

# SOBORNOST

**St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church**

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*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

## SERVICES

**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**

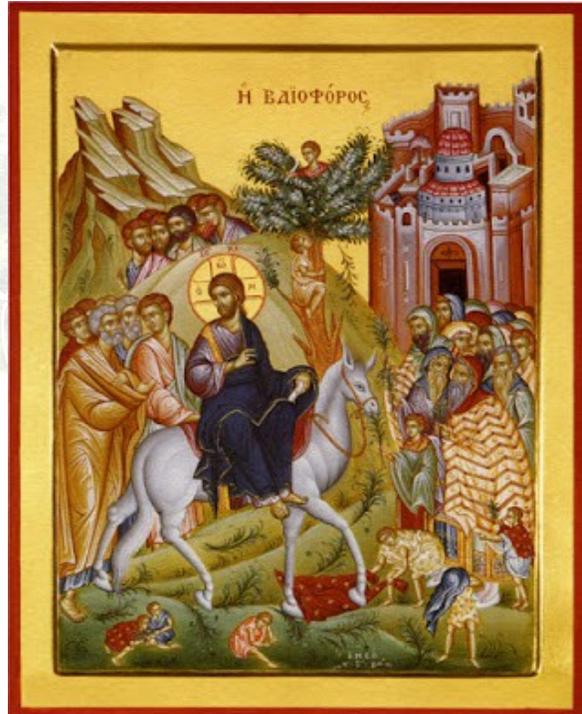
**COVID-19 pandemic; if you are currently not assigned to an attendance group, please contact [outreach@apostlethomas.org](mailto:outreach@apostlethomas.org) for information on when you may attend.**

**May 2, 2021 – Holy Pascha**

**Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!**

**Sunday of Holy Pascha By Archimandrite Epiphanius Theodoropoulos**

The "feast of feasts and celebration of celebrations" has dawned, the great and glorious day of Pascha. The word "Pascha" is a Hebrew word which means "to pass over". When the Angel killed the firstborn of the Egyptians, he passed over the homes of the Hebrews, without entering within and killing the children of the Hebrews, being prevented from doing so by the blood of the sacrificial lamb which they painted on their lintels and door posts. The Hebrews celebrate Passover in memory of this event, as well as the event of the wondrous passing over of the Red Sea and their salvation from bondage under Pharaoh. But these events were at the same time a type with another higher meaning. Egypt signifies sin, while the tyrant Pharaoh signifies the devil. Our Lord, the Lamb of God, came down from heaven to earth and was crucified and buried and rose again, saving us from the land of our bitter bondage and bringing us to the "pasture of abundant flowers" of the spiritual life, and crushed our enemy the devil. This is the passing over we celebrate today.



The passing over from the guilt of sin to justification, from the works of darkness to virtue, from the curse to the blessing, from corruption to incorruption, from death to life, from earth to heaven; therefore, "let us praise the Lord, for by glorifying Him we are glorified".

The Service of the Sunday of Pascha, which is Matins and the Divine Liturgy of John Chrysostom, usually takes place at midnight on Saturday into Sunday. It begins with the chanting of the Canon of Great Saturday "Wave of the Sea" and the troparion "When You Descended Unto Death". This is followed by "Come Receive the Light" and "Your Resurrection". When the Gospel (Mk. 16:1-8) is read, "Christ is Risen" is chanted ten times with verses, then the Canon for Pascha, which is a poem of Saint John of Damascus, a true masterpiece. As the divine Nikodemos the Hagiorite says: "John, who was bright in life, brighter in word, and most bright in soul, wanted to brighten the bright day of the Resurrection of the Lord worthy of his own brightness with two bright things: first he brightened this Bright Day not with another tone, but with the first, because this tone has a melody that is straight forward, intense and noble...; secondly, the bright melodist brightened this Bright Day with the bright sayings of the most bright panegyrist Gregory the Theologian, so that a bright panegyrist, by a bright melodist, through a bright tone, with bright sayings, will brighten the bright day of Bright with the composition of a song" (*Eortodromion*, p. 148). The Canon is complete (with eight Odes). There is no acrostic. It begins with the Irmos "It is the Day of Resurrection". After the Exaposteilarion "You Awoke the Flesh", the Stichera of the Praises are chanted, as well as the particular Stichera of Pascha, namely "A Sacred Pascha", "Come Now From That Sight", etc. At the end of the Divine Liturgy the excellent "Catechetical Discourse of John Chrysostom" is read followed by his Apolytikion.

