

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

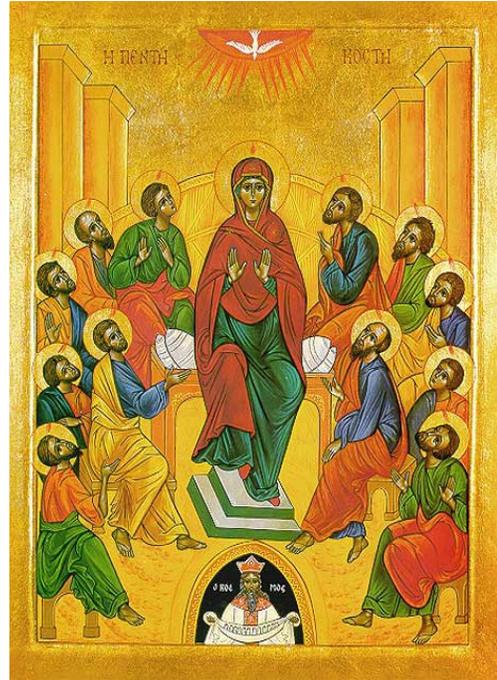
Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Great Vespers 5:00 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM



***Please note that attendance is currently limited by restrictions dictated by local response to the COVID-19 pandemic; if you are currently not assigned to an attendance group, please contact outreach@apostlethomas.org for information on when you may attend.**

June 14, 2020 | 1st Sunday After Pentecost (All Saints)

As an ill-natured man, coming with a request to one who is kind, gentle and meek, for the greater success of his request tries to resemble him, so the Christian, approaching God with a prayer to Him, or to His most pure Mother, or to the angels and saints, in order to insure the success of his prayer, ought to try to resemble as far as possible the Lord Himself, or His most-pure Mother, or the angels and saints. In this lies the secret of drawing near to God, and of His speedily hearing our prayers.

In the saints we see the dominance of the spirit over the flesh, because they live by the spirit and see the spirit throughout the whole world, the Wisdom, the Omnipotence, and Goodness of God; they see in every phenomenon, in every work, the impress of the spirit.

The holy angels and other heavenly powers are full of pure, holy life, of unbroken peace, of unchangeable vigor, of eternal courage and strength, of indescribable beauty, light, and wisdom, of the purest love for God and men, of mutual

friendship, of Divine light and enlightenment: such are also our holy guardian-angel. What a wonderful nature the angels have!

But Christians who become worthy of attaining to the future life and to the resurrection from the dead will be equal to the angels, according to the word of the Lord Himself. Let us, then, zealously strive after that endless, unchangeable, undisturbed life.

In the same manner as objects situated at a great distance off on the earth, though they may be large, are quite invisible from afar if the sun is not reflected in them, whilst even small ones are visible a long way off if the sun is reflected in them, so it is also amongst men: those in whom the Eternal Sun of Righteousness, God, is not reflected in His perfections, are only noticeable when quite near by a very few; but if the Sun of Righteousness is reflected in them, then they are seen by all from a very great distance, they are glorified by all; they are people of all places and of all times (the saints); some of them shine like the sun, others like the moon, and others like the stars.

God's saints are near to believing hearts and, like the truest and kindest of friends, are ready in a moment to help the faithful and pious who call upon them with faith and love. We have for the most part to send, and have sometimes to wait long for earthly helpers, whilst we have not to send for nor wait long for spiritual helpers: the faith of Him who prays can place them close to his very heart in a moment, and he will as speedily receive through faith full spiritual help. In saying this, I speak by experience; by this I mean the frequent deliverance from affliction of heart through the intercession and patronage of the saints, and especially through the intercession of Our Lady, the Holy Virgin Mary. Probably some would say that this is the action of simple and firm faith, and a determined assurance in our deliverance from affliction, and not the intercession of the saints for us before God. No, it is not so. How can this be proved? It can be proved by the fact that if I do not call upon the saints known to me in hearty prayer, without making any distinction, if I do not see them with my spiritual vision, then I shall obtain no help, however great assurance I may have felt of being saved without their help. I recognize, I feel clearly, that I receive help through the names of those saints upon whom I have called, because of my lively faith in them. This happens just as everything happens in the usual order of earthly things. First, I see my helpers by means of earnest faith; then, seeing them, I pray to them also with my whole heart, invisibly but intelligibly to myself; after this, having received invisible help in quite an imperceptible manner, but sensibly to my soul, I simultaneously receive a strong conviction that this help has been obtained from them, just as a sick man, cured by a doctor, is convinced that he has been cured precisely by that doctor, and not by anyone else; that his illness has passed away not by itself, but through the

help of this particular doctor. All this comes to pass so simply that it is only necessary to have eyes in order to see.

