

# 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](mailto:outreach@apostlethomas.org) for information on when you may attend.**

## July 12, 2020 | 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost | Martyrs Proclus and Hilarion of Ancyra

The Holy Martyrs Proclus and Hilarion were natives of the village of Kallippi, near Ancyra, and they suffered during the time of a persecution under the emperor Trajan (98-117). Saint Proclus was put under arrest first. Brought before the governor Maximus, he fearlessly confessed his faith in Christ. The governor decided to compel the Saint to submit himself to the emperor and offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. "What is your lineage?" the governor inquired of Proclus. Proclus answered: "My lineage is Christ and my hope is my God." When the governor threatened him with tortures, Proclus said: "When you are afraid to transgress the orders of the emperor in order not to fall into temporal sufferings, how much more are we Christians afraid to transgress the commandment of God so that we may not fall into eternal sufferings!"

During his tortures, the martyr predicted to Maximus that soon he himself would be compelled to confess Christ as the true God. First Proclus was scourged, then the wounds of his bodily members were burned with lit lamps. He was then

suspended on a stake and a heavy rock was tied to his feet. Then they forced the martyr to run after the chariot of the governor, heading towards the village Kallippi. Exhausted, Saint Proclus prayed that the Lord would halt the chariot. By the power of God the chariot halted, and no force could move it from the spot. The dignitary sitting in it became petrified. The martyr told him that he would remain unmoving until such time as he would sign a document with a confession of Christ. Only after this could the chariot continue on its way with the governor.

The humiliated pagan took fierce revenge on Saint Proclus. He commanded that Proclus be led out beyond the city, tied to a pillar and shot with arrows. The soldiers, leading Saint Proclus to execution, told him to give in and save his life, but the Saint said that they should follow their orders.

Along the way to the place of execution, they met Hilarion, the nephew of Saint Proclus, who with tears embraced his uncle and also confessed himself a Christian. The soldiers seized him, and he was thrown into prison. The holy Martyr Proclus prayed for his tormentors and surrendered his soul to God after being shot with arrows.

Saint Hilarion was brought to trial and, with the same courage as Saint Proclus, confessed himself a Christian. After being beaten he was sentenced to death. They tied the martyr's hands and dragged him by his feet three miles through the city, wounded and bloody, and then they beheaded him three days after the death of his uncle, the holy Martyr Proclus. Christians buried them together in a single grave.  
*(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

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

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) or, "'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

## Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 8:28-9:1

At that time, when Jesus had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed *men*, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept *them* fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men*. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged *Him* to depart from their region. So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

The discos represents the hands of Joseph and Nicodemus, who buried Christ. The discos on which Christ is carried is also interpreted as the sphere of heaven, manifesting to us in miniature the spiritual sun, Christ, and containing Him visibly in the bread.

The chalice corresponds to the vessel which received the mixture which poured out from the bloodied, undefiled side and from the hands and feet of Christ. Or again, the chalice corresponds to the bowl which the Lord depicts, that is, Wisdom; because the Son of God has mixed His blood for drinking instead of that wine, and set it forth on His holy table, saying to all: "Drink of my blood mixed for you for the remission of sins and eternal life."

The cover on the discos corresponds to the cloth which was on Christ's head and which covered His face in the tomb.

The veil, or the aer, corresponds to the stone which Joseph placed against the tomb and which the guards of Pilate sealed. Thus Christ is crucified, life is buried, the tomb is secured, the stone is sealed. In the company of the angelic powers, the priest approaches, standing no longer as on earth, but attending at the heavenly altar, before the altar of the throne of God, and he contemplates the great, ineffable, and unsearchable mystery of God. He gives thanks, proclaims the resurrection, and confirms the faith in the Holy Trinity. The angel wearing white approaches the stone of the tomb and rolls it away with his hand, pointing with his garment and exclaiming with an awed voice through the deacon, who proclaims

the resurrection on the third day, raising the veil and saying: “Let us stand aright” - behold, the first day! - “Let us stand in fear: - behold, the second day! - “Let us offer in peace: - behold, the third day!