On the evening of Pascha Sunday the "Vespers of Love" takes place (in many churches today it takes place at either 10:00 or 11:00 in the morning). It is called this, because in olden times the Christians exchanged between themselves a kiss of love. It is called the "Second Resurrection", just as the Vespers of Great Saturday is called the "First Resurrection". During the Vespers is read, according to an old custom, the Gospel in various languages. This occurs because of the world-historic and universal character the event of the Resurrection of the Lord has had in its dissemination. Therefore, "It is the day of Resurrection, let us be radiant, O peoples! Pascha, the Lord's Pascha; for Christ God has brought us from death to life, and from earth to heaven, as we sing the triumphal song."

To Him be the glory and the dominion and the honor and the worship, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 1:1-8**

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 1:1-17**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.



Let us sing the beautiful triumphant hymn of the Resurrection with great strength and joy every day, multiple times a day, for 40 days.

“Christ is Risen, from the dead, trampling down death by death,  
and to those in the tombs, bestowing life.”

May the Clergy and Laity, Friends and Supporters of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese experience the love, joy, and excitement of the early followers of Christ when they first saw Him after His Resurrection. Christ is Risen!

Working in the Risen Lord's Vineyard with much love,

+ Metropolitan Gregory  
+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

This Protocol is to be read in the Divine Liturgy of Pascha and distributed by all means available including bulletins and emailing of parishioners.

# A Word From the Holy Fathers

Even if we perform upon thousands of good works, my brethren: fasts, prayers, almsgiving; even if we shed our blood for our Christ and we don't have these two loves [love of God and love of brethren], but on the contrary have hatred and malice toward our brethren, all the good we have done is of the devil and we go to hell.

But, you say, we go to hell despite all the good we do because of that little hatred? Yes, my brethren, because that hatred is the devil's poison, and just as when we put a little yeast in a hundred pounds of flour it has such power that it causes all the dough to rise, so it is with hatred. It transforms all the good we have done into the devil's poison.

– St. Kosmos Aitolos

## **From Pascha to Pentecost** by Protopresbyter Dr. George D. Dragas

**1. The Pentecostal Period.** The word, Pentecost means "the fiftieth" and is used to designate the great event of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (*Epiphotesis*) upon the Apostles and the Church on the 50th day after the Resurrection of Christ, just ten days after His Ascension into Heaven.

Before His Passion, the Lord spoke to his Disciples about the gift of the Holy Spirit, which they were to receive after the Ascension. The details are preserved in the Gospel of Saint John: "I will ask the Father to send you the Holy Spirit who will defend you and always be with you" (14:16). He also said, "The Holy Spirit can not come to defend you until I leave. But after I am gone, I will send the Spirit to you" (16:7). After His Resurrection, the Lord appeared to the Disciples, and He said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (20:22). This was a foretaste of the Outpouring (*Epiphotesis*) on Pentecost Sunday.

Near the end of Saint Luke's Gospel, Christ tells His Disciples, "I will send you the One My Father has promised, but you must stay in the city until you are given power from above" (24:49). It is in the Acts of the Apostles, however, that Saint Luke speaks of the fulfillment of this promise: "On the day of Pentecost, all the Lord's followers were together in one place. Suddenly, there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind. It filled the house where they were meeting. Then they saw what looked like fiery tongues moving in all directions, and a tongue came and settled on each person there. The Holy Spirit took control of everyone, and they began speaking whatever language the Spirit let them speak" (2:1-4).

Since ancient times, the 50-day period from Pascha to Pentecost has been called Pentecost because what began with the Lord breathing the Holy Spirit on His Disciples was consummated with the full descent of the Spirit upon the Disciples and the whole Church. Thus, the Church was fully born and began to grow.

During this period, all kneeling is prohibited as a tangible confession of the Resurrection of Christ. It is only on the actual day of Pentecost that kneeling is resumed, and is connected with a special kneeling ceremony (*akolouthia gonyklesias*), which consists of prayers for the gift of the Holy Spirit, hence the name, "Kneeling Day" (*tes gonatistes*) for Pentecost.

Later on, another week was added to these 50 days in order to celebrate the post-feast (*metheorta*) of the Feast of Pentecost. Thus, today the period of movable Feasts after Pascha spans eight weeks, to include the Sunday of All Saints (*Agion Panton*), and is divided into three parts: 1) The 40 post-festal days of Pascha, 2) The Feast of the Ascension, together with its post-festal period, and 3) The Feast of Pentecost together with its own post-festal period. The hymns of this period are contained in the special Pentecostal book, the *Pentecostarion*.