You do not understand how the saints in Heaven can hear us when we pray to them. But how do the rays of the sun bend down from Heaven to us, lighting everything throughout the earth? The saints in the spiritual world are like the rays of the sun in the material world. God is the eternal, life-giving Sun, and the saints are the rays of this wise Sun. As the eyes of the Lord are constantly looking upon the earth and upon terrestrial beings, so also the eyes of the saints cannot but turn towards the same direction as the provident gaze of the Lord of all creatures towards where their treasures (their bodies, their works, the holy places, and the persons devoted to them) are to be found. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

You know how quickly, how far, and how clearly the heart can see (especially the objects of the spiritual world); you notice this in all the sciences, especially in the spiritual ones, where a great deal is adopted by faith only (the vision of the heart). The heart is the eye of the human being. The purer it is, the quicker, farther, and clearer it can see. But with God's saints this spiritual eye is refined, even during their lifetime, to the highest degree of purity possible for man, and after their death, when they have become united to God, through God's grace it becomes still clearer and wider in the limits of its vision. Therefore the saints see very clearly, widely, and far: they see our spiritual wants; they see and hear all those who call upon them with their whole hearts — that is, those whose mental eyes are fixed straight upon them, and are not darkened or dimmed when so fixed by unbelief and doubt; in other words, when the eyes of the heart of those who pray, so to say, meet the eyes of those they call upon. This is a mysterious vision. He who is experienced will understand what is meant. Therefore, how easy it is to communicate with the saints! It is only necessary to purify the eye of the heart, to fix it firmly upon a saint known to you, to pray to him for what you want, and you will obtain it. And what is God in reference to sight? He is all sight, all light, and all knowledge. He everlastingly fills both Heaven and earth, and sees everything in every place. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." - St. John of Kronstadt

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-12:2

Brethren, all the saints through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and

scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in dens* and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30

The Lord said to his disciples, "whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Amen I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Prooimion: O Planter of creation, Lord, to You does the entire world bring as an offering the God-bearing martyr Saints, as being nature's first fruits. At their earnest entreaty, keep Your Church in a state of profoundest peace, through the Theotokos, O Lord abundantly merciful.

1. Those who were martyred throughout the earth, and those who moved their homes to the heavens, the imitators of Christ's suffering, and those who remove from us our suffering, here today are gathered, shown to be the first fruits of the Church, having held it as the type of that above. And they cried out to Christ, "You are my God; preserve me. This, through the Theotokos, as You are most merciful."

2. Having gathered from every city and being our compatriots, they came out from all the world, and have taken us from the world, and have made us participants in the feast. Together with that above, creation below dances, for the Angels cry out with us: “O God, You are truly wondrous among Your Saints, O Most-Merciful One.”

3. Let us celebrate a sacred feast, for the things on earth have become heaven. The lights among the firmament, the Martyrs among the multitudes have shone upon the Church, and enlightened the whole world, that David might therefore say with us, that “Your lightning has shown upon the earth, O Most-Merciful One.”

4. Now you hear strange things, and behold divine and incomprehensible deeds. Everywhere the blood of the Martyrs, as roses without thorns, have been sown, pouring forth healings, and breathing forth the fragrance of gifts, from which we receive deliverance from the passions, and cry to God: “Your hand is lifted high, O Most-Merciful One.”

5. Their struggles and crowns, their sweat and wonders, cannot be related by word, nor circumscribed by place. The Church beholds them, as arrayed in garments fringed with gold, and standing beside You as a queen, God, the immortal and incorruptible King, O Most-Merciful One.

6. Let us continuously chant unto our God, for He has richly poured forth grace, As Joel preached beforehand. “I will pour out,” he writes, “from the Spirit upon my sons and daughters.” For this strength guided the champions in word and power, and silenced the mouths of those against You, O Most-Merciful One.

