

# 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.**

## **October 11, 2020 | 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council**

The Sunday after the eleventh of October, we commemorate the Holy Fathers of the Holy and Ecumenical Seventh Synod. The Seventh Ecumenical Synod was held in Nicaea of Bithynia from 24 September until 13 October 787, at the initiative of Empress Irene, who was acting as regent. Under the presidency of the Patriarch of Constantinople Saint Tarasios (Feb. 25), three hundred and fifty Orthodox bishops gathered, and to them were added seventeen other hierarchs who denounced the heresy of the iconoclasts.

Besides the representatives of the Pope of Rome and the Patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem, the monks who suffered terrible persecution during the reign of the iconoclast Emperor Leo III the Isaurian (717 - 741) and Constantine V Kopronymos (741 - 755) were a strong presence; there were about a hundred and thirty-six. After careful preparation, the Fathers of the Synod anathematized the



heretics, who for more than fifty years forbade Orthodox Christians to honor the venerable icons of Christ and His saints because it was presumed to be idolatry. So they put an end to the first period of iconoclasm, but it erupted again a few years later under Leo V the Armenian (813 - 820) and it finally ended in 843, thanks to Empress Theodora and the Holy Patriarch Methodios (June 14). The Holy Fathers anathematized the heretical patriarchs Anastasios, Constantine and Niketas, denouncing the alleged ecumenical synod convened in the palace of Hieria at the initiative of Constantine V in 754, and they proclaimed eternal memory to the holy defenders of Orthodoxy: Holy Patriarch Germanos (715 - 730; May 12), Saint John of Damascus (Dec. 4), George of Cyprus, and all those who suffered torture and exile as defenders of the holy icons. In the Oros of the faith that was read at the seventh and last session of the Synod, the Fathers proclaimed:

"We decree with full precision and care that, like the figure of the honored and life-giving cross, the revered and holy images, whether painted or made of mosaic or of other suitable material, are to be exposed in the holy churches of God, on sacred instruments and vestments, on walls and panels, in houses and by public ways, these are the images of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and of our Lady who is without blemish, the holy Theotokos, and of the revered angels and of any of the saintly holy men.

The more frequently they are seen in representational art, the more those who see them are drawn to remember and long for those who serve as models, and to pay these images the tribute of salutation and respectful veneration. Certainly this is not the full worship in accordance with our faith, which is properly paid only to the divine nature, but it resembles that given to the figure of the honored and life-giving cross, and also to the holy books of the gospels and to other sacred objects. Further, people are drawn to honor these images with the offering of incense and lights, as was piously established by ancient custom. Indeed, the honor paid to an image traverses it, reaching the model, and he who venerates the image, venerates the person represented in that image.

So it is that the teaching of our holy Fathers is strengthened, namely, the tradition of the Catholic Church which has received the gospel from one end of the earth to the other."

The Holy Fathers proved not only to be defenders of the holy icons but, essentially, of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God: "Of old, God the incorporeal and uncircumscribed was never depicted. Now, however, when God is seen clothed in flesh, and conversing with men, I make an image of the God whom I

see. I do not worship matter, I worship the God of matter, Who became matter for my sake, and deigned to inhabit matter, Who worked out my salvation through matter. I will not cease from honoring that matter which works my salvation" (St. John of Damascus). Having received human nature, the Word of God deified it without it losing its properties. For this reason, while His glory is incomprehensible to our senses, the human nature of the Savior may be depicted. The image of Christ - the accuracy of which is kept by the tradition of the Church - thus becomes the true presence of the prototype of the God-man, a means of grace and sanctification for all the faithful who confer to it honorary veneration. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to Titus 3:8-15**

Titus, my son, the saying is sure. I desire you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds; these are excellent and profitable to men. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is perverted and sinful; he is self-condemned. When I send Artemas or Tychicos to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful. All who are with me send greeting to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 5:14-19**

The Lord said to his disciples, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

Let us look steadfastly to the blood of Christ, and see how precious that blood is to God, which, having been shed for our salvation, has set the grace of repentance before the whole world. Let us turn to every age that has passed, and learn that, from generation to generation, the Lord has granted a place of repentance to all who would be converted to Him. Noah preached repentance, and as many as listened to him were saved. Jonah proclaimed destruction to the Ninevites; but they, repenting of their sins, propitiated God by prayer, and obtained salvation, although they were aliens to the covenant of God.

The ministers of the grace of God have, by the Holy Spirit, spoken of repentance; and the Lord of all things has himself declared with an oath regarding it, "As I live, says the Lord, I desire not the death of the sinner, but rather his repentance;" adding, moreover, this gracious declaration: "Repent O house of Israel, of your iniquity. Say to the children of My people, Though your sins reach from earth to heaven, and though they be redder than scarlet, and blacker than sackcloth, if you turn to Me with your whole heart, and say, Father! I will listen to you, as to a holy people." And in another place He says: "Wash, and become clean; put away the wickedness of your souls from before my eyes; cease from your evil ways, and learn to do well; seek out judgment, deliver the oppressed, judge the fatherless, and see that justice is done to the widow; and come, and let us reason together. He declares, "Though your sins be like crimson, I will make them white as snow; though they be like scarlet, I will whiten them like wool. And if you are willing and obey Me, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse, and will not listen to Me, the sword shall devour you, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken these things." Desiring, therefore, that all His beloved should be partakers of repentance, He has, by His almighty will, established these declarations.