The people proclaim thanks for the resurrection of Christ: “A mercy of peace, a sacrifice of praise.” The priest teaches the people about the threefold knowledge of God which he learned through grace: “The grace of the holy and consubstantial Trinity be with all of you.” The people together confess and pray, saying: “And with your spirit.” Then the priest, leading everyone into the heavenly Jerusalem, to His holy mountain, exclaims: “Behold, let us lift up our hearts!” Then all declare: “We lift them up unto the Lord!” The priest says: “Let us give thanks unto the Lord.” The people affirm: “It is meet and right” to send up hymns of thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity, to have the eye of the soul seeking the habitation of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Then the priest goes with confidence to the throne of the grace of God and, with a true heart and in certainty of faith, speaks to God. He converses no longer through a cloud, as once did Moses in the Tabernacle, but with uncovered face seeing the glory of the Lord. He is learned in the divine knowledge of the Holy Trinity and faith, and “one to one” he addresses God, announcing in mystery the mysteries hidden before the ages and from the generations, but which are now revealed to us through the manifestation of the Son of God – the manifestation which the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, revealed to us. God truly spoke invisibly to Moses and Moses to God: so now the priest, standing between the two Cherubim in the sanctuary and bowing on account of the dreadful and uncountable glory and brightness of the Godhead, and contemplating the heavenly liturgy, is initiated even into the splendor of the life-giving Trinity – of the God and Father, Who is eternal and unbegotten; of the Son and Word, Who is also without beginning, consubstantial, and begotten; of the Holy Spirit, Who is co-eternal of the same nature, and proceeding – The Holy Trinity which is eternally unconfused in its hypostases, and therefore persons, and which, by the unity of its nature, is the indivisible and inseparable divinity, kingship, and glory. And the priest contemplates and proclaims the thrice-holy glorification of the seraphic powers and of the four-fold creatures. With the overshadowing Cherubim and the Seraphim who cry aloud, he exclaims: “Singing the triumphant hymn, shouting, proclaiming, and saying,” then “Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth” - this is the thrice-holy and one God of the powers - “Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” Hosanna means “save,” who, as light, comes in the name of the Lord.

The fans and the deacons are in the likeness of the six-winged Seraphim and the many-eyed Cherubim, for in this way earthly things imitate the heavenly,

transcendent, the spiritual order of things. And to one another the four-formed creatures antiphonally exclaim: the first, in the likeness of a lion, cries out “Holy”; the second, in the likeness of a calf, cries out “Holy”; the third, in the likeness of a man, cries out “Holy”: and the fourth, in the likeness of an eagle, cries out “Lord of Sabaoth.” In the three acclamations, they perceive one lordship, power, and divinity, as the Prophet Isaiah beheld when he saw the Lord on a lofty and exalted throne and the seraphic powers standing around, and the house was filled with smoke from their voice (cf. Is. 6:1-4). And “One of the seraphim was sent, and he took into his hand a coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs” (Is. 6:6) – this represents the priest who with the tongs (his hands) holds in the holy altar the spiritual coal, Christ, Who sanctifies and purifies those who receive and partake. For Christ has entered the heavenly sanctuary not made with hands (cf. Heb. 4:24), and He has appeared in glory in the presence of God on our behalf, having become a great high priest (Heb. 6:20) who has penetrated the heavens (Heb. 4:14); and we have Him as an advocate before the Father, and as the expiation for our sins. He gave us His holy and eternal body in ransom for all of us, as He says: “Father, sanctify them, whom you gave me in your name, so that they may be sanctified” (cf. Jn. 17:11,17,19); and “I desire that they may be where I am, and that they might behold my glory, because you loved them as you loved me before the foundation of the world. (cf. Jn. 17:24).

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

### **Also Commemorated Today: The Union of the Great Church (A Forgotten Feast of Constantinople)**

A feast that began in tenth century Constantinople, is no longer officially celebrated in the Orthodox Church. It was a feast that celebrated the Union of the Great Church, namely the Church of Constantinople. It was celebrated on the Sunday that fell between July 6th and 12th, when the Tomos of Union was read from the ambon in all the churches of Constantinople. It is not known whether or not this feast was celebrated outside of Constantinople, which may perhaps explain why it did not survive.

