

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.

October 27, 2019 – 19th Sunday After Pentecost

Martyr Nestor of Thessalonica

Saint Nestor, the Daring Disciple by Fr. Vasilios I. Kalliakmanis

Discipleship under a capable instructor and experienced spiritual father is considered essential for anyone who wants to be initiated in the Christian life. This cannot simply be transmitted through sermons or books. It is transferred by example. In the Synaxarion of Saint Demetrios it says that he came from "the city of Thessaloniki, pious towards the things above by his parents, and an instructor in the faith of Christ." At the same time he was a general of the Roman army in Thessaly and Proconsul of Greece. But this did not prevent him from cultivating Christian piety and to be a mystagogue of many students in evangelical truth.

He who is inspired by the message of the resurrection of the Gospel cannot only keep it for themselves; they desire to impart it to others as well. Those who undergo a "spiritual alteration", which is "most honorable", as our liturgical texts teach, want others to be initiated into the life of the Spirit. Among the most distinguished students of Saint Demetrios was Saint Nestor, whom the Church honors on October 27th.



When it was disclosed that Saint Demetrios was not only a Christian, but that he taught the faith to a circle of students, this resulted in his dismissal from his military post and his imprisonment. Caesar Galerius was very strict with the young officer. Furthermore he wanted to celebrate his victory against the Scythians, so he organized duels in the stadium of Thessaloniki, where the gigantic Lyaios boasted arrogantly and caused fright among the Christians.

At a time when the Christian faith was persecuted and Christians were led to the arenas as food for wild animals, to prison and a martyric death, who would dare resist? Yet, the daring disciple of Saint Demetrios, Nestor, who was armed with courage and bravery, voluntarily entered the arena to give a good fight. He did not calculate the superiority of his opponent, nor did he bend to the cheers of the hostile crowd.

What came to his mind was that which was taught by his teacher: that Christians may seemingly be weak and persecuted, but their strength is internal, spiritual and "perfected in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). He remembered the unequal battle between David and Goliath, where David came out victorious. He was inspired by the boldness and firmness of the faith of his teacher, who sacrificed earthly glory, offices and riches for the truth of Christ.

Nestor fled to imprisoned Demetrios, and according to the Synaxarion he said to him: 'Servant of God, I want to fight Lyaios. Thus supplicate unto the Lord through my words.' The Saint sealed his forehead with the sign of the Cross and told him: 'You will be victorious over Lyaios, and will be martyred for Christ.' Hence by the words of the Saint, Nestor received courage and strength in his soul, and straightway jumped into the stadium. He fought Lyaios and killed him. He did not receive the same arrogance of Lyaios, nor the praise of the king.



The king felt shamed, and was saddened as well as angry. Because he learned that Saint Demetrios moved Nestor towards this, he sent soldiers to the prison and ordered them to pierce the Saint many times with spears. This was due to the massacre of Lyaios. When this happened, immediately the great Demetrios submitted his holy soul into the hands of God. He worked many miracles and strange healings after his death. Then the king ordered Saint Nestor to be beheaded. Thus

like good soldiers of Christ, the instructor and the student received an "incorruptible crown of glory" (1 Pet. 5:4). *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 11:31-12:9

Brethren, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands. It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 8:26-39

At that time, they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!” For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed *them* saw what had happened, they fled and told *it* in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the

demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen *it* told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The theme of [the feast of the Nativity of Christ] is both splendid and strange. Splendid, for it brings an extraordinary salvation to humanity. Strange, for the birth of a child has conquered the laws of nature. And while nature cannot conceive of the mother who gave birth, grace not only showed her giving birth, but preserved her virginity, made her a mother, and did not destroy her incorruptibility. O Seedless Earth, which blossomed with the fruit of salvation! O Virgin, who opened paradise for Adam! Rather she is more glorious than paradise, for paradise was merely the planting of God, but she cultivated God himself in the flesh. Let us then all draw near, not to dance at the wedding of the Master's mother, for she is a virgin with no experience of wedlock. Instead, let us reverence her virginal birth pangs, for she became a mother without giving herself in marriage; and although she had no experience of a man, her child did not thereby find himself an orphan. Come and see the womb of a virgin wider than creation! For the one whom creation cannot contain is contained in her without constriction. And he who bears all things, including the one who bore him, in the hollow of his hand, is himself borne about in her womb. Come and see the unhewn rock dangling miraculously in the virginal web; it establishes the ground of the universe, but it does not harm her nature. Come and see the inconceivable voyage of a ship sailing across the sea, swamping the chief of evil, and fishing out the first-born man. Its arrival is inexpressible; its departure inexplicable. Come and see the spiritual serpent (cf. Num. 21:8, Jn. 3:14) conversing with the daughter of Eve in an exchange not bringing death but granting life and cancelling the debt of disobedience. Come and see the light of the divinity sending forth rays of grace through the translucence of the body.