**2. Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women.** We have already spoken about the New Week (*Diakainesimos*) and the Sunday of Saint Thomas (the first Sunday after Pascha). The second Sunday after Pascha is called the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women (*Kyriake ton Myroforon*). It is dedicated to the women who brought myrrh to the tomb of Christ. It is also dedicated to the secret disciples of the Lord, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who arranged for and assisted in the Lord's burial. This is clearly commemorated in the Gospel lesson for the day (Mark 15.43-16.8).

The Myrrh-Bearing Women we can identify from the Holy Gospels are Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, (a.k.a., Mary of Clopas, Joanna the wife of Huza, a guardian of Herod Antipas, Salome the mother of the sons of Zebedee, and Suzanna).

Joseph of Arimathea (a city of Judaea) was a rich nobleman and a member of the Sanhedrin (a council deputy in Jerusalem). He was the one who did not agree with the council's decision against Christ. He was also the one who bravely asked Pontius Pilate for the body of Christ (Matthew 27.57-60, Mark 15.42-47, Luke 23.50-56, John 19.38-42). Nicodemus was a Jewish leader, a Pharisee, who was well read in the Scriptures and visited Christ by night (John 3.1-21 and 19.39-42).

All these sacred persons clearly demonstrate to us that people from all walks of life can be disciples of the Lord and enjoy the privilege of taking care of His body and become primary witnesses of the Lord's mighty Resurrection.

### **3. Sundays of the Paralytic, The Samaritan Woman, and the Man Born Blind.**

The following three Sundays are known, in order, as the Sunday of the Paralytic, the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, and the Sunday of the Man Born Blind, because of the Gospel readings and the hymns prescribed for them. The incidents commemorated in these feasts all demonstrate the divine authority, identity and power of Christ, which were then fully revealed by his Resurrection.

The healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda or Bethsaida (John 5.1-18) shows Christ's authority over the Sabbath because it was on the Sabbath day that He healed the paralytic.

The conversation of the Lord with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well near Sychar (John 4.3-42) reaches its high point when the Lord discloses his identity: "I am the One [the Christ] Who is speaking to you now" (4:26). At the end of the story, the Samaritans openly declare, "We are certain that He is the Savior of the world" (4:42).

Finally, the healing of the blind man (John 9:1-41) demonstrates the divine power of Christ and the fact that He came from God: "This is the first time in history that anyone has ever given sight to someone born blind. Jesus could not do anything unless He came from God" (9:32).

**4. Mid-Pentecost.** The Wednesday after the Sunday of the Paralytic falls exactly in the middle of the 50 days of the period of Pentecost and is consequently called Mid-Pentecost (*Mesopentekoste*). It is a Festal Day, and according to ancient custom, it draws its meaning from the Gospel prescribed for it (John 7.14-30). This Gospel lesson contains the speech of the Lord made in the Temple, in the middle of the feast of the Tabernacles (*Skenopegias*), which explains His authority over the Sabbath in terms of the divine origin of both His teaching and His existence. Central to this are the Lord's words to the people of Jerusalem: "I did not come on My own. The One Who sent Me is truthful, and you do not know Him. But I know the One Who sent Me, because I came from Him" (7:28). Also central are the words the Lord uttered on the last day of the Feast which anticipate the Outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost: "If you are thirsty, come to Me and drink! Have faith in Me, and you will have life-giving water flowing from deep inside you" (7:37). The hymns of this Feast recall the miracles of the Lord, which demonstrate His Godhead, and admonish the Christians "to keep steadfastly the commandments of the Lord in order to become worthy to celebrate his Ascension and to participate in the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Doxastikon ton Aion).

**5. The Return of Pascha.** On the Wednesday after the Sunday of the Man Born Blind (the 6th Sunday after Pascha), we celebrate the Return (*apodosis*), or completion, of the post-festal period of Pascha. The services of the day, which

include a paschal liturgy, are sung in a manner identical to that of the New Week. This is actually the 39th day after Pascha, the eve of the Ascension Day, when we sing the Resurrection Hymn, *Christos Anesti*, and exchange the Resurrection greeting for the last time.

