

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

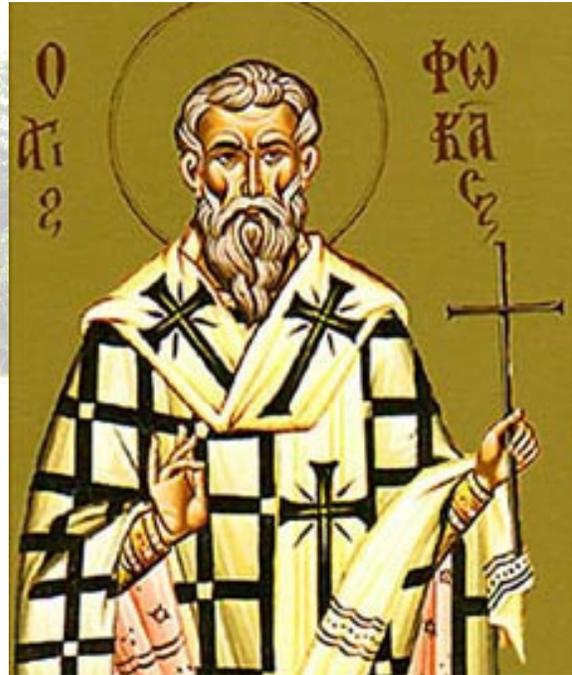
Children's Sunday School 9:30 | AM Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

September 22, 2019 – 14th Sunday After Pentecost

Hieromartyr Phocas, Bishop of Sinope

At first he was a ship master, and later bishop of the maritime city of Sinope. "Steadily" walking the way of salvation, he "from childhood" was a "zealot of the Lord" and "defender of the needy". During the reign of Emperor Trajan he courageously confessed Christ "before the cruel judge" and after various tortures he was thrown into a hot bath where he died in the year 171. The Holy Church glorifies him as one who enlightened "the whole earth with rays of wonders", delivered us "from everything fierce", treated "various passions", drove away "every infirmity of soul and carnal weakness" and "vigilant as a prayer book calming the raging waves of the sea and taming misfortunes", delivered "those who sail from storms and trouble" and who "always" helped "those on the seas".

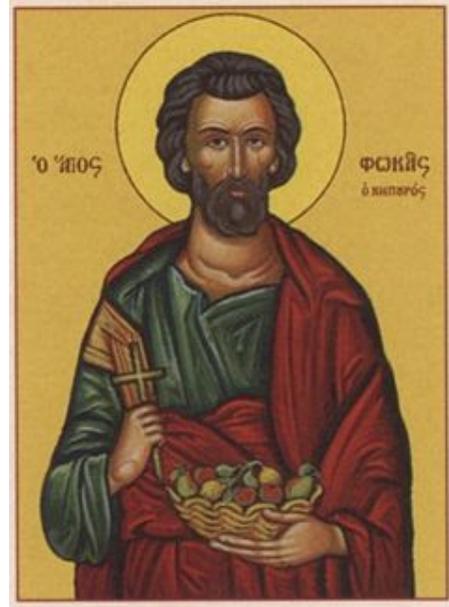
Thus according to the church hymns the usual help for those sailing the seas is Hieromartyr Phocas, and according to the Reader's Menaion Martyr Phocas the Gardener is also commemorated on this day. (*see below – Ed.*) Already Asterius of Amasia (who died about the year 410) bore witness that seafarers resorted to prayer for the help of Martyr Phocas the Gardener.



Some hold that confusion in this case has gone. So the relics of the Hieromartyr Phocas were transferred to Constantinople not later than the year 404 and his memory was much more glorious than the memory of Martyr Phocas the Gardener by the inhabitants of Constantinople. Others held that they resorted to Hieromartyr Phocas for help in navigation, but the inhabitants of Sinope and its vicinity resorted to Martyr Phocas the Gardener.

Martyr Phocas the Gardener of Sinope

He suffered for Christ in the city of Sinope about the year 320. St. Phocas had a small garden in Sinope which supplied him the means of making a living. He helped all the poor, willingly gave shelter to strangers and treated them with the fruits of his garden. He died from truncation by the sword. (from Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., by S. V. Bulgakov (Trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris))



Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 1:21-2:4

Brethren, He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand. But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is *the joy* of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 5:1-11

At that time, as the multitude pressed about Jesus to hear the word of God, He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night

and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The potter who sits working the earth first takes care to fashion vessels decorated with colorful motifs that become honored at the morning and evening meals of emperors and are even honored by the priestly order of the Church. After making these, he fashions other vessels that are ugly and inferior for use as chamber pots and for birthing stools for the newborn and innocent. After making these, he loads the furnace and fires them. Truly I say that just as he prays for the precious and decorated vessels, he also prays for those that are ugly and inferior because they are works of his hand.