So let us yield obedience to His excellent and glorious will; and imploring His mercy and loving-kindness, while we forsake all fruitless labors, and strife, and envy, which leads to death, let us turn and have recourse to His compassions.

Let us therefore, brethren, be of humble mind, laying aside all haughtiness, and pride, and foolishness, and angry feelings; and let us act according to that which is written (for the Holy Spirit says, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, neither let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glories glory in the Lord, in diligently seeking Him, and doing judgment and righteousness" ), being especially mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spoke, teaching us meekness and long-suffering. For thus He spoke: "Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; forgive, that it may be forgiven to you; as you do, so shall it be done to you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as

you are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure you measure, with the same it shall be measured to you." By this precept and by these rules let us establish ourselves, that we walk with all humility in obedience to His holy words. For the holy word says, "On whom shall I look, but on him that is meek and peaceable, and who trembles at My words?"

This is the way, beloved, in which we find our Savior, even Jesus Christ, the High Priest of all our offerings, the defender and helper of our infirmity. By Him we look up to the heights of heaven. By Him we behold, as in a glass, His immaculate and most excellent visage. By Him are the eyes of our hearts opened. By Him our foolish and darkened understanding blossoms up anew towards His marvelous light. By Him the Lord has willed that we should taste of immortal knowledge, "who, being the brightness of His majesty, is by so much greater than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." For it is thus written, "Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." But concerning His Son the Lord spoke thus: "You are my Son, today have I begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the heathen for Your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Your possession." And again He says to Him, "Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool." But who are His enemies? All the wicked, and those who set themselves to oppose the will of God.

Let our whole body, then, be preserved in, Christ Jesus; and let every one be subject to his neighbor, according to the special gift bestowed upon him. Let the strong not despise the weak, and let the weak show respect to the strong. Let the rich man provide for the wants of the poor; and let the poor man bless God, because He has given him one by whom his need may be supplied. Let the wise man display his wisdom, not by [mere] words, but through good deeds. Let the humble not bear testimony to himself, but leave witness to be borne to him by another. Let him that is pure in the flesh not grow proud of it, and boast, knowing that it was another who bestowed on him the gift of continence. Let us consider, then, brethren, of what matter we were made, -- who and what manner of beings we came into the world, as it were out of a sepulchre, and from utter darkness. He who made us and fashioned us, having prepared His bountiful gifts for us before we were born, introduced us into His world. Since, therefore, we receive all these things from Him, we ought for everything to give Him thanks; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- St. Clement, Pope of Rome *First Letter to the Corinthians*

# ORTHODOX YOUNG ADULT

## FALL RETREAT

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 14TH

**“IN YOUR PRESENCE,  
THERE IS FULLNESS OF JOY”**

*Are you finding peace & joy in the midst of  
this storm? How do we block the noise? How  
do you find stillness, peace and even, joy?*

METROPOLITAN GREGORY OF NYSSA,  
VERY REV FR STEPHEN LOPOSKY,  
FR GREGORY JENSEN, FR ANASTASIOS ATHANASIOU

9:30 AM-12:00 NOON  
AND 6:30-8:30 PM

VIA ZOOM

SIGN-UP FREE:

[TINYURL.COM/2020YAFALLRETREAT](https://tinyurl.com/2020YAFALLRETREAT)



## **Also Commemorated Today: Apostle Philip of the Seventy**

Saint Philip was born in Caesarea of Palestine. He was married and had four daughters (Sept. 4), who consecrated their virginity to God and were given the gift of prophecy (Acts 21:8). He became one of the Seventy Apostles of Christ, and after Pentecost he was chosen by the Twelve Disciples to serve the needs of the Church of Jerusalem as one of its Seven Deacons. As a deacon, he served at the meals of the faithful and took care of the poor and the widows.

When the assembly of the Apostles dispersed on their missionary journeys, Philip spread the Gospel throughout Samaria. He baptized Simon the Magus (or Magician) who feigned conversion in the hope of making money by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Then the Lord sent him along the Gaza road to convert the Ethiopian eunuch of Queen Candace, as he traveled back to Egypt from Jerusalem in his chariot and was studying and baffled by the prophecies the Book of Isaiah. Philip opened his eyes to see that it was Christ of whom Isaiah spoke, and after instructing him in the Christian faith he baptized the eunuch, then was caught away by the Holy Spirit to continue his preaching in Azotos. From there he evangelized in every city till he came to Caesarea (Acts 8). After that, he made his way to the province of Trallia in Asia Minor. There he led many pagans to the knowledge of God, built a church, and reposed in peace.