Emperor Leo VI caused a major scandal with his numerous marriages which failed to produce a legitimate heir to the throne. His first wife Theophano, whom Basil had forced him to marry on account of her family connections to the Martinakioi, and whom Leo hated, died in 897, and Leo married Zoe Zaoutzaina, the daughter of his adviser Stylianos Zaoutzes, though she died as well in 899. Upon this marriage Leo created the title of basileopatōr ("father of the emperor") for his father-in-law.

After Zoe's death a third marriage was technically illegal, but he married again, only to have his third wife Eudokia Baiana die in 901. Instead of marrying a fourth time, which would have been an even greater sin than a third marriage (according to Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos) Leo took as mistress Zoe Karbonopsina. He married her only after she had given birth to a son in 905, but incurred the opposition of Patriarch Nicholas. Replacing Nicholas Mystikos with Euthymios in 907, Leo got his marriage recognized by the Church (albeit with a long penance attached, and with an assurance that Leo would outlaw all future fourth marriages).

Patriarch Nicholas was exiled to his own monastery, though he regarded his deposition as unjustified so he involved Pope Sergius III in the dispute. About the time of the accession of Leo VI's brother Alexander to the throne in May 912, Nicholas was restored to the Patriarchate. A protracted struggle and schism with the supporters of Euthymios followed, which did not end until the new Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos promulgated the Tomos of Union on 9 July 920, after a synod of both sides was summoned to make its official decrees on marriage, which caused dynastic issues in the empire. As John Skylitzes writes in his historical synopsis: "In the month of July, the eighth year of the indiction, the Church was united. The metropolitans and clergy who had been at odds and differed from each other in support of the patriarch Nicholas or of Euthymios were reconciled."

From then on, on the Sunday that fell between July 6th and 12th, the Tomos of Union was read from the ambon in all the churches of Constantinople. The Church decreed that third marriages were permissible, though there were limitations: a man over forty, for example, who already had children, was not allowed to marry for a third time. Fourth marriages were absolutely prohibited. Some believe that the famous mosaic of Emperor Leo VI prostrating before Christ in Hagia Sophia (see photo above) dates to this time, and depicts the submission of the emperor and the triumph of the Church.

Hieromonk Matthew Blastares writes more about this in the fourteenth century: 'Basil the Great in his fourth canon states, "We hold the custom of five years' excommunication for trigamists when the marriage is clearly not dissolved. However, we no longer call such an affair marriage, but polygamy, or rather fornication that has been tempered, i.e., not dissolved, but reduced; limited to one woman. Wherefore, the Lord also said to the Samaritan woman, who had five husbands in turn, "He whom you have now is not your husband," because they that go beyond the limit of digamy are no longer worthy to be called by the name of husband or wife.'" However, he states that "it is not altogether necessary to bar them from the the Church, but only for their punishment to be spent in the places of the hearers and of those that stand, not however, in that of the weepers."

But also, again in canon fifty, he states, “There is clearly no ecclesiastical law of third marriage. Nevertheless, we view such things as defilements of the Church. However, we do not submit them to public condemnations because they are more preferable than unrestrained fornication.” Thus, we do not condemn the practice so as to also dissolve them, but according to the Tomos of Union which will be discussed shortly, by its decisions and command, we accept these marriages.

Gregory the Great, who is surnamed the Theologian, stated, “The first marriage is legal, the second is a concession, the third is a transgression of law, and one beyond this, the life of a swine, which does not have many examples of its evil.” (Homily 37.8)