It is the same with our Lord Jesus Christ, who possesses the treasures of numerous mercies, who alone is compassionate with his good Father and the Holy Spirit: just as he rejoices over the person who is honored and adorned with the pure progress of virtue and abstinence, he also rejoices over the conversion of someone who is inferior, that is, the sinner, as it is written, ‘There will be rejoicing in heaven in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner, if he repents’ (Lk. 15:7). He also said, ‘I do not desire the death of the sinner so much as his conversion and his life’ (See Ez. 33:11, 1 Tim 2:4, 2 Pet. 3:9). When he took on this flesh, he also willingly accepted its griefs. On account of this, our Lord Jesus Christ also says, ‘I have not come to invite the righteous to repentance but sinners’ (Mt. 9:13).

– St. Macarius the Great of Egypt, from *The Virtues of St. Macarius*

Homily on the Holy Martyr Phocas

Yesterday our city was magnificent, magnificent and renowned not because it has columns, but because a martyr was in our midst, ceremoniously conveyed to us from Pontus. He observed your hospitality and filled you with his blessing. He praised your enthusiasm and blessed the people present. He blessed those who gathered and shared his sweet smell, and cursed those who kept away. Rather, so

that their fault does not go uncured, again on a second day we herald him so that those who kept away out of laziness will double with their zeal too the blessing radiating from the martyr. For, indeed, I shall not stop saying what I have often said: I'm not demanding an account of their sins; rather, I'm preparing medicines for the sick. Did you keep away yesterday? At least come today, so that you might see him escorted off to his own location. Did you see him as he was escorted through the marketplace? See him sailing across the sea as well, so that each of the two elements might be filled with the blessing that radiates from him.

Let no one keep away from this holy festival. Let no virgin remain at home, let no married woman stick to the house. Let us empty the city, and set course for the martyr's tomb. After all, the imperial couple, too, are joining with us in the festivities. What excuse, then, does the private person have, when the imperial couple are quitting the palace and taking a seat at the martyr's tomb? For the nature of the martyrs' power is such that it catches in its net not just private persons, but those who wear the diadems. This power is a source of shame for the Greeks, the censure of their error, the total annihilation of demons. This power is our nobility, and the Church's crown. I celebrate with martyrs and skip at the sight of their trophy instead of at meadows, because they poured forth blood instead of springs of water. Their bones were consumed and yet their memory becomes fresher with every day. My point is that just as the sun cannot in any way be extinguished, so too the martyrs' memory. For Christ himself revealed: "The heaven and the earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Mt. 24:35). But let us put off our praises of the martyr until the appropriate moment. For truly what has been said is enough for the benefit of those who ought to assemble and make the day of the festival renowned. For what I said yesterday, I say again today, took namely that while no glory will attach to the martyr from the attendance of large numbers, the blessing to you from being in the martyr's presence will be substantial. For just as the person who looks towards the sun doesn't make that star more brilliant, but floods their own eyes with light; so, too, then, the person who honors a martyr does not make him more radiant, but draws from him the light's blessing.

Let us again make of the sea a church by going out there with torches, both getting the fire wet and setting the water on fire. Let no one be afraid of the sea. The martyr wasn't afraid of death and you are scared of the water? But we've said enough on that point. Come, and from what has been said today let us furnish for you the customary table. For even if our bodies are packed tight, even so let our minds take wing. I do not even see your discomfort, but your enthusiasm. For a sea billowing with waves is pleasure to a helmsman, and to a preacher, a church flooding its banks. I say this because in these waters there is neither spume nor

rock nor sea monsters, but a sea and ocean brimming with a sweet smell. Here the ship doesn't sail from landfall to landfall, but has its course set from earth towards heaven; not with a cargo of money – not gold nor silver – but faith and love and zeal and wisdom.

