

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

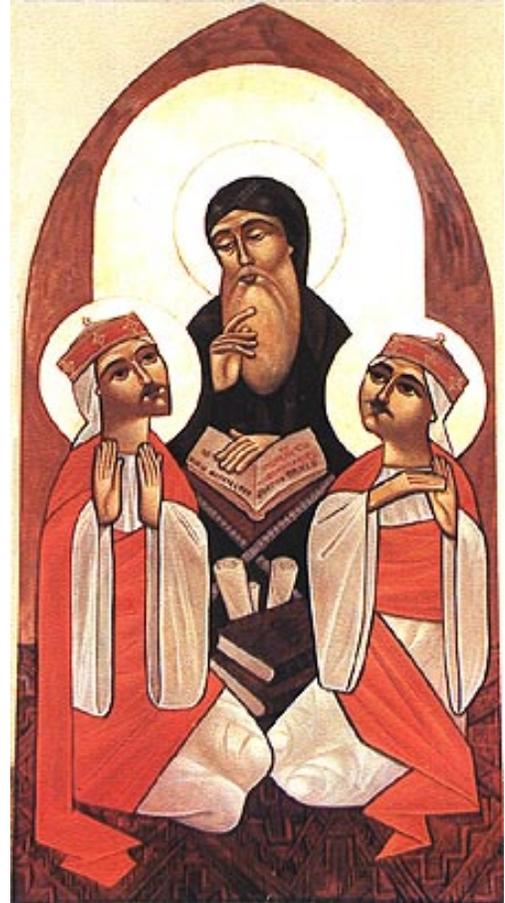
Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM |

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

January 19, 2020 – 31st Sunday

**After Pentecost | Venerable
Macarius the Great of Egypt**



Ven. Macarius was born in Egypt about the year 301 of pious and rather poor parents and in his youth grazed cattle. After he reached maturity, Ven. Macarius wanted to lead a monastic life, but was forced to marry by his parents. In marriage he lived with his wife as with a sister and remained a virgin. Within a few days his wife died and soon after that his parents also died. After this he, following the advice of a certain elder hermit, left to practice asceticism in Nitria, then, after a revelation from above in the Scetis desert for 30 years of his life.

"Having died to carnal subtlety" Ven. Macarius "exemplified all kinds of fasting in his virtuous way of life". Prayer, psalm-singing and meditation on God were his main occupation. His desert asceticism, fasts and vigil seemed to exceed the strength of a man. Silence and sincere humility mainly distinguished and ennobled the spirit of the great "father of the desert". At 40 years of age Macarius was ordained a presbyter and for his asceticism received the gift of prophesy and such grace of wonderworking that even the dead answered his voice, if the advantage of faith or well-being demanded this for innocent sufferers.

By the way, it is told in his life, that finding a skull in the desert, he asked, who are you? The skull replied: "I was the chief demon of the pagan priests, who abided in this place. You, Abba Macarius, are the fulfillment of the Spirit of God. In that hour when you pray having mercy on those in torment, they feel some joy". Many from distant countries came to the Venerable One seeking his counsel and precepts, distinguished by humility and warm sincerity and full of deep skilled wisdom.

During the reign of Valens, a protector of Arians, Ven. Macarius endured imprisonment on a certain island in Egypt, but soon was recalled for wonders and the conversion of the entire island into the Christian faith. Informed by God about his death within 9 days, Ven. Macarius peacefully died on the appointed day, being 90 years old, in 390 or 391. His relics repose in the city of Amalfi, Italy. For his holiness and wisdom he is called "great". Besides several uplifting prayers (1 and 4 at bedtime and 1-4 in the morning but according to Greek manuscripts the 9th), Ven. Macarius has left us 50 homilies, 7 treatises and 2 epistles, full of lofty wisdom and simplicity. The main subject of his homilies consists of the teaching about the grace of God. (*from Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., by S. V. Bulgakov (Trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris)*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 1:15-17

My son Timothy, this *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus was coming near Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God.



Orthodox Christians Walking Together at The March for Life

Friday, January 24, 2020
The National Mall, Washington, DC

Text "MARCHFORLIFE" to (844) 334-5548

to opt-in to receive texts for day-of updates on our gathering schedule & location

Our Facebook Event Page will be kept up to date
[Facebook.com/events/432441117439851/](https://www.facebook.com/events/432441117439851/)

AGENDA - Friday, January 24

8:30AM - 10/10:30AM Pre-March Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral
Located: 3500 Massachusetts Ave NW DC

11:30AM Meet at the National Mall at the intersection of 12th St NW & Madison Dr NW

- **EXACT detailed spot will be announced via text and Facebook**
- *May need to adjust to a nearby location (within 5 min walk) due to the nature of this event. Please opt-in for texting for real-time updates. You will also spot our signs there.*

