

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 28, 2020 | 3rd Sunday After Pentecost | Translation of the Relics of the Wonderworkers Cyrus & John

The Transfer of the Relics of the Holy Martyrs, Unmercenaries and Wonderworkers, Cyrus and John from the city of Konopa, near Alexandria (where they suffered in the year 311) to the nearby village of Manuphin, took place in the year 412. This Egyptian village prompted fear in everyone, since in a former time there was a pagan temple inhabited by evil spirits. Patriarch Theophilus (385-412) wanted to cleanse this place of demons, but he died. His wish was fulfilled by his successor in the See of Alexandria, the holy Patriarch Cyril (412-444). He prayed fervently in carrying out this project. An angel of the Lord appeared in a vision to the hierarch and commanded the venerable relics of Saints Cyrus and John be transferred to Manuphin. His Holiness Patriarch Cyril did the angel's bidding and built a church at Manuphin in the name of the holy martyrs. From that time this



place was purified of the Enemy's influence, and by the prayers of the holy Martyrs Cyrus and John there began to occur many miracles, healings of the sick and infirm. Saints Cyrus and John are commemorated January 31. (*from oca.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 5:1-10

Brethren, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 6:22-33

The Lord said, "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The bread of offering, that is to say, which is purified, signifies the superabundant riches of the goodness of our God, because the Son of God became man and gave Himself as an offering and oblation in ransom and atonement for the life and salvation of the world. He assumed the entirety of human nature, except for sin. He offered Himself as first-fruits and chosen whole burnt offering to the God and Father on behalf of the human race, as it is written: "I am the bread which came down from heaven," and "He who eats this bread will live forever" (Jn. 6:51).

About this the prophet Jeremiah says: "Come, let us place a stake in his bread" (11:19 LXX), pointing to the wood of the cross nailed to His body.

The piece which is cut out with the lance signifies that "Like a sheep he is led to the slaughter, and like a lamb that before its shearers is dumb: (Is. 53:7).

The wine and the water are the blood and the water which came out from His side, as the prophet says: "Bread will be given him, and water to drink" (cf Is. 33:16). For this lance corresponds to the lance which pierced Christ on the cross.

The bread and the chalice are really and truly the memorial of the mystical supper at which Christ, having taken the bread and wine, said: "Take, eat and drink, all of you, this is my body and blood." This shows that He made us communicants of His death, His resurrection, and His glory.

The antiphons of the liturgy are the prophecies of the prophets, foretelling the coming of the Son of God, proclaiming: "Our God has appeared upon earth and dwelt among men: (Bar. 3:38) and "He is clothed in majesty (Ps. 92:1). The prophets are indicting His incarnation, of course, which we proclaim, having accepted and comprehended it through the ministers and eyewitnesses of the Word, who understood it.

The entrance of the Gospel signifies the coming of the Son of God and His entrance into this world as the apostle says: "When He," that is the God and Father, "brings the first-born into the world, He says: 'Let all God's angels worship him'" (Hb. 1:6). Then the bishop, by his stole, manifests the red and bloody stole of the flesh of Christ. The immaterial One and God wore this stole, as porphyry decorated by the undefiled blood of the Virgin Theotokos. The good shepherd took the lost sheep upon his shoulders: he is wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed not in a manger of irrational animals, but on the rational table of rational men. The hosts of angels hymn him, saying: "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth, good will to men:" (Lk. 2:14); and "Let all the earth worship Him: (Ps. 65:4); and, heard by all: "Come let us worship and fall down before Him: save

us, O Son of God” (cf. Ps. 94:6). And we proclaim the coming which was revealed to us in the grace of Jesus Christ.

The Trisagion hymn is sung thus: there the angels say “Glory to God in the highest:”; here, like the Magi, we bring gifts to Christ – faith, hope and love like gold, frankincense, and myrrh – and like the bodiless hosts we cry in faith: “Holy God,” that is the Father; “Holy Mighty,” that is the Son and Word, for He has bound the mighty devil and made him who had dominion over death powerless through the cross and He has given us life by trampling on him; “Holy Immortal,” that is the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, through whom all creation is made alive and cries out “Have mercy on us.”

The ascent of the bishop to the throne and his blessing the people signifies that the Son of God, having completed the economy of salvation, raised his hands and blessed His holy disciples, saying to them: “Peace I leave with you: (Jn. 14:27). This shows that Christ gave the same peace and blessing to the world through His disciples.