7. They were not swayed by vain wealth, for they loved Your Kingdom. They neglected things of this life, and kept in memory the incorruptible things. They went forth on the road, preferring to die rather than to live, that they might pass on to Your life, and be fed with Your good things, O Most-Merciful One.

8. Appearing before rulers more fierce than beasts, your Saints, O Lord, came into dangers and wrath, and were greatly tortured in anger, as lambs torn apart by wolves. But You, the Lamb of God and our Shepherd, granted them Your help, thus for You, they endured blows, O Most-Merciful One.

9. Your word alone made the Saints follow You, O Lord, for You said, “Let he who wishes to follow me deny relatives and parents.” Eagerly they cast off everything, and as being naked, they followed You, the true Way and Spring of Life, and with un-taught knowledge, they believed in You, O Most-Merciful One.

10. Having partaken of the sacrifices [to idols], the lawless fell upon them. But [the Saints], beholding Your heavenly supper with their spiritual eyes, did not defile themselves with the filth of the idols, but praised You by mouth, and blessed

You, that they might become partakers of Your good things, of which Your Disciples were made worthy, O Most-Merciful One.

11. Everyone beheld with astonishment that the mouths of beasts were calmed, and they approached [the Saints'] bodies and lied at their feed, serving, or rather embracing them, for who would dare to struggle against Your Saints? For the fire again became like the brazen furnace for them [as the fire which did not burn the Three Youths], therefore teaching them to honor Yours, O Most-Merciful One.

12. The devil was struck down, and fell along with all his power. For he emptied his quiver of arrows, and was unable to hit Your Soldiers. And he raised up a wave, to cast them upon the rock, but could not overturn them, nor shake them, for they had You as their firm foundation, O Most-Merciful One.

13. They were truly patient with patience, and they struggled according to the rules. They fought the good fight, and finished the course of the race. They kept the faith, and instead of all these pains, they received Your crowns. Through their intercessions, be merciful to us, O Most-Merciful One.

14. Richly is Your grace poured forth, to those who need it and entreat You with faith. Therefore, I, the unworthy one, entreat You, O Merciful Lord, that a small drop of Your Spirit, like a drop of rain, be sent to me, I ask, that I might therefore chant and speak, and enrich many from Your gifts, O Most-Merciful One.

– St. Romanos the Melodist, Kontakion on All Saints

A History of the Apostles' Fast By John Sanidopoulos

"The Apostles almost always fasted." - Saint John Chrysostom (Sermon 57 on the Gospel of Matthew)

Patristic Testimony Concerning the Fast

The fast of the holy Apostles is very ancient, dating back to the first centuries of Christianity. We have the testimony of St. Athanasius the Great, St. Ambrose of Milan, St. Leo the Great and Theodoret of Cyrrhus regarding it. The oldest testimony regarding the Apostles Fast is given to us by St. Athanasius the Great (†373). In his letter to Emperor Constance, in speaking of the persecution by the Arians, he writes: "During the week following Pentecost, the people who observed the fast went out to the cemetery to pray." "The Lord so ordained it," says St. Ambrose (†397), "that as we have participated in his sufferings during the Forty Days, so we should also rejoice in his Resurrection during the season of Pentecost. We do not fast during the season of Pentecost, since our Lord Himself was present amongst us during those days ... Christ's presence was like nourishing food for the Christians. So too, during Pentecost, we feed on the Lord who is present among us.

On the days following his ascension into heaven, however, we again fast" (Sermon 61). St. Ambrose basis this practice on the words of Jesus concerning his disciples in the Gospel of Matthew 9:14, 15: "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast."

St. Leo the Great (†461) says: "After the long feast of Pentecost, fasting is especially necessary to purify our thoughts and render us worthy to receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit ... Therefore, the salutary custom was established of fasting after the joyful days during which we celebrated the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, and the coming of the Holy Spirit."

The pilgrim Egeria in her *Diary* (fourth century) records that on the day following the feast of Pentecost, a period of fasting began. *The Apostolic Constitutions*, a work no later than the fourth century, prescribes: "After the feast of Pentecost, celebrate one week, then observe a fast, for justice demands rejoicing after the reception of the gifts of God and lasting after the body has been refreshed."