12PM - 1PM Pre-March Rally His Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia will lead all in prayer on stage

About 12:30/12:45 Orthodox faithful and hierarchs will gather for a brief prayer for the unborn

1PM March peacefully with hierarchs and clergy up Constitution Ave to US Supreme Court

After March Please join us for fellowship at St. Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral

MESSAGE & FOLLOW US [Facebook.com/OrthodoxMarchForLife/](https://www.facebook.com/OrthodoxMarchForLife/)

See official **March for Life website** for schedule, tips, and other info: [MarchForLife.org](https://www.MarchForLife.org)

Please support  an Orthodox Christian Initiative ([ZoeForLife.org](https://www.ZoeForLife.org))
ZOE for Life!® affirms the value of all life by helping women in a confidential manner during and after crisis pregnancies

For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. **Psalm 139:13**

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Whatever the soul may think fit to do itself, whatever care and pains it may take, relying only upon its own power, and thinking to be able to effect a perfect success by itself, without the co-operation of the Spirit, it is greatly mistaken. It is of no use for the heavenly places; it is of no use for the kingdom – that soul, which supposes that it can achieve perfect purity of itself, and by itself alone, without the Spirit. Unless the man who is under the influence of the passions will come to God, denying the world, and will believe with patience and hope to receive a good thing foreign to his own nature, namely the power of the Holy Spirit, and unless the Lord shall drop upon the soul from on high the life of the Godhead, such a man will never experience true life, will never recover from the drunkenness of materialism; the enlightenment of the Spirit will never shine in that benighted soul, or kindle in it a holy daytime; it will never awake out of that deepest sleep of ignorance, and so come to know God of a truth through God's power and the efficacy of grace.

Unless a man is permitted thus through faith to receive grace, he is not qualified or adapted for the kingdom; but on the other hand, if he receives the grace of the Spirit, and does not at all change his mind, or do despite to grace by negligence or wrong-doing, and thus contends for some time without grieving the Spirit, he shall be enabled to obtain eternal life. As one perceives the workings of evil by the passions, by anger, by concupiscence, by envy, by heaviness, by wicked thoughts and other wrong things, so ought one to perceive the grace and power of God by the virtues, by kindness, by goodness, by cheerfulness, by gaiety, by divine gladness, in order to be likened to and mingled with the good and divine nature, with the kind and holy workings of grace. When the will is gradually and progressively tested by time and opportunity, whether it is continually at one with grace and is found well-pleasing, it comes gradually to be altogether in the Spirit, and so being wrought by the Spirit to holiness and purity is made meet for the kingdom. Glory and worship to the undefiled Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost for ever. Amen.

– St. Marcarius the Great, *Homily 24*

Also Commemorated Today: Venerable Macarius of Alexandria

Saint Macarius of Alexandria was born in the city of Alexandria (still called the "city") at the end of the Third Century and until 40 years of age he was a pagan and seller of vegetables. When he became 40 years old, he accepted holy baptism, renounced the world and left for the desert. After many monastic labors and ascetic deeds he became worthy of the priesthood. He was the Rector of one monastery,

which he founded in the Egyptian desert between Nitria and Scetis. He was the friend and associate of Ven. Macarius the Egyptian.

Having been released from all earthly things and in heart and mind flown up to heaven, St. Macarius was close to the spiritual world and saw more than one wonderful manifestation. Thus, he once saw how Ven. Mark received the Holy Mysteries from angelic hands. Another time he had an angelic revelation about the situation of dead souls. Ven. Macarius ended his ascetic life in 394 or 395 as a one hundred year old elder, being glorified by God with the gift of miracles and insight into hidden human thoughts. In his homilies he frequently taught monks humility, pointing out that obedience is higher than ascetic efforts. He is known for his "Discourse on the Departure of the Soul" and their situation after death. (*from Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., by S. V. Bulgakov (Trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris)*)

St. Mark, Bishop of Ephesus

St Mark, whose name in the world was Manuel, was born of pious parents in 1392 in the queen of cities, Constantinople. His father was called George and was the Sakellarios and Deacon of the Great Church of Hagia Sophia, and his mother was Maria who was the daughter of the pious physician Luke. Both parents tried and succeeded in raising Manuel in the education and admonition of the Lord. But the death of his father left him and his younger brother John orphans at a tender age. His first letters, the Saint learnt from his father George, who had a famous private school. After the death of his father, his mother sent him to continue his studies to the then most famous teachers, John Cartasmeno (later Metropolitan Ignatius of Selmyria) and the mathematician and philosopher George Gemistus Plethon. Among his classmates was the later sworn enemy Cardinal Bessarion.