The prokeimenon again indicates the revelation and prophecy of the prophets about the coming of Christ. Like soldiers they run ahead and shout: “You who sit upon the Cherubim, appear and come to save us” and “God sits upon His holy throne”.

David exclaims alleluia and says: “Our God will come clearly and fire shall go before Him” (Ps. 49:3). The brightness of His evangelists has shown throughout the world. For in Hebrew AL means “He comes, He appears”: EL means “God”; and OUIA means “Praise and sing hymns” to the living God.

The censer demonstrates the humanity of Christ, and the fire, His divinity. The sweet-smelling smoke reveals the fragrance of the Holy Spirit which precedes. For the censer denotes sweet joy.

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

Also Commemorated Today: New Martyrs of the Turkish Yoke

On the third Sunday after Pentecost, the Orthodox Church commemorates those who were martyred by the Turks after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Among them is Holy New Martyr Theodore of the Dardanelles (+ 1690) (August 2).

Neomartyr Theodore was born in the village of Ophryniion (Erenkoy) in the Hellespont (Dardanelles) province. His parents George and Kyriaki raised him in a pious Orthodox Christian home.

At a young age he went to nearby Tsanak Kale, where he apprenticed in the trade of being a sesame merchant. Later he left the merchant and opened his own sesame business.

When Theodore was 20 years old a Turkish man took notice of him, in particular his handsome features, virtuous character and business acumen, and he began a plot to convert him to Islam in order to get him to marry his daughter, who was his only child, and make him an heir of his own wealth.

One day Theodore was ill with a fever, and the Turkish man said to him: "Theodore, promise me that you will become a Muslim and I will cure you of your illness, because I like you and wish you to become my son-in-law and the heir to all I have."

Although the wealthy Turkish man persisted, Theodore responded by saying: "Please leave me alone, for I was born a Christian as were my parents, and all my relatives. I will not become a Muslim and I don't need your riches, your marriage or your cure, because Christ whom we Christians worship is omnipotent and can cure me, as can the Panagia, His mother, who grant me my health when they consider it beneficial to my soul."

Theodore's fever continued, and the Turkish man again visited him. The Turk decided to prepare and give the remedy to Theodore, and indeed it was effective. When the Turkish man visited Theodore again, he saw him healthy and said to him: "See, I cured you. Come now, you must become a Muslim as you promised."

To this Theodore replied: "I will not become a Muslim, nor did I ever promise to become one, nor will I. Just leave me alone."

This disappointed the Turkish man, who then went to the judge and slandered Theodore saying that he had promised to become a Muslim in return for a cure, but now refused to fulfill his promise. The judge asked for witnesses, and the Turkish man was able to convince other Turks to bear false witness on his behalf. The judge therefore ordered Theodore to go to court, where he was asked if the charges were true. Theodore replied: "Yes, I was ill and was cured, but I never promised to become a Muslim., nor did I ever give my word on this. Those who say otherwise are lying."

The judge responded: "From the testimony of these good and honorable men, it is evident you promised and in fact said that our faith is better than yours. So receive this man's daughter as your wife and become heir to his fortune, since he has no other children. Know also that if you do not listen to what I have advised you to do, you will suffer torture and in the end be put to death."

To this Theodore said: "I was born a Christian and a Christian I will die. I will not become a Muslim and I want neither riches nor a wife. I say again, I was and am a Christian, and I will not accept your filthy religion. Do to me what you will."

With this bold confession, Theodore was locked up and deprived of food, water and Christian visitors. Only Muslims were permitted to visit him, and when they did they would not cease to try to persuade him to convert to Islam and save himself. When Theodore refused, they took turns beating him. They also later cut at his flesh with razors and pulled out the nails from his hands and feet. Through all this Theodore remained firm and strong in his faith and courage, and was comforted by the apostolic passage: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. 8:35).

One Orthodox Christian priest was informed of the plight of Theodore and managed to be able to visit him in prison, where he gave him consolation and hope. When the priest asked if he had been fed, Theodore said: "No Father, no one has given me bread, or water, or light, but each day a light enters my cell and illuminates it, and it also nourishes me. Therefore I don't need any bread or water. Only those Christ-haters come often and annoy me with their offers, and threats, urging me to become a Muslim, and because I will not fulfill their wish, they torture me."

The priest then heard Theodore's confession, communed him, and told him stories of the lives of previous martyrs who died for their faith in Christ to strengthen him in his resolve to fulfill his martyrdom.

