

SOBORNOST

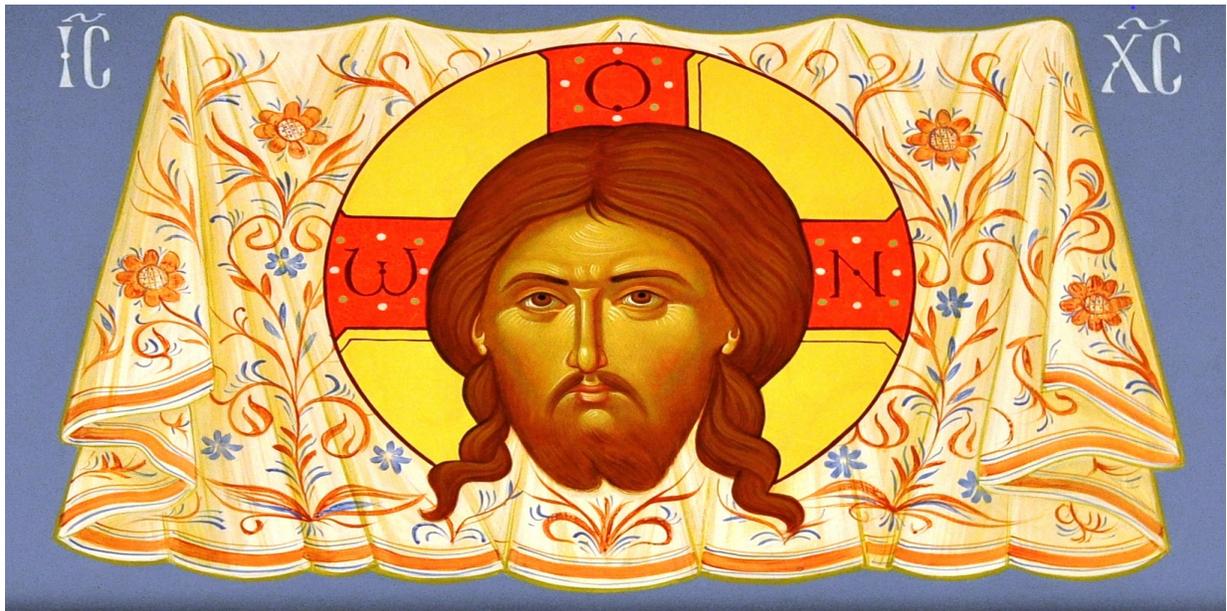
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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

**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 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; please contact outreach@apostlethomas.org if you are currently not assigned to an attendance group for information on when you may attend.**

**August 16, 2020 | 10th Sunday After Pentecost
After-feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos
Martyr Diomedes**

The Martyr Diomedes was born in Cilician Tarsus. He was a physician, and a Christian, and he treated not only ills of the body but also of the soul. He enlightened many pagans with belief in Christ, and baptized them. The Church venerates him as a healer and mentions him during the Mystery of Holy Unction.

St Diomedes traveled much, converting people to the true Faith. When he arrived in the city of Nicea, the emperor Diocletian (284-305) sent soldiers to arrest him. Along the way from Nicea to Nicomedia, he got down from the cart so as to pray, and he died.

As proof of carrying out their orders, the soldiers cut off his head, but became blinded. Diocletian gave orders to take the head back to the body. When the soldiers fulfilled the order, their sight was restored and they believed in Christ. *(from oca.org)*

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 4:9-16

Brethren, I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We *are* fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you*. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 17:14-23

At that time, when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Concerning the greater and primary virtues: if one fulfills these virtues, all other virtues will be submitted to him on faith.

Concerning faith: the first virtue is faith, for by faith even mountains are moved and men receive everything they wish, as the Lord said. Each one, in all glorious and wondrous deeds, is confirmed by his faith. By our own free will faith either decreases or increases.

The second virtue is unhypocritical love towards God and men. Love embraces and binds in one all virtues. By love alone the entire law is fulfilled and God-pleasing life takes place. Love consists in laying down one's life for one's friend and not doing to others what you yourself would not want done to yourself. For the sake of love the Son of God became a man. He who remains in love remains in God; where love is, there is God also.