When the young Manuel completed his studies he assumed the administration of the school of his father and soon was recognized as the brightest teacher of the declining city. Among his students who later excelled were George Gennadius Scholarius, the first Patriarch following the fall of the city, Theodore Agallianus, Metropolitan Theophanus of Media and his brother John Eugenikos.

Divine love however, did not leave Manuel to be carried away by the most promising teaching career, not even the very friendly relationship with the emperor stopped him from denying the world and fleeing to the island of Andigoni in the Prince's Islands close to the famous ascetic Symeon. There he remained in a spiritual struggle for two years and then, after the Turkish assaults on the islands, he came with his elder to the famous Monastery of Saint George of Mangana, in Constantinople.

In the Monastery of Mangana, St Mark composed almost all of his more than 100 works that are preserved to this day. Especially important are the works he wrote against the Latin leaning rivals of St Gregory Palamas, whom he greatly respected and was his model. In this monastery Mark was tonsured to the priesthood, after being pressured to do so, because he thought of himself as unworthy of such a high calling. Soon though he acquired such great spiritual fame, that many clerics and lay people wrote to him requesting his opinion on different topics.

In 1436, while still a Hieromonk, the Patriarch of Alexandria named him as his representative at the convened synod for the Union of Churches. The same year Emperor John Palaiologos forced him to accept the Metropolitan throne of Ephesus which became vacant that year. The emperor showed his great appreciation he nurtured for St Mark, by naming him General Exarch of the Synod. The Saint was therefore forced to follow the Patriarch and the rest of the representatives to Italy.

St Mark went to the Synods with the best intentions and demonstrated his conciliatory stance with the speech he composed for the Pope, even before the start of the proceedings of the Ferrara Synod. Some Orthodox representatives even criticized Mark for his on Metropolitan Bessarion of Nicaea should speak instead. The first topic of discussion was on purgatory. Bessarion did not feel capable of speaking (due to his inadequate theological training), letting Mark to speak instead for the Orthodox, who then expressed four points of disagreement on the topic.

The crystal clear Orthodox views as presented by our Saint greatly pleased the emperor, who looked toward Mark as the lone Orthodox theologian who could easily answer the arguments of the Papacy. But the theologically inadequate Byzantine emperor was hopeful that the Orthodox views would prevail, not knowing that the papal representatives would persist without budging from their deceptions. For this reason, when he saw the irrational persistence of the Latins would have sank his political agenda - namely the union of the Churches, and by this the expected help of the papacy to confront the Turks - he began to pressure the Orthodox to follow a milder, or better, a more yielding way.

The Latins began to apply their known tactics of whisperings, lies and pressures, and during that time they distributed in Ferrara hundreds of leaflets which contained 54 heretical Orthodox practices! Seeing that the situation was worsening against the Orthodox, two of the sanctioning members of the Byzantine representation, Metropolitan Anthony of Herakleia and Metropolitan John - first in rank to the Ecumenical throne, and brother of Mark - tried to flee from Ferrara, but were impeded by the emperor. Because John was being accompanied by his brother to the harbor, the emperor and the Patriarch feared other attempts of flight,

thus in agreement with the Latins, they transferred their Synodal work from Ferrara which was close to the sea, to Florence.

When the proceedings of the Synod re-started, Mark of Ephesus was the main speaker of the Orthodox. His clear responses however and the reversal of opinions by the Latin false believers, caused the wrath of the Latin leaning Orthodox, who with the silent consent of the emperor they tried to overcome St Mark, even distributing the information that the one from Ephesus was mad. During the conference of the Orthodox representatives, when the Metropolitan from Ephesus referred to the Latins as "heretics", the Metropolitan of Lacedaemon and of Mitylene insulted the Saint and tried to hit him.

The Saint ascertaining that all his attempts to persuade the Orthodox not to proceed towards Union - thus becoming victims of the Latins - were in vain, so he stopped taking active part in the proceedings of the Synod. Finally on 5 July 1439, the union was endorsed, and as reported by Syropoulos, most of the Orthodox representatives signed against their will fearful of the emperor. When the Pope asked if Mark had also signed and received a negative response, he remarked, "Well we have accomplished nothing". The arrogant and despotic Pope asked the undecided Byzantine emperor to send Mark to him to be judged in front of the Synodal Court, but fortunately the emperor refused.

Later on though, he begged Mark, having first received oral assurances from the Pope on his safety, that he present himself in front of the Pope to explain his position. Mark, obeying the emperor's order went to the Pope. In vain he tried to force him to accept the false union. When he saw that Mark remained immovable in his views, he reverted to abuses and threatened to declare him a heretic.