From the testimonies of the fourth century we ascertain that in Alexandria, Jerusalem and Antioch the fast of the holy Apostles was connected with Pentecost and not with the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul on June 29. In the first centuries, after Pentecost there was one week of rejoicing, that is Privileged Days, followed by about one week of fasting.

The canons of Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople (806-816), mention the Apostle's Fast. *The Typicon of St. Theodore the Studite* for the Monastery of Studios in Constantinople speaks of the Forty Days Fast of the holy Apostles. St. Symeon of Thessalonica (†1429) explains the purpose of this fast in this manner: "The Fast of the Apostles is justly established in their honor, for through them we have received numerous benefits and for us they are exemplars and teachers of the fast ... For one week after the descent of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the *Apostolic Constitution* composed by Clement, we celebrate, and then during the following week, we fast in honor of the Apostles."

Duration of the Fast

The Fast of the Apostles came into practice in the Church through custom rather than law. For this reason there was no uniformity for a long time, either in its observance or its duration. Some fasted twelve days, others six, still others four, and others only one day. Theodore Balsamon, Patriarch of Antioch (†1204), regarding the Apostle's Fast, said: "All the faithful, that is the laity and the monks, are obliged to fast seven days and more, and whoever refuses to do so, let him be excommunicated from the Christian community."

From the work *On Three Forty Days Fasts*, which is credited to a monk of the monastic community of St. Anastasios the Sinaite (6th or 7th century), we learn that the Fast of the holy Apostles lasted from the first Sunday after Pentecost to the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God on August 15. Later, however, the Fast of the Dormition was separated from it and the month of July was excluded from the Fast of the Apostles. St. Symeon of Thessalonica speaks of the Apostle's Fast as of one week's duration.

In the Orthodox Church the Fast of the holy Apostles lasts from the day after the Sunday of All Saints to the 29th of June, the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul. This fast may be of longer or shorter duration depending upon which day Pascha is celebrated. According to the Old Calendar it could last from as little as 8 days to as many as 42 days depending on the date of Pascha, but this is shortened by the New Calendar which sometimes obliterates the Fast altogether. If the feast of Pascha occurs sooner, then the Apostle's Fast is longer; if Pascha comes later, then the Apostle's Fast is shorter.

Prescription For the Fast

The Fast of the Apostles is somewhat more lenient than the Great Fast before Holy Week and Pascha. The Kievan Metropolitan George (1069-1072) approved the Rule for the Kiev Caves Monastery which does not allow meat or dairy products to be eaten during the Apostle's Fast. On Wednesday and Friday, they prescribed dry food, that is, bread and water or dry fruits. On Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday they permitted fish, wine and oil. In addition to this, they directed that one hundred prostrations (profound bows to the ground) be made daily, excepting Saturdays, Sundays and holy days (the Feast of the Birth of John the Baptist falls on June 23rd and fish, oil and wine is permitted no matter the day). This rule was transferred to Russia via the Kiev Caves Monastery who based their rule on that of the Monastery of Studios in Constantinople. We can thus assume this was the rule for the Fast practiced by both the Roman Empire and the Russian Empire. This is the rule still practiced today with possible minor variations among jurisdictions. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

May Treasurer's Report

Glory to Jesus Christ! Thanks to God's mercy and your dedication and generosity, for May we saw donations totaling \$14,200.81 against expenses of \$9106.03. To God be the Glory!

Herman, Treasurer

JOIN your CN Friends for the...

CN SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCE 2020

*We had to switch gears...we aren't getting together AT Camp Nazareth
for our Summer Weeks,
BUT our CN Family is STILL getting together!*

REGISTER ONLINE STARTING JUNE 1, 2020!!!

Dates for the CN Summer Camp Experience

Week 1: July 19-24, 2020

Johnstown, Pocono, Southern Tier, Youngstown and Chicago Deaneries

Week 2: July 26-July 31, 2020

Pittsburgh, Mid-Atlantic, Tri-State and Washington D.C. Deaneries

Week 3: August 2-August 7, 2020

New England, NY, NJ, Florida and Canada Deaneries

Register Online Starting June 1, 2020

Register at – *campnazareth.org*

Register by July 1, 2020!!!!

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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, 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, 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.)