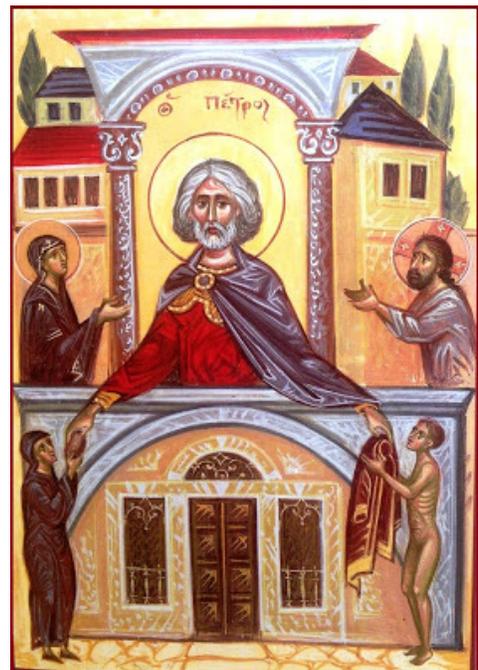
– St. John Chrysostom

Also Commemorated Today: Prophet Jonah

The fifth from among the Minor Prophets, he was born in Gath-Hepher and prophesied to Jeroboam II, King of Israel (9th century B.C.). Sent by the Lord to preach repentance in the capital city of the mighty Assyrian monarchy, Nineveh, and not wishing to deliver pardon from God to the Ninevites because they were pagans and enemies of his fatherland, St. Jonah sailed away from Nineveh on a ship. But during the time of a suddenly risen storm he was thrown into the sea by the pagans for the propitiation of their gods and was swallowed by a whale. Being in the belly of the whale for 3 days and 3 nights, St. Jonah repented of his disobedience and was then thrown out on the shore by the whale and again received the command from the Lord to go to Nineveh. The Ninevites, having heard his sermon, repented of their sins and was pardoned by God. All of this is narrated in detail in "The Book of the Prophet Jonah". The three-day existence of St. Jonah in the belly of the whale serves as a prototype of the three day burial of the Lord Jesus Christ in the grave.

St. Peter the Tax Collector

During the reign of Justinian I, he was a tax collector in Africa and, out of cruelty, did not like to give alms. Once, after the persistent request of a needy one, Peter in anger, not finding a stone threw a loaf of bread, which he held for the house of the prince, in the face of the needy one. Following this he had a vision, that this bread was placed on a balance scale by angels, weighed against all his wicked deeds and perceived that even his almost involuntary good deed had great value before the eyes of the Creator. Fulfilling the command of the angels applied to this bread as alms and in order to not fall under the authority of the devil and to avoid eternal torment, Peter became charitable and began to distribute alms abundantly to the needy. His new vision strengthened him even more in ascetic efforts of good works.



Once having been shipwrecked with very expensive clothes which, being ashamed to wear, he replaced them with others. Peter was very much distressed, having seen his clothes hanging in the market-place, thinking that God did not wish to accept his offering. Then in a vision at night the Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself to Peter, dressed in his clothes given to the needy. After this, Peter distributed his estate, freed all his servants, leaving only one. Having come to Jerusalem with this servant, Peter persuaded him to be his master and to sell Peter into slavery, and that the servant did. Sold to a certain Christian, Peter served him for many years, refusing any freedom offered to him. Recognized by sellers of silver who came to Jerusalem, St. Peter hid himself and all his remaining life he passed in slavish humility and labors. He died in Constantinople in the 6th Century. (*from Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., by S. V. Bulgakov (Trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris)*)

News From Jesse Brandow September 2019

Dear friends, I have finished my second term as a missionary and now I'm back in the USA! I am committed to working in Guatemala for many decades longer, but right now it's time for a short break in the USA. The Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) requires that missionaries come home "on furlough" every two years to rest, reflect, and ask for people's ongoing support. So I will be traveling within the USA until mid-November. I hope to see you! [*Jesse will visit our parish on Sunday, October 6. – Ed.*]

My trip home provides a good opportunity to share the recent news from our mission field. Keep reading to see some of what's new!

Guatemala News

Archimandrite Evangelios Patá named vicar in Guatemala: The Very Rev. Fr. Evangelios is one of the five Orthodox priests in Guatemala who entered the Orthodox Church under guidance from the late Fr. Andrés Girón. He is pastor to about 80 churches in Guatemala and Southern Mexico and rector of the Annunciation Cathedral in Aguacate. Archim. Evangelios also is the director of St. Andrew's Seminary and the Fr. Andrés Girón Orthodox Medical Clinic (both in Aguacate). Now in addition to those extensive responsibilities, he also has been named vicar in Guatemala by His Eminence Athenagoras of Mexico. As vicar, Archim. Evangelios must oversee the entire Guatemalan Orthodox Church, collaborating with the other clergy in fulfilling the vision that His Eminence Athenagoras has for this mission. Please include both Metropolitan Athenagoras and Archimandrite Evangelios in your prayers as they work together to grow the Church in Guatemala. May God grant them many years!



