

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 21, 2020 | 2nd Sunday After Pentecost (Regional Saints – Saints of Carpatho Rus)

On the second Sunday after Pentecost, each region in world Orthodoxy commemorates those Saints who are associated in some way with either its geographic home, or that of its roots. The Saints among the forebearers of our Diocese are primarily identified with the eastern European lands of Carpatho-Rus, especially areas of the present-day Czech and Slovak Republics, Ukraine and Poland. The icon above portrays twelve of these Saints surrounding the young Christ child and the Theotokos. Orthodoxy is relatively new to North America, and although there are already a small number of canonized Saints of North America, we were called by our Metropolitan Nicholas of thrice-blessed memory to specifically remember the Saints of Carpatho-Rus on this day. Below are the lives of several of these saints.

Holy Martyr Maxim of Gorlice

One of the most glorified martyrs of Orthodoxy in the 20th century St. Maxim (Sandovich) serves as a reminder that true belief has a price. He was born to pious parents in Galicia in the Horlitsky district in the village of Zdyna. Having finished primary school and four years of study at the gymnasium, he entered the Pocheav Lavra in Russia as a novice. After several years at the monastery, he entered the seminary in Zhitomir. After completing his studies, he married a young Orthodox woman, Pelagia, and was ordained to the holy priesthood in 1911. He returned to his home-land to serve the growing number of Orthodox faithful who had fled the "Unia" and returned to the Orthodox Church. In less than one year, he was arrested by the Austro-Hungarian militia for his zealous activity among the Orthodox faithful, and taken to prison bound in chains. For two years, he languished in a Lvov prison without trial enduring horrible conditions and abuse. In early 1914, the holy priest was released from prison for lack of evidence, and he returned to his home village.

By the summer of 1914, the Austro-Hungarian authorities were suspicious of any persons involved with the Orthodox Church, especially the Priest Maxim Sandovich. Without warning, the militia arrested Fr. Maxim, his Matushaka, and his parents, dragging them off in chains to the district prison. Forced to travel by foot the entire way, they suffered much at the hands of their captors. On Sunday, August 6th, just before dawn, the priest rose from his bunk, read his morning prayers and three akathists.

Having finished the third akathist, two soldiers dragged him from the cell and put him before Captain Deitrich, a man known for his cruelty. Saint Maxim stood silently before his accusers. Captain Deitrich read out the execution order and laughed heartily. He approached the innocent priest, tore off his pectoral cross and letting it fall to the ground, trampled it under his feet. He then marked an "X" on Fr. Maxim's black riassa in the middle of his chest for the firing squad. Two soldiers, standing less than ten feet away, waited for the command. As Captain Deitrich began the customary command of orders to the two soldiers, St. Maxim cried out; "Long live the Rusin People! Long live Orthodoxy!" Shots rang out in the courtyard, and the newest martyr for Christ fell to the ground. One of the soldiers approached the dead priest and shot him three more times in the head with a revolver. His mother and father along with his Matuska wept as they watched the scene before them. The pious Orthodox faithful buried the holy priest under the watchful eye of those who had murdered him. To this day, many travel to his grave asking the holy martyr to intercede for them.

St. Procopius of Sazava

By the end of the tenth century, internal division and wars had reduced the great Moravian Empire. The Poles and Germans had conquered and divided up most of the territory that previous Moravian princes had gained. It was during these bleak years that an important center of Orthodox Christianity arose in the Monastery of Saints Mary and John the Baptist on the Sazava River. On a land grant from Prince Oldrich, St. Procopius built the monastery and established a community dedicated to serve the Slavic population in Eastern Moravia. The monks copied manuscripts and made numerous translations of liturgical services from Latin into Church Slavonic. The monastery continued to be a center of learning and perpetuation of the Byzantine tradition until the death of the pious abbot in the year 1053. With the Roman Catholic decision to separate itself from the Holy Orthodox Church in 1054, the monastery became an easy target for Latin hostilities. The monastery experienced many setbacks under Roman Catholic authority, and was forced to close in 1074. Many of the monks sought refuge in Serbia and Kievan Rus.

St. Rostislav, Prince and Confessor

As the ninth century dawned, the entrenched pagan beliefs and customs of the Slavs in central Europe began to weaken as the surge of Christianity hit this land. The drive to evangelize these Slavs came from the south and the west, respectively Roman and Frankish missionaries were poised for the task. As the kingdom of Moravia expanded and grew in strength, Prince Rostislav allied himself with the Byzantine Empire in the east rather than with the Franks and Romans in the west.

With the fear of God and with a firm conviction to educate his people in the faith of Christ, St. Rostislav, who had been baptized in 846 asked the Byzantine Emperor Michael III to send missionaries to his people. Michael III chose two brothers from Macedonia, Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius. In 863, Saints Cyril and Methodius traveled to Moravia, and began to teach the Slavs in their own language. Earlier that year, St. Cyril had invented the Slavonic (Glagolitic) Alphabet, and began to teach them to read and write by using the New Testament and Byzantine law. Under the rule of the Blessed Prince Rostislav, Orthodox Christianity was firmly planted in Eastern Europe with the building of many churches and the teaching of the faith in Slavonic. The holy prince died in 870.