The third virtue is fasting.... Getting up from the table when still hungry, having his food, bread, and salt, and his drink-water, which the springs themselves bring forth. Behold the royal way of receiving food, that is, many have been saved by this path, so the Holy Fathers have said. To refrain from food for a day, or two days, three, four, five, or a week, a man can not do always. But, so as every day to eat bread and drink, one can always do this; only, having eaten, one should be a little hungry so that the body will be submissive to the spirit and capable of labors and sensitive to mental movements, and so the bodily passions will be conquered. Complete fasting cannot mortify the bodily passions as well as poor food mortifies them. Some fast for a time and then give themselves over to delicious foods, for many begin fasting beyond their strength and also other severe labors, and then they grow weak from the lack of measure and unevenness of this labor, and they seek tasty foods and repose for the strengthening of the body. To act in this way means to build and then again to destroy, since the body through thinness from fasting is yearning for sweet things and seeks consolation, and the sweet foods ignite the passions. But if someone establishes for himself a definite measure as to how much poor food to eat in a day, he will receive great profit. However, concerning the quantity of food, one must establish a rule that it be as much as is necessary for the strengthening of oneself. Such a one can perform every kind of spiritual work. But if someone fasts beyond this, at another time he will give himself up to repose. Ascetic labor according to measure is priceless. For certain of the great Fathers also took food in measure, and everything they used in its right time, and everything had measure – ascetic labors, bodily needs, possessions; everything according to a definite, moderate rule. Therefore, the Holy Fathers do not command one to begin to fast above one's power and to make

oneself weak. Take as your rule to eat every day; thus one may refrain in a more firm way, but if one fasts more than this, how will he refrain later from eating to the full and over-eating? In no way will he be able to. Such an immoderate beginning comes either from vainglory or lack of understanding, while continence is one of the virtues which aids in the subjugating of the flesh. Hunger and thirst are given to man for the purification of the body, from preservation from unclean thoughts and lustful passions....

One should fight evil as one fights a lion and a fierce serpent – in the infirmity of the body and spiritual poverty. He who wishes his mind to be firm against defiled thoughts should make his body refined through fasting.

The fourth virtue is continence, the mother and bond of all the virtues. If you contain your stomach, you will enter into Paradise. For continence is the killing of sin, the going away from passions, the beginning of spiritual life, and the intercessor of eternal good things. On the contrary, eating to the full deprives a man of spiritual gifts, because fullness of the body inclines one to sleep and arouses in one filthy thoughts....

– St. Paisius Velichkovsky

Also Commemorated Today: Translation of the Image Not Made By Hands of Our Lord Jesus Christ from Edessa to Constantinople

When our Lord and great God and Savior Jesus Christ was on the earth, He worked many and extraordinary wonders, in His goodness, as it is recorded in the divine and sacred Gospels, and when His reputation was spreading throughout the world, Abgar the ruler of Edessa heard of His reputation and wanted to go to Jerusalem to see the Lord with his own eyes, but was unable to do so because he was suffering from an incurable disease. For a black leprosy had burst out over all his body and had consumed him, and arthritis brought him unbearable pain. Because of these two reasons he never left his house and was unseen by all his subjects.

Around the time of the saving Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, he wrote a letter to the Lord and sent it by a certain Ananias, ordering him to depict with absolute accuracy the physical height of the Lord, the color of His hair and His holy face, and in short to depict His whole bodily appearance accurately, and to bring it to him; for he knew Ananias was a skilled painter.

Abgar, ruler of the city of Edessa, to Jesus the Savior, the good Physician, who has appeared in Jerusalem. I have heard about your reputed wonders, and about your cures, which are done by you with your words and without drugs. It has been said that you make the blind see again and you make the lame walk;

you cleanse lepers; you drive out unclean spirits and demons; you heal those who have been tormented by disease over long periods; you even raise the dead. Having heard all these wonders which you do by your word, I had one of two ideas: either that you are the Son of God, who do these things, or that you are God. So then I write to you and ask you to take the trouble and come to me to cure my suffering. I have also heard that the Jews murmur against you and wish to do you ill. My city is very small but distinguished and adequate for both of us to live here in peace.

Ananias therefore departed for Jerusalem, and gave the letter mentioned above to the Lord. He then gazed intently at His holy face with great attention, but, since he was unable to get near Him because of the surging crowd, he climbed up onto a small outcrop of rock, and being able to behold the face of the Lord with his eyes, at once he began to press his hand to the paper to copy the appearance of what he saw, but he was quite unable to capture His exact form, because it appeared differently at one point and took on another appearance at another point, and with differing aspect. But the Lord, who knows what is hidden and searches hearts, knowing the intention of Ananias, asked for water to wash Himself, and while doing so He was given a cloth folded in four, and when He had washed He wiped His most pure and divine face with it. Thus His divine form and appearance were imprinted - O the wonder! - on the cloth folded in four.

