not gain the ascendant over me, even if I think upon it frequently? Do you not know that a root breaks even a rock by long persistence? Do not admit the seed, since it will rend your faith asunder: tear out the evil by the root before it blossoms, lest from being careless at the beginning you have afterwards to seek for axes and fire. – St. Cyril of Jerusalem

* * *

If you are truly interested in the welfare of your children, why do you not watch as strictly, but once a week, how they attend to their lessons in the study of the Law of God, as you do in some home-work, which the children seemed to be forced to have prepared within the next twelve hours for their public school? You must obey God, above the public and all other masters, or lose your souls for the responsibility which rests upon you for the present and future welfare of your children.

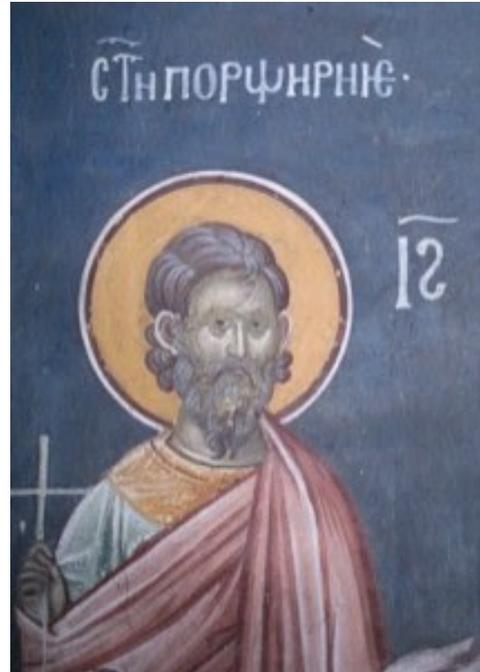
Where there is intellect, there always will be knowledge. Still, you must educate the child. Teach the boy and girl geography and history; but if you do not train the child's will, in order not only to please you, its parents, but to bend before the holy will of Him, who is the only just rewarder of good and evil, then you are a failure as a Christian. Where there is no discipline, there is no constancy.

– St. Sebastian Dabovich, "On the Education of Children"

Also Commemorated Today: St. Porphyrios the Actor

Saint Porphyrios was an actor in the days of Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363). In the course of his birthday celebration, the Emperor persuaded Porphyrios to mimic and make fun of the Christian Mysteries, specifically Holy Baptism. Hence, Porphyrios entered into a font with water, and cried out: "The servant of God Porphyrios is baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." And having immersed himself into the water, he got out and put on the white robe of the newly-illumined, crying out: "Now I am a Christian."

Although everyone at first thought he said this in jest, his act and confession caused a change to come over Porphyrios, for he was touched by the grace of God, and came to truly believe in Christ, whose name he boldly confessed before the Emperor and all the spectators. For this reason Porphyrios was ordered to be beheaded, thus sealing his bold confession with his blood, and completing his act. This Saint Porphyrios may be the same person as Saint Porphyrios the Actor who was converted in the same way under Emperor Aurelian (c. 270) and is celebrated on November 4th. However, seeing that there are two different dates given and two different iambic verses composed, they are to remain distinguished as two different persons.



A Reflection of St. Nikolai Velimirovich

"God is not mocked" (Galatians 6:7). God either punishes the mockers in order to correct them or He converts them into that which they had mocked. Initially, St. Porphyrios was famous among the pagans as a mocker of Christianity. On one occasion, he was mocking the Christian Mystery of Baptism before Emperor Julian the Apostate and his retinue. But something totally unexpected happened. When Porphyrios immersed himself in the water and pronounced the words of baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, his spirit was suddenly changed, and he became a true Christian. Instead of mocking the Christian Faith, he began to denounce the emperor for his impure idolatry, for which he was tortured and beheaded.

A similar thing happened to the comedian Gennesus, probably in Diocletian's time. This Gennesus parodied the Christian Divine Liturgy before a crowd of pagans, amusing them with his mockeries and witticisms. Suddenly, he changed, and cried out before the people: "I believe, and I desire to be baptized." At first, the spectators thought his words were a part of his farce, but he repeated his statement of faith in Christ. When Gennesus remained steadfast in his new faith, even when interrogated by the court and the emperor himself, he was tortured and slain. Thus, the mocker of Christ became a martyr for Christ. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)



The Romanian Orthodox Community in the metropolitan Washington D.C. area invites you to the conference:

YOU ARE WHAT YOU LIVE!