St. Ephrem of New Torzhok

In the days of the venerable great princes, the Holy Passion-bearers of Russia, Saints Boris and Gleb, three brothers from the Carpathian lands and members of the Boyar class, Ephrem, George, and Moses had been enlisted to guard and protect the holy princes. However, when the enemies of Christ had succeeded in

murdering the Holy Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb, Ephrem and Moses escaped death, while their brother George died while trying to defend St. Boris.

Following the death of the holy princes, Ephrem became a monk in the Kiev-Pechersk Monastery in Kiev in 1020, while Moses remained a pious layman attached to the princes of Rus'. Ephrem lived in the monastery for several years, but he desired to establish the monastic life in another area of Rus'. With the blessing of his abbot, Ephrem traveled to the city of Torzhok. He found a beautiful spot along the banks of the Tversta River and built a church in honor of the Holy Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb. Having gathered many monks, he then built a monastery on the same spot in the year 1038. Raised to the rank of Archimandrite, St. Ephrem labored in fasting and prayer until his death in 1053. After his death, many miracles were performed at his grave. (*from acrod.org*)

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 4:25-5:12

At that time, great multitudes followed Jesus—from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be

comforted. Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The church is the temple of God, a holy place, a house of prayer, the assembly of the people, the body of Christ. It is called the bride of Christ. It is cleansed by the water of His baptism, sprinkled by His blood, clothed in bridal garments, and sealed with the ointment of the Holy Spirit, according to the prophetic saying: "Your name is oil poured out" (Song of Sol. 1:3), and "We run after the fragrance of your myrrh" (Song of Sol. 1:4), which is "Like the precious oil, running down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron (Ps. 132:2 LXX).

The church is an earthly heaven in which the super-celestial God dwells and walks about. It represents the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Christ: it is glorified more than the tabernacle of the witness of Moses, in which are the mercy seat and the Holy of Holies. It is prefigured in the patriarchs, foretold by the prophets, founded in the apostles, adorned by the hierarchs, and fulfilled in the martyrs....

The holy table corresponds to the spot in the tomb where Christ was placed. On it lies the true and heavenly bread, the mystical and unbloody sacrifice. Christ sacrifices His flesh and blood and offers it to the faithful as food for eternal life.

The holy table is also the throne of God, on which, borne by the Cherubim, He rested in the body. At that table, at His mystical supper, Christ sat among His disciples and, taking bread and wine, said to His disciples and apostles: "Take, eat, and drink of it: this is my body and my blood. This table was prefigured by the table of the Old Law upon which the manna, which was Christ, descended from heaven....

The altar corresponds to the holy tomb of Christ. On it Christ brought Himself as a sacrifice to His God and Father through the offering of His body as a sacrificial lamb, and as high priest and Son of Man, offering and being offered as a mystical bloodless sacrifice, and appointing for the faithful reasonable worship (*see* Rom. 12:1), through which we have become sharers in eternal and immortal life. This lamb Moses prefigured in Egypt "towards evening" when its blood turned back the

destroyer so that he would not kill the people (see Ex. 12:7-13). The expression “towards evening” signifies that towards evening the true lamb is sacrificed, the One who takes away the sin of the world on His cross, “For Christ, our Pascha, has been sacrificed for us” (1 Cor. 5:7).

The altar is called the heavenly and spiritual altar, where the earthly and material priests who always assist and serve the Lord represent the spiritual, serving, and hierarchical powers of the immaterial and celestial Powers, for they also must be as a burning fire. For the Son of God and Judge of all ordained the laws and established the services of both the heavenly and the earthly powers.

The bema is a concave place, a throne on which Christ, the king of all, presides with His apostles, as He says to them, “You shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mt. 19:28). It points to the second coming, when He will come sitting on the throne of glory to judge the world, as the prophet says: “Thrones were set for judgment over the house of David” (Ps. 121:5)....

The chancel barriers (iconostasis – ed.) indicate the place of prayer: the outside is for the people, and the inside, the Holy of Holies, is accessible only to the priests. The barriers...are like those around the Holy Sepulchre, so that no one might enter there by accident.

The ambo manifests the shape of the stone at the Holy Sepulchre on which the angel sat after he rolled it away from the tomb, proclaiming the resurrection of the Lord to the myrrhbearing women. This is according to the words of the prophet, “On a bare hill raise a signal” (Is. 13:2) and “Climb O herald of good tidings, lift up your voice with strength” (Is. 40:9). For the ambo is a mountain situated in a flat and level place.