His sacred skull is kept at the Monastery of Saint John the Theologian on the island of Patmos. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

### **Martyrs Zenaida and Philonilla of Tarsus**

The holy sisters Zenaida (or Zenais) and Philonella were born in the district of Tarsus early in the first century. They were cousins of the Apostle Paul and were born into a highly educated Jewish family. Both sisters had a natural intelligence and a love for learning. When they entered the famous school at Tarsus to study philosophy, the sisters were instantly attracted to the lectures of the medical theorists. Their cousin Jason, Bishop of Tarsus, was an early convert to Christianity and a follower of their kinsman, the Apostle Paul.

The two sisters learned the Christian faith from Jason and were attracted by the love and compassion of Christ. After their baptism, the two gave themselves over more fully to the study of medicine and began to apply Christian principles and ideas to medical philosophy. They understood that salvation is a healing process and they were deeply impressed with the realization that Christ healed the whole person, spiritual and physical, with the presence of the Holy Spirit.

When Saints Zenaida and Philonalla completed their studies, they moved to Thessaly, where there were many medicinal mineral springs flowing in the

numerous caverns of the Felion Mountains. Here, the Greeks had centers of pagan worship tied to the philosophy of medicine and the worship of Asklepios, the patron of healing. The holy sisters desired to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the great crowds of people who visited these mineral hot springs for healing. Their earnest desire was to combine scientific medicine with prayer and faith and so reveal the nature of salvation and proclaim Jesus Christ to whomever would hear the words of the glorious gospel.

Finding a cavern with a mineral spring, Zenaida and Philonella built two cells and a small chapel for themselves. Having thus established a women's monastery, they used their wealth to create a clinic. The pagan physicians not only sought out the wealthy and generally ignored the poor, but they mixed their medical practice with magic, superstition and witchcraft. Much money was earned from the sale of medical amulets, charms and useless compounds. The two sisters opened their hearts to the poor.

Philonella was a patient and careful scholar. Almost at once she set herself to developing experimental medicine which would approach a scientific medicine.

All her life she would labor to free medicine from the idea of magic, astrology and superstition. Zenaida, on the other hand, was more contemplative. She was keenly interested in the suffering of children and worked to develop pediatric care, but her first love was monasticism. So famous did she become as a spiritual eldress that both men and women sought her spiritual counsel. Three of her spiritual children, Papias, Pateras and Philokyros built a men's monastery not far from the cavern-hospital of the holy sisters.





The sisters' love, compassion and openness to the poor and humble attracted many to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not only the medical skill of the two sisters became renowned, but the miracles worked through their prayers established many in the Gospel.

Toward the end of her life, Saint Zenaida became interested in psychiatric medicine. Many of those who came to their hospital suffered from severe depression and other psychiatric illnesses. Zenaida had the wisdom to recognize these as actual illnesses and concerned herself with their causes and cure.

It is not known in what year Saint Zenaida departed this life, but she left her sister Philonella to carry on their work and instruct others in Christian medicine and the faith. It is said she died after she stepped on a nail, and died after removing it. After the death of her beloved sister, Philonella entered more deeply into the spiritual life, leaving the treatment and care of patients more and more to the students and other nuns. She also became renowned as a wonderworker and reposed in peace and at a great age. The Holy Church bestowed the title, "Friends of Peace" on the two saints because they both preached and practiced peace. Philonella often said that a peaceful and serene disposition could not only aid in healing but could even prevent illness. For her, the source of true peace was the Holy Spirit and the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. The disciples of Saint Zenaida reported that her last words in this life were a prayer for the peace of the world.

Not only were Saints Zenaida and Philonella the first Christian doctors (after the Apostle Luke), but they were the first of those saints whom we call "unmercenary physicians"; Christian medicine began with holy women. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

### **The Distinguished Diocesan Donor Program Needs YOU!**

Covid has turned much of our life upside down, including our Distinguished Diocesan Donors Program! The 2020 Fund Drive is still under way and will continue through the end of November. However, there will be no Fall DDD Dinners.

We encourage as many parishioners as possible to participate. Gifts of \$100 or more are asked. Proceeds from the DDD benefit Camp Nazareth, and because Covid has caused all events and programs to be canceled, DDD is basically our only source of Camp income. Checks are payable to: Distinguished Diocesan Donors and may be sent to:

Diocesan Chancery  
312 Garfield Street  
Johnstown, PA 15906.

May the Lord bless you and yours during these stressful times.

Sincerely in Christ,

Very Rev. Protopresbyter Frank P. Miloro, *Chancellor*

### **September Treasurer's Report**

Glory to Jesus Christ! Thanks to God and your generosity, in July we received \$12,248 in weekly collections. We paid out \$10,532 in expenses. Thank you all for your continued support! To God be the glory!

Herman, Treasurer

#### **Follow Our Diocese On-Line**

**Diocesan Website:** <http://www.acrod.org>

**Camp Nazareth:** <http://www.campnazareth.org>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

**You Tube:** <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

***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, Presbyteria 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 Domieniecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, 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, Nicholas Pavlik, 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.)