Seeing that all these things did nothing to change Theodore's mind, the judge had him thrown in a pit of lime where he was kept for three days. He was then bound hand and foot and placed on a horse and paraded all over the city. As he went by, some Turks took the opportunity to strike him with sticks and rods, while others shouted obscenities at him.

Unable to break the resolve of young Theodore, the judge sentenced him to death by decapitation. He was taken to the area where the foreign consulates were located, but just as he was about to be bound and his face covered Theodore said to the executioner: "Don't bind me. I surrender myself to death voluntarily for my Christ. Why tie me? Only please allow me a little time to pray to my God."

Then Theodore faced east, and prayed and glorified God. Then he voluntarily lowered his head for the executioner, and the executioner struck off his head. This took place on August 2, 1690 at 3:00 PM.

Among those in attendance at the execution were Orthodox Christians, Westerners and Armenians, who dipped pieces of cloth in Theodore's blood to keep as a blessing and source of grace. After three days the body was released to the Orthodox Christians, who buried him with full honors in the courtyard of a church.

By 1773 the Christians had enlarged the church where Theodore's relics were kept, but because of the Russo-Turkish War at the time the Turks took their revenge on the Orthodox Christians and burned the church down. Theodore's relics however were unharmed.

In 1922, with the exchange of populations between Turkey and Greece, Theodore's skull was brought to Greece by Father Konstantinos Oikonomou who deposited them in the Church of Saint Xene in Nicaea of Piraeus, Greece.

Megalynarion: Rejoice, divine offspring of Ophrynion, and sacred ornament of the Dardanelles, who rejoice, Theodore, that by your contests, you have received a wealth of gifts from God.

Another Megalynarion: Rejoice, Neomartyr of Jesus, blessed Theodore, who contested with a firm mind, and as a sacrifice you were offered to the Lord, worthily were you glorified, with mighty glory.

Another Megalynarion: You have boldness before Christ, O Theodore Martyr, entreat earnestly, on behalf of those who honor, your all-revered memory, and venerate with faith, your divine skull. *(from john sanidopoulos.com)*

Also Commemorated Today: Hieromartyr Basil

The Hieromartyr Basil (Sitnikov) was a deacon of the Dalmatov - Saint Nicholas Church in the province of Perm. He graduated from the three classes of the religious school, and beginning in 1885, he served as a Reader. In 1898, he was ordained as a deacon, serving first at Saint John the Baptist Church in the village of Izyeduga in the Shadrinsk district of the Yekaterinburg diocese. Later, he served in the Church of the Nativity of the Theotokos in the village of Baklanskoye in that same district.

On November 5, 1913, he was transferred to the Saint Nicholas Church in the city of Dalmatov, where he was put to death fby the atheists who had come to power. In 1918, after the priests Vladimir Sergeiev and Alexander Sidorov were arrested, Deacon Basil began to reproach the atheists for plundering the property of these arrested shepherds. They took note of this and got their revenge. Deacon Basil Sitnikov was killed on the day after the priests with whom he served, on June 28, 1918.

Saint Paul the Physician

Saint Paul the Physician, from the city of Corinth, in his youth took monastic tonsure at one of the monasteries. Here the saint toiled much and became an experienced ascetic.

Once Paul, through demonic malice, was slandered by a woman. She came to the monastery with a newborn infant and said, that Saint Paul was the father. The Elder with humility and joy endured the slander, he did not deny it and he took the infant, as though it were his own son. When they began to reproach the saint for breaking his monastic vows, Saint Paul said, "Brethren, let us ask the infant who his father is!" The newborn, pointing his hand at the blacksmith, said, "Here is my father and not the monk Paul." Seeing this miracle, people bowed down to the Elder, asking forgiveness. From this time Saint Paul received from God the gift of healing the sick, whereby he received the name physician. Saint Paul died at age 70. (from oca.org)

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!!!

July Anniversaries and Birthdays

Anniversaries:

Jacob & Hillary Maher 19th Jim & Jessica Stiver 26th Doug & Lauren Chadwick 28th

Birthdays:

Phyllis Kopan 4th

Olga Dewey 6th

Shannon McNeil 7th

Avery Lynne Robinson 19th

Melanie Samson 20th

Phyllis Thomidis 21st

Tudor Stefan Popescu 23rd

Valentina Makowelski 25th

Jamila Madison 30th

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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, Presbyteria 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.)