

SOBORNOST

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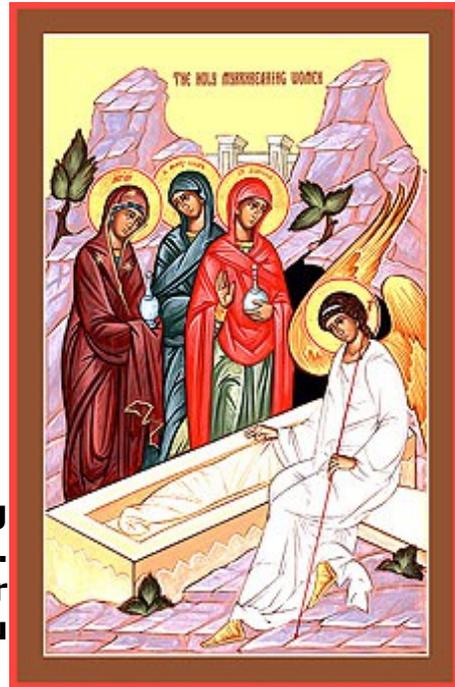
www.apostlethomas.org

American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Public services are in abeyance pending resolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please refer to the information on our parish and diocesan websites on how you can worship at home.



May 3, 2020 | Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women (Second Sunday of Pascha)

When we stand in church or at home before the holy icons, make the sign of the cross, bow our heads or prostrate ourselves, say the words of prayer, make charitable contributions to the church, abstain from non-Lenten food (keep the fast), etc., – then we are externally serving and worshiping God. However, such worship is not yet the worship “in spirit and in truth” that was mentioned in today’s Gospel, it is not yet genuine prayer, but only its outward manifestation.

Today’s Gospel reading tells us of how Jesus Christ in His conversation with the Samaritan woman teaches us, too, how to pray and how to worship God. We have just celebrated the great feast of Christ’s Resurrection, the celebration of which continues until the end of the paschal period. And throughout this period of time, every Sunday the Church brings to our attention Gospel readings from St. John the Theologian, whose Gospel is distinguished from the others by its lofty spiritual style, and which most frequently deals with dogmatic teaching and speaks of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as the Messiah.

The Holy Church, preparing us throughout the entire year for the feast of Pascha, now offers us supreme truths in these Gospel readings.

Often in prayer our soul is distracted by various earthly thoughts, even against our will. Often we ourselves do not know what we are saying, since our lips say one thing, while the heart deals with another. How can we expect God to hear our prayer when we ourselves often do not hear it? Rarely are we able to pray sincerely, sometimes not at all, and there is little benefit from automatic prayer. What should we do? Should we stop praying?

No, dear brethren! The Lord answers us through the Samaritan woman. The Lord met this woman at the well, and during His conversation with her He made her aware of her sinful life. This revelation set her on the path to salvation – she was the first among the Samaritans to acknowledge Christ as Messiah. Without even having had time to do any penance, she asks this Stranger about spiritual life, and He explains it to her. He does not reject her, though she is a sinner, but discourses with her on the same level as with His listeners in the synagogues.

The Lord knows what is in everyone's heart, He knew what was in the Samaritan woman's heart, and He also knows our own hearts and our weaknesses. He knows us well and can help us, only we must not fall prey to despondency. Tradition holds it that the Samaritan woman, who was called Photinia, was persecuted during Nero's reign in approximately 66 A.D. for spreading Christianity, and died a martyric death by being thrown into a well.

Despite leading a sinful life, the Samaritan Photinia had a sincere desire to know the true faith, and the Lord did not overlook her desire. In other words, she was not lukewarm in faith as is, unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of contemporary mankind. The Lord accepted the sinful Samaritan woman, but did not approve of the scribes and the Pharisees, despite the fact that outwardly their life may have appeared more righteous. Thus external actions alone, without internal coordination, are of lesser value to us than making sure our inner spiritual state is better and purer. At this point we come upon the most important aspect of our life: **the inner life.**

Today's Gospel reading teaches us to approach all spiritual issues in our life **from within**: to pay scant attention to externals, for the internal has more value than the external. And whenever we are faced with the question of whether we are acting correctly in such-and-such a case, we should look upon it **from within the heart**: if the answer is "yes" – then thanks be to God, and if the answer is "no" – then we must try to change ourselves. Thus for a long time now, for almost two thousand years, the time has been ripe to worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for God seeks such worshipers; and may He grant that we be among them. Amen. Father Igor Hrebinka (from <http://tokandylaki.blogspot.com>)

Today's Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7

In those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Mark 15:43-16:8

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joseph observed where He was laid.

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” So they went out and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

When then [Mary Magdelene] came and said these things, [the disciples] hearing them, drew near with great eagerness to the sepulcher, and saw the linen clothes lying, which was a sign of the Resurrection. For neither, if any persons had removed the body, would they before doing so have stripped it; nor if any had stolen it, would they have taken the trouble remove the napkin, and roll it up, and lay it in a place by itself; but how? They would have taken the body as it was.

On this account John tells us by anticipation that it was buried with much myrrh, which glues linen to the body not less firmly than lead; in order that when you hear that the napkins lay apart, you may not endure those who say that He was stolen. For a thief would not have been so foolish as to spend so much trouble on a superfluous matter. For why should he undo the clothes? And how could he have escaped detection if he had done so? Since he would probably have spent much time in so doing, and be found out by delaying and loitering. But why do the clothes lie apart, while the napkin was wrapped together by itself?

That you may learn that it was not the action of men in confusion or haste, the placing some in one place, some in another, and the wrapping them together. From this they believed in the Resurrection. On this account Christ afterwards appeared to them, when they were convinced by what they had seen.

– St.

John Chrysostom, *Homily 85 on the Gospel of John*



May Anniversaries and Birthdays



Anniversaries:

Ronnie & Katrina Robinson 1st Kari & Mary Diane David 4th
Alex & Valentina Makowelski 18th Chris & Nicole Nicolaus 27th
Brad & Bernadette Karbowsky 28th

Birthdays:

Charlotte Flade 6th Kelsey Moore 11th Helen Janowiak 12th
Amelia Hanbury 15th Jennifer Popescu 20th Olivia Wright 24th
Andy Single 27th

April Treasurer's Report

Christ is Risen! Thanks to God's mercy and our generous and dedicated community, April saw contributions of \$13,355.00, against expenses of \$12,773.60. Your continuing support in these challenging times is much appreciated! Herman, Treasurer

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, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Howl Family, 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, Robinson Family, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, 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, the newly reposed handmaiden of God Lydia Vita, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)