At this time, three marriages were recognized by ancient laws. Emperor Leo the Wise, who entered into a fourth marriage, was subjected to anathema by Patriarch Nicholas [I Mystikos], who required the emperor to quit himself of this union. Because the patriarch was absolutely inflexible, the emperor expelled Nicholas from the Church, and appointed as patriarch Euthymios Synkellos, a holy man. However, Euthymios, with a majority of hierarchs, contending not only tetragamy, but also trigamy to be illegal, with all zeal hindered the emperor who wished to decree that marriage be extended as far as the fourth for those who so desired. On account of this, a schism arose in the Church, which also sustained the dispute over the throne between Leo VI's son Constantine Porphyrogennetos and the latter's father-in-law Romanos. At this time, in the year 6428 [920 AD], the so-called Tomos of Union was brought forth, which determined when it is fitting to concede a third marriage for some, excellently places reins on shameless desires of the passions, and it is annually read during July on the ambon. Thus, it states the following toward the end:

“Men who have reached forty years of age, and who cast themselves into a third marriage, inasmuch as they are defilements of the Church, we rule that they are to be excommunicated for five years, and after this expires, they are to approach for Communion once a year, on the venerable day of saving Pascha, after purifying themselves as much as possible by the fast for Pascha. The priest who dares, contrary to the decision, to deem some of these worthy of Holy Communion, will be risking his own rank. We command these things when there are no children from previous marriages. But if in fact there are children, the third marriage will be forbidden. But if a man is thirty and has received a succession of offspring from previous marriages, and nevertheless now joins himself to a third woman on account of the licentiousness of fleshly desire, let him be excommunicated for four years. Afterward, let him partake of Communion three times a year: on the Resurrection Day of Pascha, the Dormition of the undefiled Theotokos, and the feast day of the Lord's Nativity because the fasts before these days are believed to

purify most of the stain absorbed by him. However, if he is childless, this man is worthy of pardon if he chooses a third marriage on account of a desire to procreate children; and, excluded from Communion for three years, he should be treated with customary penalty.” *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

## **St. John of Damascus and the Miracle of Panagia Tricherousa**

In the ninth century during the time of the Iconoclasts, St. John of Damascus (December 4) was zealous in his veneration of holy icons. Because of this, he was slandered by the emperor and iconoclast Leo III the Isaurian (717-740), who informed the Damascus caliph that St. John was committing treasonous acts against him. The caliph gave orders to cut off the hand of the monk and take it to the marketplace. Towards evening St. John, having asked the caliph for the cut-off hand, put it to its joint and fell to the ground before the icon of the Mother of God. The monk begged Our Lady to heal the hand, which had written in defense of Orthodoxy. After long prayer he fell asleep and saw in a dream that the All-Pure Mother of God had turned to him promising him quick healing.

Before this the Mother of God bid him toil without fail with this hand. Having awakened from sleep, St. John saw that his hand was unharmed. In thankfulness for this healing St. John placed on the icon a hand fashioned of silver, from which the icon received its name "Of Three Hands." (Some iconographers, in their ignorance, have mistakenly depicted the Most Holy Theotokos with three arms and three hands.) According to Tradition, St. John wrote a hymn of thanksgiving to the Mother of God: "All of creation rejoices in You, O Full of Grace," which appears in place of the hymn "It is Truly Meet" in the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.

St. John Damascene accepted monasticism at the Monastery of Saint Savvas the Sanctified and there bestowed his wonderworking icon. The Lavra presented the icon "Of Three Hands" in blessing to St. Sava, Archbishop of Serbia (+ 1237, January 12). During the time of an invasion of Serbia by the Turks in the reign of King Urosh V, some Christians who wanted to protect the icon entrusted it to the safekeeping of the Mother of God Herself. They placed it upon a donkey to lead the army into battle, which instead without a driver proceeded on its own by another route to Mount Athos and stopped in front of the Hilandari Monastery which is Serbian. The monks put the icon in the monastery's cathedral church (katholikon). During a time of discord over the choice of abbot, the Mother of God deigned to head the monastery Herself and moved miraculously from the sanctuary, and from that time Her holy icon has occupied the abbot's throne in the temple. At the Hilandari Monastery there is chosen only a vicar, and from the holy icon the monks take a blessing for every obedience. Thus even though the



Hilandari brotherhood is a coenobium, it has no abbot and is administered in accordance with the system of idiorrhythmic monasteries.

This event is commemorated by the Church on June 28 and July 12. (*from. johnsanidopoulos.com*)

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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.)