*Recent data from neuroscience
in light of the spiritual experi-
ences of the Philokalia*

Thursday, September 19, 2019

“St. Luke” Serbian Orthodox Church

(6801 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA)

6:30 p.m. Evening Service

7:00 p.m. Refreshments

7:30 p.m. Conference, Q&A

Free entrance/donations at will



SPEAKER:

Deacon Adrian Sorin Mihalache, PhD.

*Deputy Director- Center for interdisciplinary research in Religion, Philosophy and Science,
“A.I.Cuza” University - Iasi, Romania*

Director - Center for Medicine and Spirituality “Providenta” Hospital - Iasi, Romania

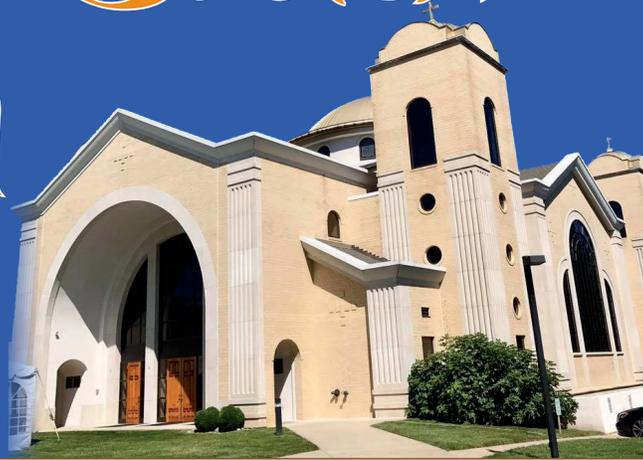


Event organized by “Saint Andrew” Romanian Orthodox Church, Potomac, MD and “Saint Calinic” Romanian Orthodox Church, Fredericksburg, VA. RSVP at 202-505-2340 or contact@sfantulapostolandrei.org

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL
ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

36TH ANNUAL

Middle Eastern Festival



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From **(495) BELTWAY**, Take **EXIT 39**
towards **POTOMAC, CHURCH** is **4.2**
MILES on **LEFT**.

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SEPTEMBER 20 – 22, 2019

FRIDAY
NOON – 9 PM

SATURDAY
11 AM – 10 PM

SUNDAY
NOON – 6 PM

*LIVE MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT ON SATURDAY ONLY. FROM 6 PM TO 10 PM.

ALSO FEATURING

PASTRY BOOTH

JEWELRY

**LIVE MIDDLE EASTERN
MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT***

RELIGIOUS ITEMS

RAFFLES

**MIDDLE EASTERN
GIFTWARE**

METRO AREA VENDORS

FUN FOR KIDS

FREE PARKING

FREE ADMISSION

CARRY OUT

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Orthodox Christian Church**
10620 River Road
Potomac, MD 20854
office@peterpaulpotomac.org
<https://www.peterpaulpotomac.org>
(301) 765-3400

Fr. Joseph blessed our parish children last Sunday as they started a new school year.



Icon of the Mother of God of Novonikita

The Novonikita Icon is one of the ancient icons of the Mother of God. It appeared to the holy Great Martyr Nikita (+ 372). Saint Nikita was a former soldier and disciple of Theophilus, Bishop of the Goths. Prior to his Baptism, Nikita saw a Child in a dream, holding His Cross in His hand. He awoke and pondered the meaning of the vision for a long time.

A certain Christian girl by the name of Juliana, inspired by God, told the youth that he should look at his own chest. To his unspeakable astonishment he discovered there an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos with the Pre-eternal Christ Child, standing on His Mother's knees and holding the Cross in His hand.



“This is the same image I saw in the dream,” cried Saint Nikita. The appearance of the icon produced such an effect on him that he quickly received holy Baptism.
(from oca.org)

Annual Meeting Next Week

All who attend St Thomas (even visitors!) are encouraged to come to the Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, Sep 22nd after Liturgy. We will eat during the meeting, and plan to keep it right at an hour. We will cover finances (past and future), and hold elections for new Parish Council officers and members. All may come and participate! Voting members of the parish will approve the budget and candidates. To vote: regularly practicing chrismated Orthodox Christian adults who tithe a portion of their income to St Thomas the Apostle Church. Please see the current Trustee, Kelsey Moore, if you have any questions. See you Sunday!

Hurricane Dorian Relief Fund

Glory to Jesus Christ! His Eminence, Metropolitan Gregory, has announced a relief fund effort throughout the Diocese to help those impacted by Hurricane Dorian. We will take a collection this Sunday towards this; all donations will go directly to International Orthodox Christian Charities. Please give generously as you are able.

Social Team for September 22

Team 7 is up next week – Single, Wright H., Thomidis. 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.)