

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.

December 8, 2019 – 25th Sunday after Pentecost

Venerable Patapius of Thebes

Saint Patapius was born at Thebes into a pious Christian family. Reaching the age of maturity, he scorned the vanities of the world and so went into the Egyptian desert where he became known for his ascetic deeds. Though he wished to dwell in silence, people began to come to him for advice.

He went eventually to Constantinople, where he obtained a cell at the city wall, near the Blachernae church. But here, too, he quickly became known. The sick began to throng about, and he, having been vouchsafed the gift of healing, began to help all the needy.

There was a youth who was possessed by a terrible demon. At times, the demon tore at the young man's garments, leaving him totally naked; on other occasions, the youth was cast over precipices and into ditches. He was also thrown into water, where he was in serious danger of drowning.

As the youth was walking on the road one day, the demon seized him and was about to cast him into the sea. However, by God's providence, at that very moment, the great Patapius passed by and saw the attempt to drown the youth. As



the demon beheld Patapios, it violently shook its victim, causing the young man to twist his eyes and foam at the mouth. Next the demon had the young man gnash his teeth and cast a fierce look at the Saint.

As Patapios approached, the demon lamented. "Woe unto my calamity! What does Patapios seek here? What shall I do? Where shall I go to find a dwelling place? Whether I go into the city or into the desert, You always overtake me, O Nazarene, and expel me by the sign of Your Cross; and I always vanish in defeat!"

After the odious demon spoke these words, the creature levitated the youth into the air and shook him. The servant of Jesus Christ, Patapios, undaunted by this display, made the sign of the life giving Cross in the air with his hands, saying, "Depart, you unclean spirit, and go into the desert. Christ commands you, and His power you have confessed, even against your will!" After the Saint uttered this, the demon convulsed the youth and cast him to the ground. The demon then left his victim, exiting as smoke, and fled. In the meantime, the youth wept with happiness, praising God and thanking the Saint.

After a life adorned with virtue and miracles, Saint Patapius fell asleep in the Lord and was buried in the church of Saint John the Baptist. (*from oca.org and johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:1-6

Brethren, I, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in us all.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 18:18-27

At that time, as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up *their* voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" So when He saw *them*, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."



A Word From the Holy Fathers

The holy Apostle says concerning those who receive Holy Communion: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily.... eats and drinks damnation to himself (1 Cor. 11:27, 29). They sleep not a bodily sleep, but one of the soul. They do not take care for the salvation of the soul. A careless life and passionate attachment to the world is called the sleep of night. Those who live that way revel in the passionate delights of the world, and therefore the Apostle calls them sickly in soul because of their sins, and they truly partake unworthily. If a man approaches the Holy Mysteries with discrimination, in repentance and contrition of heart over his sins, has the intention not to sin and prays, "O Lord, I am sinful and unworthy to approach Your great and awesome Mystery, but trusting in Your great compassion, I intend with Your help to correct my life according to Your holy commandments and to turn away from sin," such a man can truly partake worthily.

One must go to the church of God with the aim of hearing what is being read and sung, and what the Church of God enjoins us to do, we must resolve to fulfill in actual fact. The church is the Christian school, and it is not our words that are pleasing to God, even though they be words of prayer, but together with our prayers good deeds as well.

One can pray always and everywhere, walking or sitting..... Prayer is the raising of the mind to God, during which one must ask His goodness for the remission of sins, saying: "O Lord! take away my sins from me and deprive me not of Your loving-kindness; grant me victory and mastery over the enemy and over all the passions." One must ask God's aid in this way and personally live uprightly. I have always been telling you: your prayer will be useless if you will not live well; if you pray but do not make an effort to amend your life and instead live in slothfulness, then your prayer will be nothing.

"Let not your left hand know what your right hand does" (Mat. 6:3). If you do some good deed, do not join any kind of craftiness of the adversary to it. While offering a prayer or alms, let them not be offered with vainglory or man-pleasing. In fasting and prayers, do not fall into high-mindedness. While doing any good deed, do not call attention to yourself: do not think that you are doing anything great; do not ascribe it to yourself, but to God's help. If you do something good, it is not by your own power but through God who has helped you.

"I remembered God and I was gladdened" (Ps. 76:3). This is the meaning of these words: with his noetic eyes the Psalmist began to observe God's creation, how it was all created by His wisdom, unfathomable to the human mind: the heavens are stretched out, the earth is made steadfast, the winds blow, the waters flow, the seas stand within their bounds. Gazing at all this wonderful creation, the Psalmist cries out: "Your knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is mighty, I cannot attain unto it" (Ps. 138:5). That is, Your knowledge is wonderful, exalted far beyond me, I cannot attain unto Him, Your wisdom is inaccessible to my limited understanding. Knowing from the creation the Creator who has created all things in wisdom, the Psalmist turns his gaze to man, seeing God's love towards him and His great compassions and benefactions, but his own baseness. Therefore he said, "I am a worm (before God) and not a man" (Ps. 21:6). God's love toward corruptible man compelled the Psalmist to be ever thankful to God for all His mercies which He showed in his life, spending it in the fulfilling of God's commandments, loving nothing earthly more than God, and always burning for him in spirit, in the hope that God would abide with him inseparably. Therefore, he said, "I remembered God and I was gladdened," and he did not merely remember, but lived a life in harmony with the will of God, in the hope of His loving-kindness and the reception of future blessings. During times of misfortune the Prophet David remembered God and was thereby comforted. Enduring persecution from Saul and then from his own son Absalom, with hope in God's loving-kindness, he found all consolation in God and said, "I beheld the Lord ever before me, for He is at my right hand" (Ps. 15:8), "therefore my heart rejoiced" (Ps. 15:9). He knew that the Lord was always with him and therefore he said, "Though I should walk in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me" (Ps. 22:4). Thus, the prophetic word is fitting for you, for us, and for every man. One must bear with patience and thanksgiving everything that befalls us in hope of God's loving-kindness. He who lives uprightly (according to God's commandments) must hope in God's goodness, remembering the prophetic words, "I remembered God and was gladdened", and to those who live in carelessness these words do not apply, for they have no joy in God.... As one lives, so too will he receive recompense, depending on his life.

– St. Theodore of Sanaxar



Social Team for December 15

Team 4 is up next week – Hebert, Howl, Karbowsky, Kopan. 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, 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, Dcn. 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.)