Far left: His Eminence Athenagoras stands with Archimandrite Evangelios, the newly-appointed vicar in Guatemala.

Near left: Archimandrite Evangelios stands with seven of the seminarians of St. Andrew's Seminary in Aguacate, Guatemala

His Eminence Athenagoras celebrates Pascha in Guatemala: This year we had the honor of

receiving His Eminence, Metropolitan Athenagoras at the Annunciation Orthodox Cathedral for services from Holy Thursday through Pascha. His Eminence also celebrated Agape Vespers in Tzisco, México, with the Orthodox faithful from different areas of Chiapas (the southernmost state of Mexico).

New seminarians: This year we have received three new young men into the St. Andrew's Seminary in Aguacate. Please pray for more vocations to the priesthood from among these students.

New long-term missionaries: Thomas and Elizabeth Manuel have joined our team of OCMC long-term missionaries in Guatemala. They plan to work here for at least two years, possibly longer. In January they began Spanish studies and in June they transitioned into active ministry in Aguacate, Guatemala, where Thomas teaches classes at the St. Andrew Seminary and Elizabeth teaches Church music and is preparing to begin a youth ministry program. Welcome, Thomas and Elizabeth!

Personal News

Taking a coordinating role: This has been a year of many transitions as Thomas and Elizabeth recently arrived in Aguacate and I am preparing to *leave* Aguacate in January to move to Huehuetenango (about four hours from Aguacate). Under guidance from Archim. Evangelios and our missionary field leader, Fr. John Chakos, I have been helping to coordinate the shifting of roles and responsibilities of our team of long-term missionaries, which includes: Archim. Juvenal Repass, Jennifer Rice, Thomas and Elizabeth Manuel, and myself. For example, I am passing on my “know how” for leading the medical mission teams so that others may begin to lead teams, and I am helping to organize and formalize our seminary

teaching efforts now that we have a larger team of instructors for the seminary students. In the midst of those transitions, I continue to lead the *Calendario* project which produces quarterly publications of lectionary readings, Saints' lives, and church hymns.

Engagement & car accident: If you didn't catch my last update, I am engaged to be married to Juanita Pascual, a young Orthodox woman from Aguacate who is studying medicine in the city of Huehuetenango, Guatemala. This year was already busy for us with our marriage preparations, but it became even more intense when Juanita suffered a bad car accident in May. She spent June recovering and now, thanks be to God, she is back to her studies at full force!

Ways to Help

Prayer requests:

- Please pray for all of the clergy in Guatemala, who work tirelessly for their flocks: Archim. Evangelios, Archim. Mihail, Fr. Alexios, Fr. Daniel, and Fr. Blas.
- Please pray that God will illumine our new vicar, Archimandrite Evangelios, to lead wisely as he works together with His Eminence Athenagoras.

Please pray that I will have a successful furlough that is both productive and truly restful.

Donate liturgical items: The Church in Guatemala always needs more liturgical items, which I can bring down with me upon my return to the mission field in November. You can purchase items and have them shipped to: Jesse Brandow, PO Box 15, Sturgis, MI 4909 (please notify me by email). These are some of the items needed:

- [Quick-lighting charcoal](#) [we can use up to 10 boxes]
- [Floating wicks with cork float](#) [up to 300 of these]
- [Baptismal crosses](#) [up to 1000 crosses, and Ancient Faith has given a bulk discount in the past]
- [Incense](#) [up to 5 pounds]
- [Cross elevation tray](#) [just one]

Final Word

There's already a lot in this newsletter, so I want to keep my ending short by saying that I hope to see you during my furlough! If I am coming through your area, I would love to see you at one of my parish visits! Sending best wishes for a beautiful autumn! With love in Christ, Jesse

Annual Meeting THIS Week

All who attend St Thomas (even visitors!) are encouraged to come to the Annual Parish Meeting today 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!

Social Team for September 29

Team 1 is up next week – Blaydoe P, Chumak, Connour, Samson. 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.)