Let women come running, for a woman has brought forth, not the flower of death, but has given birth to the fruit of life. Let virgins also come running, for a virgin has given birth, not by disgracing her virginity, but by sealing her incorruptibility. For the child came forth without ruffling the bed-chambers of the womb; leaving

behind, as he grew in grace, the workshop of nature just as he found it. Let mothers come running, for through the Tree of Life a virgin mother has set aright the tree of disobedience. Let daughters also come running, for the obedience of a daughter has avenged the offense of maternal disobedience. Let fathers come running, on account of the father who was born in these latter days. Let infants come as well, for the sake of the infant swaddled in the manger. Let shepherds come running too, on account of the shepherd who came forth from the virginal lamb. He cloaked himself in the strangely thick sheep-skin of the body, and the wolf, seeing him like a lamb, pursued him with jaws agape. And though his teeth were razor sharp, he was not able to taste the flesh of the spotless lamb, because "his flesh did not see corruption." (Ps. 16:10/Acts 2:31) And the lamb slew the wolf, and made that omnivorous beast vomit forth from his stomach those whom of old he had swallowed, just as he drew forth Jonah from the whale. Let kings come running, for the King of glory has clothed himself, not in the imperial purple, but in swaddling clothes. Let princes come running, for in the virginal workshop the prince of peace has forged the weapon of his body, and, whetting it upon his pure divinity, slew our enemy the devil. Let consuls also come running, for the heavenly consul (i.e., God) has elected the earthly one (i.e., Christ). His richly appointed throne is the Virgin Theotokos. His consular toga is his seedless flesh. Its precious stones are the lives of the saints, its priceless pearls are the precious prophecies of the prophets. He does not go about scattering pieces of gold, the cause of disorder, but bestows his compassion upon us, the source of salvation. Let private citizens come running, for the judge has clothed himself in a civilian robe, so that through it he might hunt down the hidden devil in disguise. Strange is his apparel, and his tunic is exceedingly unique. Its fabrication is wondrous, for it has no share in any human craftsmanship. O Virgin, maiden who knew not man, and mother who knew not pain! Where did you find the flax to weave the robe with which the Lord of creation has clothed himself today? What sort of loom was your womb, upon which you wove the tunic without seam? But I seem to hear Nature responding instead of the Virgin, for I take care to assess the rationale of a virgin birth. "I am unable," Nature says, "to make garments of flesh without the mingling of a man. Besides, my loom produces only soiled garments. I clothed Adam, but he was stripped naked, and he covered himself with fig-leaves and shame." In order, then, to mend the ruined robe, Wisdom became a weaver in the virginal workshop, and by means of a shuttle propelled by divine artifice, she clothed herself in the robe of the body.

For the sake of the unbelieving Jews, I ask the Virgin this: Tell me, O Virgin, who made you a mother before marriage? How did you become a mother and remain a virgin? Tell the Jews. Silence the mouths of unbelievers. She answers me with