This he gave to Ananias saying, "Go, give this back to the one who sent you." He also gave him a letter in the following words: "Blessed are you, O Abgar, for you have believed in me, though you have not seen me. For it is written of me that those who have seen me, do not believe in me, so that those who have not seen me may believe and live. As to what you wrote about my coming to you, know that it is necessary that I accomplish all that I was sent out to do in the world by my Father and, after I have accomplished it, to be taken up to the heavens to the Father who sent me. Then I will send you one of my disciples, named Thaddeus, who will heal your disease and grant you and those with you eternal life and peace, and he will make your city of Edessa such that no enemy can prevail against it. " At the end He fixed seven seals in Hebrew letters, which when translated mean: "Depiction of God divine wonder" [in Greek a play on words: "Theou thea theion thavma"].

Abgar received Ananias with great joy and fell down and worshiped the holy and immaculate icon of the Lord with faith and much love, and he was instantly healed of his disease. Only a small patch of leprosy remained on his forehead. After the saving Passion and Resurrection of the Lord and His Ascension into heaven, the Apostle Thaddeus** arrived in Edessa and brought Abgar and all those under him to the font, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When Abgar came out of the holy font he had been cleansed of the small remaining trace of leprosy which had remained on his forehead. From that time forward Abgar honored and revered in every way possible the divine depiction of the Lord and His form. Because he wanted all the inhabitants of Edessa to similarly honor and venerate it, besides the other good things he did, he gave the following order. For a former and distinguished Greek citizen of Edessa, had placed his own image over the public gate of Edessa, so that all those who entered would first venerate his image, and thus receive his blessing before entering the city. Abgar had this unclean image taken down and removed, and in its place was put the icon of the Master Christ made without hands [acheiropoiton], sticking it onto an embellished plank of wood, and had written over it the following words: "Christ God, those who hope in You will never fail."

He also released an order and law in writing, that whoever entered that gate of the city, should first ascribe reverence and veneration towards the wonderworking and honorable icon of the Lord, and then enter the city. This order and law of Abgar was kept until the end of his life and that of his son. When his grandson became the recipient of his paternal inheritance, he turned away from piety and voluntarily turned to the religion of idols. Wherefore he wanted to place over the gate of Edessa the image of a demon, and take down the icon of Christ. When the Bishop of Edessa found out about this by divine revelation, he showed the proper care and attention. Because the place above the gate was deep, made like a rotunda with a cylindrical roof, he lit a lamp before the holy icon of Christ, and in front of it he placed a ceramic tile (keramion), which he covered over with bricks and asbestos, thus closing off that place, making that section of the wall look even. Therefore, since the icon of the Lord could not be seen, the plans of the impious one were halted, and the holy icon was not taken down.

Many years passed, to the extent that the place where the holy icon was located became forgotten. When the king of the Persians Khosrow, during the reign of Heraclius the emperor of the Romans (610-641), fought against the cities of Asia Minor in 615, he arrived in Edessa. Having come against it with every instrument in his arsenal, he brought fear and anxiety to its citizens, who took refuge in God, and begged Him with tears so they could quickly find salvation. One night a glorious woman appeared to Bishop Eulavios, who told him that he would do much good if he took the icon of Christ made without hands that was hidden above the gate of the city, showing the location with her hand. The Bishop went to the spot and began digging until - O the wonder! - he found the divine icon of the Lord, whole and complete, and the lamp he still found to be lit after more than five hundred years. And the ceramic tile, which the Bishop then had placed before the Holy Mandylion, on this same ceramic tile he found imprinted another icon of the

Lord, precisely similar to the Holy Mandylion. When the citizens of Edessa saw these two divine imprints and icons of the Lord, they were filled with spiritual gladness and rejoicing.

The Bishop took the holy icon of the Lord, and conducted a procession with it to the place in the city where the Persians were digging from the outside, knowing where they were by the sound of the copper instrument. As the Bishop approached near there, he sprinkled oil from the lamp on a fire prepared by the people of Edessa, and immediately the flame arose, causing the Persians to flee. And the fire that was lit outside Edessa by the Persians, which they tended with an infinite amount of wood from nearby trees, the Bishop straightway approached this flame with the divine icon, and immediately a strong wind came and turned the flame against the Persians, so they withdrew to no avail.

Because in the Queen of cities everything was running together well, it was God's will that this made without hands and immaculate icon of the Lord be treasured there along with the other good things, thus to this cause the then emperor of the Romans Romanos the Younger (959-963) made haste to enrich the Queen City with the wealth of this icon made without hands. Wherefore at various times he sent men to Edessa to ask for the divine-human icon of the Lord from Amir who was there, offering him for the treasure twelve thousand silver coins, as well as to free two hundred Saracens which he happened to have enslaved there. Not only this, but he promised security to many, so that the Roman soldiers would not fight against the Saracens. With these things he attained his request, and did all that he promised.