Praying toward the East is handed down by the holy apostles, as is everything else. This is because the comprehensible son of righteousness, Christ our God, appeared on earth in those regions of the East where the perceptible sun rises, as the prophet says: “Orient is his name” (Zech 6:12); and “Bow before the Lord, all the earth, who ascended to the heaven of heavens in the East” (*see* Ps. 67:34); and “Let us prostrate ourselves in place where His feet stood: (*id.*); and again, “The feet of the Lord shall stand upon the Mount of Olives in the East” (Zech 14:4). The prophets also speak thus because of our fervent hope of receiving again the paradise in Eden, as well as the dawn of the brightness of the second coming of Christ our God, from the East.

We do not kneel on Sunday as a sign that our fall has been corrected through the resurrection of Christ on the third day.

We do not kneel until Pentecost because we observe the seven days after Easter seven-fold; seven times seven is forty-nine, and Sunday makes fifty....

The fact that priests walk about in unbelted phelonia points out that even Christ thus went to the crucifixion carrying His cross....

The epitrachilion is the cloth which was put on Christ at the hands of the high priest, and which was on His neck as He was bound and dragged to His passion.

– St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, *On the Divine Liturgy*

What is an Orthodox Man?

Happy is the man who becomes wise – who comes to have understanding (Proverbs 3:13).

We live today in a society where husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, have been torn from their roots, ripped from time-honored and theologically-sanctioned values about what it is to be a man, a woman, a family. The old values and roles, so easily nurtured in a largely agrarian and patriarchal society, now seem almost impossible to live in our industrialized cities. The healthy psychological bonding that used to occur naturally between mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, is now a rare experience.

As if this were not a difficult enough burden for the spiritually-minded to bear, we are also now inundated by strange and sometimes aberrant notions about sexuality and role models. We live in a culture of increasing “unisex,” perversion, and immorality – on the job, at home, and sometimes even in the church.

The “women’s liberation movement” was originally an understandable reaction to irresponsible, heavy-handed, arrogant and insensitive men; but instead of raising the conscience and morality of men to the traditional nurturing and moral level of women, it had the effect of bringing women down to the more animal level of men’s behavior, while at the same time shattering the “male myth” without giving in its place a proper sense of what it is to be a man – or, for our purposes, what it is to be an Orthodox Christian man.

An extraordinarily relevant model for the Orthodox man today is the Holy Prophet Job in the Old Testament. Indeed, here was a man “after God’s own heart.” His life gives evidence of certain manly characteristics by which the Orthodox man can, and should, measure himself today – providing a program of spiritual growth and struggle that is without equal.

We think of St. Job primarily in the context of his trial of faith and the afflictions of his life, for which reason the Orthodox call him “The Much-suffering.” We forget that he persevered to the end and found victory over his troubles. We seldom

realize that in order to obtain this victory, he needed certain qualities of character and soul – the qualities of a true and godly man.

What are those qualities? He was a man who did not forget God and God’s loving care for him, no matter how terrible the present affliction: God was always with me and the friendship of God protected my home (Job 29:3-4).

The Orthodox man strives never to forget God and His blessings whether in the past or in the present, and he gives this same example to his wife and children, especially in times of trial.

The Prophet loved his children and missed them sorely when he was in exile. He did not see them as an irritating intrusion into his own “lifestyle.” He rose early to pray and make sacrifice for them, in order to purify them in case they had sinned. The Orthodox man prays ardently for his children – both for wisdom in guiding them aright, and for God’s blessing and grace on them. This is also a model for a priest, who has many spiritual children.

St. Job was just and fair, both with his children and with those for whom he had responsibility outside his family. In the same way, an Orthodox man is a model of justice and even-handedness for his own children, tempering justice with mercy.

The Prophet Job received respect from old and young. Orthodox men show respect to their elders, both in the family and at work, but especially in the Church, and they earn the respect of their wives and children, doing nothing to kill this respect or to scandalize them. The Saint was stable, like a tree whose roots always have water. An Orthodox man consciously strives to avoid the restlessness of our mobile society, recognizing the need for children to have a secure sense of place and stability in their lives.

St. Job was a seeker after God and wisdom: The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord. An Orthodox man also strives to serenely rest in God’s providence, keeping lively his commitment to the Orthodox Faith, and modeling this for his family according to his strength.

Because of all these spiritual characteristics, St. Job was able to endure terrible suffering and affliction, as a result of which the Lord blessed the last part of Job’s life even more than he had blessed the first. Here, then, is a real example for today’s men, who are often tempted to retreat into passive self-centeredness in the face of difficulty and temptation, who are too ready (and encouraged by society to do so) to jettison job, wife, and children at the slightest whim or difficulty. Here, then, is a Saint who can inspire in contemporary man a real manhood rather than a fake masculinity.

Always obey the Lord and you will be happy. If you are stubborn, you will be ruined (Proverbs 28:14). (*from pravmir.com*)

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. 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.)