But St Mark unintimidated responded by saying, "The Synods of the Church have condemned as rebels those who have transgressed against some dogma and have preached thus and fought for this, for which reason also they are called heretics; and from the beginning the Church has condemned the heresy itself, and only then has it condemned the leaders of the heresy and its defenders. But I have by no means preached my own teaching, nor have I introduced anything new in the Church, nor defended any foreign and false doctrine; but I have held only that teaching which the Church received in perfect form from our Savior, and in which it has steadfastly remained to this day: the teaching which the Holy Church of Rome, before the schism that occurred between us, possessed no less than our Eastern Church; the teaching which, as holy, you formerly were wont to praise, and often at this very Synod you mentioned with respect and honor, and which no one could reproach or dispute. And if I hold it and do not allow myself to depart from it, what Synod will subject me to the interdiction to which heretics are

subject? What sound and pious mind will act thus with me? For first of all one must condemn the teaching which I hold; but if you acknowledge it as pious and Orthodox, then why am I deserving of punishment?" Having said this and more of the like, and listened to the Pope, he returned to his quarters.

Following the treasonous union at Ferrara-Florence, the Byzantines left Italy to return to the besieged city. The emperor received St Mark on the imperial ship. After a trip of three and a half months, they finally arrived at Constantinople. There the people received them with averse feelings and tested those that signed the union, but honored our Saint, and as reported by his insulter, the Greco-Latin bishop Joseph of Methonis, "The one of Ephesus saw the crowd praising him for not signing and the crowd kneeling to him as if he were Moses and Aaron, and praised him calling him a saint". The simple people of God looked at St Mark as the lone hierarch who had the courage and capability to protect the Orthodox faith. They were already aware that quite a few who signed the union were bribed by the pope, while the hands of St Mark were clean. When the emperor decided to fill the Patriarchal throne, he sent representatives to St. Mark asking him to accept the high honor of the Patriarch, but he did not accept.

On the 4th of May 1440 St Mark was forced to flee from the Royal City, because his life was in danger, and to go to his metropolitan see, Ephesus, that was under the Turks. There having shepherded for a short while his rational flock, he was forced again, now due to the Turks and unionists, to leave Ephesus and board a ship destined for the Holy Mountain, where he decided to live the rest of his life. However when the ship made a stop at Limnos, the Saint was recognized and arrested under imperial order and was imprisoned there for two years. During this period of imprisonment he suffered greatly, but as he wrote to the Hieromonk Theophanis of Evia "the word of God and the power of truth cannot be tied down, instead it proceeds and prospers and most of the brothers encouraged by my exile check the transgressors of the true faith."

From Limnos the Saint sent his superb encyclical epistle for all people around the world and the Orthodox Christians who lived on the islands. With this he severely rebuked those Orthodox who accepted the union and with uncompromising facts proved that the Latins are innovators and because of this he says, "as they are heretics we turned ourselves away and for this we separated." The Saint then invites the believers to avoid the unionists because they are false apostles and crafty servants. After he was released from prison, St Mark, because he was sick, could not withdraw to the Holy Mountain, but returned to his Monastery in Constantinople where he was received by the people with honors as a saint and confessor. From the Monastery of Saint George of Mangana, the new confessor directed the struggle against the unionists, writing letters to the monks and clerics,

encouraging them to hold onto the true faith and not to cooperate with the unionists. The persecutions, the despising and the pressures worsened the state of health of the Holy Father, so that on the 23rd of June 1444, having called by his side his spiritual children and passed on the leadership of the anti-union struggle, he departed to the Lord. He was 52 years old.

The faithful people of the Lord, now orphaned, mourned greatly for the loss of their spiritual father. George Gennadius Scholarius gave a eulogy during which he recalled among other things: "Thus, having lived with love of God and in everything excelled in his sojourn from his youth to the divine schema: in the most holy schema, in the degrees of priestly service, in the hierarchal dignity, in arguments concerning the Orthodox Faith and in devout and passionless confession, having attained fiftytwo years of bodily age, in the month of June on the twenty-third day he departed rejoicing to Him Whom he desired, according to Paul, to be dissolved to be with Him, Whom he glorified by good works, Whom he theologized in an Orthodox fashion, Whom he pleased his whole life long."

Immediately following his holy repose, Mark was honored as a Saint and Confessor.... The first divine service in honor of the Saint was done by his brother John, the philosopher. In the beginning he was commemorated on June 23, but later it was changed to January 19 - the day the relics of the Saint were transferred to the Monastery of Lazarus in Galata. The struggles of Mark as well as of his student Gennadius were recognized and justified by the Great Synod of Constantinople that was concluded in 1484 and recorded their names as Holy Fathers in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

House Blessings

Fr. Joseph blessed holy water for Theophany . Please contact him if you'd like to schedule a house blessing. Holy water is available at the church; please bring a container if you'd like to take some home.

Social Team for January 26

Team 3 is up next week – Edgington, Valllandingham P., Barzykin, Moore. Thank you!

Follow Our Diocese On-Line

Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org>

Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

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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, 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.)