Therefore, because Amir allowed Romanos to have the holy icon, the Bishop of Samosata, the Bishop of Edessa and other pious individuals took the holy icon of the Lord (as well as the letter written by Christ) and embarked on the journey to Constantinople. Many miracles took place along the way. When they arrived at the place called Optimaton, at the Church of the Theotokos known as that of Eusebius, many who were ill ran there with faith, to the holy form of the Lord, and they were healed of various diseases. Then one who was demonized came forward, and prophesied saying: "Receive O Constantinople glory and honor and joy. And you Porphyrogennitos, receive your kingdom." And immediately the man was cured of the demon. On the 6467th year from the creation of the world, on the fifteenth of the month of August, in the year nine hundred and fifty-nine, during the reign of Romanos, the above mentioned Hierarchs arrived in Constantinople, and they went to the Church of Blachernae, carrying with them the holy icon of the Lord, which was reverently and joyfully venerated, as much as from the emperor, as from the leaders and the rest of the people. The next day, namely the sixteenth of the month of August, Patriarch Theophylaktos and the young kings (Romanos was not

present due to an illness), along with the senate and all the people of the Church, took the holy icon on their shoulders, and they conveyed the holy icon with proper guarding, until they arrived at the so-called Golden Gate. Then they took it from there while chanting psalms and hymns, with thousands of lamps and lights, and they went to the much famed and most grand Church of Hagia Sophia. There they made the preparation to go up to the royal palace, where they entered the Church of the Theotokos called the Pharos, and there they placed the holy and honorable imprinted image of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, to the glory of Christians, for the guarding of the empire, for the security of the entire city, and the Christian establishment. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

Finding of the Newly Revealed Martyrs of Megara

The uncovering of the relics of the Six Holy Martyrs of Megara occurred in a wondrous manner. In the year 1798, a boy named Paisios (who at the time was 9 years old), saw a vision of three men, dressed like equipped Roman soldiers, who told him to remove their remains from the earth. The boy related this vision to his grandfather, who not only disbelieved him, but scolded the boy. A year later, after his death, the men appeared once again to the boy, who then told his father, John, of the vision. Together, on the night of August 16th (for fear of the Turks), they uncovered the holy relics, which emitted an incredible fragrance. From this time the saints, through their holy relics, began to work miracles. However, the inhabitants of Megara did not know the names of these saints, so they began fasting, and performing vigils and prayers for God to reveal their names. These relics were those of Sts. Seraphim, Dorotheos, and Iakovos. After a year, two other martyrs appeared to the boy Paisios (who became the protector of their holy relics) and related that their names were Demetrios and Vasileios, and showed him where to dig to find their relics, a few meters from the others. With the help of other faithful from Megara, they uncovered the tomb, and venerated the relics of these two saints. After another twenty years, to the same Paisios, another saint named Sarantis appeared and told him to uncover his relics. Paisios took the priest John Moustaka to a rural area north of the city, and found the region among bushes and a large stone. At first it was impossible to dig because of two enormous snakes, but having kneeled and prayed, the snakes disappeared and a luminous glow shined around the bushes. Having gathered the relics with piety and devotion, they brought them to Megara and placed them together with the remains of the five other Martyrs. In the area where they found the sacred relics of St. Sarantis, a small country church was built later, which although situated in the bed of the river, has survived until today.

At 40 years of age, without ever having gone to school, and with the help of the holy Martyrs, Paisios became learned enough to be ordained a priest, in the year

1828. After his death in 1848, many pious residents of Megara who had been helped by the Saints so much, began to build a church to house the holy relics (which previously had been housed in a ruined house by Paisios). The cornerstone was laid in 1889, and soon the church to the Holy Martyrs of Megara was built on the site of their tombs. All year the inhabitants who go to the church to seek the help of the Martyrs.

According to analysis by Archimandrite Dorotheos Mourtzoukos, the Holy Martyrs of Megara could have likely been martyred under the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-363AD), because (1) they have always appeared like equipped Roman soldiers, (2) the name "Sarantis" is in reference to the Holy Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (March 9th) who weren't martyred until 320 AD, and the area which included Megara was given to St. Constantine the Great in 314 AD (so it would not have been an area of persecution of Christianity, unless under the reign of the Emperor Julian). *(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 & Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Presbytera Katie Baker & family, Santiago Alzugaray, Patty Blaydoe, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, 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 & family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, Luke & Mia 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 & Christina Ristas, Robinson Family, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Bernie Takabayashi & family, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Joe & Darlene Waters, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Dcn. Nectaros & Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)