power and says: "Why are the Jews amazed that a virgin gave birth, and yet express no surprise that, contrary to the laws of nature, the dry rod of Aaron blossomed and bloomed? They see a staff without root blooming indoors, and ask neither how nor why, but about me they do not cease from their disputations." "Behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb and shall bring forth a son." (Is. 7:14) Seeing the child they contrive things about his mother, and they demand to see the father of one whose mother they know from scripture is a virgin. O Jew, if you demand to see the father of the son who was born today, listen to the one who cries out: "The Lord said to me, Thou art my son, today have I begotten thee." (Ps. 2:7) I brought you forth before the ages, and even though today you are born yet again, you do not have another father. The child born today should either be called "fatherless," as indeed he is, or he should be named my son, for it is not natural for one son to be born from two fathers. "Today I have begotten thee," for today the Sun of righteousness has risen from the virginal cloud, and "the people sitting in darkness beheld a great light." (Is. 9:2) Today, the seedless grain of wheat has sprouted forth from the untilled valley, and the starving world rejoices. Today without coupling a child has come forth painlessly from the womb, and all creation brings its gifts to the child who as no father: The earth offers a manger, and the rocks bring six stone jars (cf. Jn. 2:6). The mountains offer the cave, and the cities make a present of Bethlehem. The winds offer their obedience, the seas their submission, the waves their tranquility, the depths of the sea their fish, and the fish a coin of gold (Mt. 17:27). The waters offer the Jordan, and the wells the Samaritan woman. The wilderness offers John the Baptist. The beasts offer the colt (Mt. 21:2), and the birds bring the dove (cf. Mt. 3:16). The Magi bear their gifts. Women offer Martha, widows offer Anna, barren women offer Elizabeth, and virgins offer Mary the Theotokos. The shepherds offer their hymns, the priests offer Symeon, and the children bring branches of palms. The persecutors bring Paulo, sinners bring the Publican, and the gentiles the Caananite woman (Mt. 15:22). The woman with the flow of blood offers her faith. The harlot offers her myrrh (Mt. 26:6). The trees offer Zacchaeus, the wood of the trees offers the cross, and the cross offers the thief. The east gives a star, and the air the cloud (cf. Mt. 17:5). Heaven offers its angels, and the angel Gabriel offers the greeting: "Hail, most favored one, the Lord is with you," and from you, and before you. He entered into you, for this was pleasing to him, and he came forth from you, for this was his will. And he was before you, as he is before all imagining, being ineffably, immutably, impassibly, invisibly, immediately, and divinely born from God the Father. In the heavens without a mother, and on earth without a father, and thus we cry "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men," now and always, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

– St. Proclus, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Homily 4 On the Nativity of Christ*

Also Commemorated Today: Ven. Nestor the Chronicler of the Kiev Caves

Saint Nestor the Chronicler, of the Kiev Caves, Near Caves was born at Kiev in 1050. He came to Saint Theodosius (May 3) as a young man, and became a novice. Saint Nestor took monastic tonsure under the successor to Saint Theodosius, the igumen Stephen, and under him was ordained a hierodeacon.

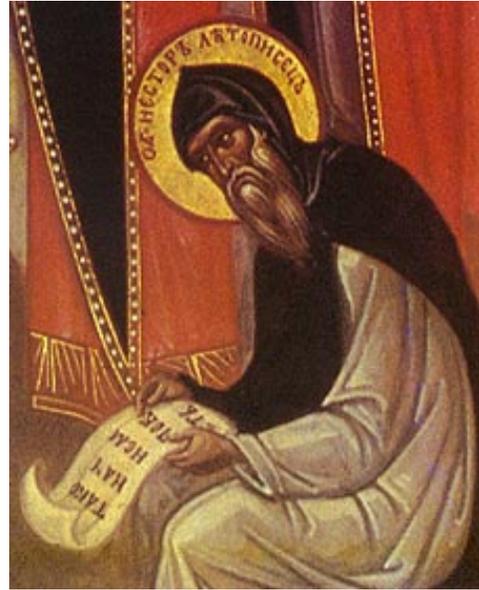
Concerning his lofty spiritual life it says that, with a number of other monastic Fathers he participated in the casting out of a devil from Nikita the Hermit (January 31), who had become fascinated by the Hebrew wisdom of the Old Testament. Saint Nestor deeply appreciated true knowledge, along with humility and penitence. “Great is the benefit of book learning,” he said, “for books point out and teach us the way to repentance, since from the words of books we discover wisdom and temperance. This is the stream, watering the universe, from which springs wisdom. In books is a boundless depth, by them we are comforted in sorrows, and they are a bridle for moderation. If you enter diligently into the books of wisdom, then you shall discover great benefit for your soul. Therefore, the one who reads books converses with God or the saints.”