**6. The Ascension.** On the following day, which is the 40th day after Pascha, the Ascension of the Lord into Heaven is commemorated. The feast of the Ascension (*Analipseos*) is explicitly mentioned in the fourth century, but its origins most probably go back to the preceding centuries. The ancient church manual, *Apostolic Constitutions*, makes the following comment about it: "Again counting 40 days after the first Sunday, you must celebrate from Sunday until Thursday the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, in which He fulfilled the whole economy and design of our salvation, ascended to God the Father, Who had sent Him, and sat at the right hand of the Power to wait until His enemies are placed under his feet" (Book V, chapter 20).

The feast of the Ascension, then, marks the end and the sealing of the work of the Lord on Earth, as well as the Ascension of human nature to heaven and consequently foreshadows the forthcoming Gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is celebrated until the Friday of the following week, when it is returned (and therefore closed).

The meaning of the Lord's Ascension is also connected with His eternal priesthood. The Epistle to the Hebrews sums it up as follows: "We have a Great High Priest Who has gone into Heaven, Jesus the Son of God" (4:14)... Jesus has gone there (behind the curtain and into the most holy place) ahead of us, and He is our High Priest forever, just like Melchizedek (6:20)... Jesus will never die, and so He will be a Priest forever. He is forever able to save the people He leads to God because He always lives to speak to God for them. Jesus is the High Priest we need (7:24-26)... He is the perfect High Priest forever (7:28)... who sits at the right side of God's great throne in heaven (8:1)."

**7. Sunday of the Holy Fathers.** The Sunday, which falls in the middle of the festal period of the Ascension (the 7th Sunday after Pascha), is dedicated to the 318 Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 AD) and is consequently known as the Sunday of the Holy Fathers (*Ton Pateron*).

The Gospel of this day comes from the Lord's High Priestly Prayer for the unity of Christians found in John 17:1-13. The Church ordered the commemoration of the Fathers on this particular Sunday because the Eparchial Synods, which were summoned for the purpose of dealing with various local matters, usually met during the Pentecostal period.

Successors of the Apostles, the Fathers, have kept the apostolic faith through their teachings. The Kontakion of the Feast puts this most eloquently and clearly: "The preaching of the Apostles and the dogmas of the Fathers sealed one faith for the Church which, wearing the garment of truth waved with theology from above, rightly dispenses and glorifies the great mystery of piety."

The Saturday before Pentecost is a Saturday of the Souls (*Psychosabbaton*), and prayers are offered for those who fell asleep that they, too, may become worthy through our prayers of the Pentecostal gift, which is commemorated the next day.

**8. Pentecost Sunday.** The Christian feast of Pentecost corresponds to the Hebrew feast which bears the same name, and in which the first fruits of Israel's new crops were offered to God (*Protogennemata*).

The Christian feast commemorates the first fruits of the preaching of the Apostles, which followed the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them on the day of Pentecost, and on account of which the first Christian Church was born and established with three thousand souls. Ever since Pentecost, the Spirit abides in the Church and regulates the Church's life and growth. The Spirit brings the entire constitution of the Church together as the Body of Christ. As the Comforter (*Parakletos*), He is the pledge of Christ's return and final victory with the entire body of the Church.

The celebration of this feast goes back to apostolic times. According to ancient custom, catechumens were baptized on this occasion and therefore, even today, no Trisagion is sung during the Liturgy. Instead, the hymn "Those baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," is sung. The vespers of this day, following immediately after the Divine Liturgy, is especially notable because of the long kneeling supplication, which is offered after the Entrance. This supplication is the first of several which follow after the feast, having been previously suspended during the Pentecostal Period.

Pentecost is celebrated throughout the week and is returned on the following Saturday. The Monday of the post-festal period is distinguished from the other post-festal days because it is dedicated to the Holy Spirit (*Deftera tou Agiou Pneumatos*). The services of the day follow the pattern of the preceding Pentecostal Sunday. Fasting is not observed during the week of (after) Pentecost.

The Doxastikon hymn of the day is the well known prayer with which most Church services begin and which is used by many Orthodox Christians as a first Prayer of each day: "Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, present everywhere and filling all things, come and abide in us; cleanse us from every stain and save our souls Gracious Lord."

**9. Sunday of All-Saints.** The Sunday after Pentecost is known as the Sunday of All Saints. It is a very ancient feast mentioned at the end of the fourth century and seems to have been initially instituted as a feast in honor of all the Martyrs. The Church always honored the Martyrs. Since honoring the Martyrs was originally a local affair, however, many of the Martyrs were unknown, and it is probably for this reason that such a feast was instituted to honor all Martyrs, known and unknown. This feast was placed very appropriately after Pente-cost because the Church was watered and increased through the witness & blood of the Martyrs. Later, when the Church honored others as Saints besides the Martyrs, the moveable feast after Pascha acquired a more general character and was changed into a feast in honor of all the Saints.