In the monastery Saint Nestor had the obedience of being the chronicler. In the 1080s he wrote the “Account about the Life and Martyrdom of the Blessed Passion Bearers Boris and Gleb” in connection with the transfer of the relics of the saints to Vyshgorod in the year 1072 (May 2). In the 1080s Saint Nestor also compiled the Life of the Monk Theodosius of the Kiev Caves. And in 1091, on the eve of the patronal Feast of the Kiev Caves Monastery, he was entrusted by Igumen John to dig up the holy relics of Saint Theodosius (August 14) for transfer to the church.

The chief work in the life of Saint Nestor was compiling in the years 1112-1113 The Russian Primary Chronicle. “Here is the account of years past, how the Russian land came to be, who was the first prince at Kiev and how the Russian land is arrayed.” The very first line written by Saint Nestor set forth his purpose. Saint Nestor used an extraordinarily wide circle of sources: prior Russian chronicles and sayings, monastery records, the Byzantine Chronicles of John Malalos and George Amartolos, various historical collections, the accounts of the boyar-Elder Ivan Vyshatich and of tradesmen and soldiers, of journeymen and of those who knew. He drew them together with a unified and strict ecclesiastical point of view. This permitted him to write his history of Russia as an inclusive part of world history, the history of the salvation of the human race.

The monk-patriot describes the history of the Russian Church in its significant moments. He speaks about the first mention of the Russian nation in historical sources in the year 866, in the time of Saint Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople.

He tells of the creation of the Slavonic alphabet and writing by Saints Cyril and Methodius; and of the Baptism of Saint Olga at Constantinople. The Chronicle of Saint Nestor has preserved for us an account of the first Orthodox church in Kiev (under the year 945), and of the holy Varangian Martyrs (under the year 983), of the “testing of the faiths” by Saint Vladimir (in 986) and the Baptism of Rus (in 988).



We are indebted to the first Russian Church historian for details about the first Metropolitans of the Russian Church, about the emergence of the Kiev Caves monastery, and about its founders and ascetics. The times in which Saint Nestor lived were not easy for the Russian land and the Russian Church. Rus lay torn asunder by princely feuds; the Polovetsian nomads of the steppes lay waste to both city and village with plundering raids. They led many Russian people into slavery, and burned churches and monasteries. Saint Nestor was an eyewitness to the devastation of the Kiev Caves monastery in the year 1096. In the Chronicle a theologically thought out patriotic history is presented. The spiritual depth, historical fidelity and patriotism of the The Russian Primary Chronicle establish it in the ranks of the significant creations of world literature.

Saint Nestor died around the year 1114, having left to the other monastic chroniclers of the Kiev Caves the continuation of his great work. His successors in the writing of the Chronicles were: Igumen Sylvester, who added contemporary accounts to the The Russian Primary Chronicle; Igumen Moses Vydubitsky brought it up to the year 1200; and finally, Igumen Laurence, who in the year 1377 wrote the most ancient of the surviving manuscripts that preserve the Chronicle of Saint Nestor (this copy is known as the “Lavrentian Chronicle”). The hagiographic tradition of the Kiev Caves ascetics was continued by Saint Simon, Bishop of Vladimir (May 10), the compiler of the Kiev Caves Paterikon. Narrating the events connected with the lives of the holy saints of God, Saint Simon often quotes, among other sources, from the Chronicle of Saint Nestor.

Saint Nestor was buried in the Near Caves of Saint Anthony. The Church also honors his memory in the Synaxis of the holy Fathers of the Near Caves commemorated September 28 and on the second Sunday of Great Lent when is celebrated the Synaxis of all the Fathers of the Kiev Caves. His works have been published many times, including in English as “The Russian Primary Chronicle”.
(from oca.org)



November Anniversaries and Birthdays



Anniversaries:

none

Birthdays:

Pani Stacey Edgington 3rd

Karen Blaydoe 3rd

Brad Karbowsky 8th

Jennifer Brady 11th

Mya Chopic 16th

Tabitha Single 20th

Michael Kopan 22nd

Herman Blaydoe 24th

Lydia Vita 30th

Social Team for November 3

Team 5 is up next week – Vallandingham BC, Osborne, Sampson, Brady. 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, 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, Dcn. 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.)