**10. The Feast of the Holy Apostles.** On the Monday after the Sunday of All Saints, a fast is observed for the Feast of the Holy Apostles. Originally, this was a weekly fast as it is explicitly stated in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (Book V, chapter 20). Later on, it was connected with the feast of the Holy Apostles (June 29-30) and was extended to the whole period from the Monday after the Sunday of All Saints to the 28th of June. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

### **Commemorated Today: Blessed Mother Matrona of Moscow**

She was blind from birth, but from a very young age Blessed Matrona was filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit to be able to clearly see the sins and passions and even the thoughts of people who came to her. Born totally without eyes she was blessed with the ability to foretell future events. This simple, illiterate woman, born in a remote Russian village in a poor peasant family is now known and honored throughout Russia as a powerful intercessor before the Lord and a worker of miracles but is less well known here in America.

Blessed Matrona was born in the village of Sebeno, about 300 kilometers south of Moscow in 1885. She was the fourth child born into a poor family and was initially seen as another unwelcome mouth to feed. Prior to her birth, her mother decided to send her to an orphanage in the nearby village of Buchalki but she had a dream in which she felt a sign from God to accept and care for the child. Matrona's family lived directly across from the village church and were a pious family and all frequently attended services. Matrona especially loved the church services and spent most of her time there, literally "growing up" in the church. There in the church she stood, riveted to one spot, immersing herself in the worship, learning by memory all of the hymns and prayers of the divine services. Even as a young child, before she learned to talk, her parents at times discovered her, in the middle of the night when everyone was asleep, pulling the icons from the family icon corner and speaking to them in her childish language.

Beginning around the age of 7 it began to be noticed that when Matrona prayed for the sick they often recovered. From that time on a steady stream of sick people from their village and the surrounding province made their way to the family home begging Matrona to pray for them. People came to her with a multitude of problems and concerns besides sicknesses: loss of a job, unhappy love, what decision to make regarding a move, psychiatric illnesses... In gratitude for the help they received they would leave gifts of food and other items for the family. Her parents, expecting that this blind child would be an unwelcome burden on a poor family, now realized how God was blessing their family and village with this "handicapped" child. When she was 17 years old she lost the ability to walk, the cause of the paralysis never discovered. She never complained of her new handicap, but bore it as the will of God.

At the age of 14, Blessed Matrona joined a group of pilgrims who journeyed to the city of Kronstadt to see the famed Russian priest and miracle worker, Father John of Kronstadt. Father John, with his own gift of spiritual discernment, demanded that the crowd make a space for him to meet the teenager. As he greeted Matrona he exclaimed: "*Here goes my successor, the eighth pillar of Russia!*"

Blessed Matrona always emphasized that it was the power of God, and not her own that brought healing to anyone: "*What, Matrona is God? Is that it? It is God that helps!*" She always prayed in a loud voice and insisted that the people who came to her have faith in God and repent of their sins. She required that everyone who came to her wear a cross throughout their lives. She herself followed the same, strict pattern throughout her life: she devoted her nights to prayer and her days to receiving visitors, sometimes up to forty a day. A tiny woman, she usually sat on her bed cross-legged, while visitors knelt before her bed. Matrona would reach out her hands and with her fingertips touch her visitors head and make the Sign of the Cross over them and pray for them, giving a word of consolation or advice as needed. With her love and compassion for people she held them in her arms and prayed for them as they sobbed in pain and despair. It is said that she had a small depression on her forehead made by her fingers because she made the Sign of the Cross so frequently, slowly and carefully.

With her spiritual gifts she predicted the coming of the Russian Revolution and described in detail how churches would be desecrated and closed and how believers would be persecuted and killed. During World War II she was often the only source of information on the safety of sons and husband who had gone off to fight in the war. To one family she would be reassuring: "*Alive! Wait for him...*" To another: "*They've died, arrange for the burial service*".

With the ascent of the Communists Matrona's life was in danger. In 1925 at the age of 40 she was forced to flee to a friend's home in the relative anonymity of Moscow. Two of her brothers, Mikhail and Ivan had become staunch Communists and were irritated by the constant stream of the sick and the suffering coming to see their sister in the family home. The brothers also knew the danger they and their family faced from the Communist authorities since their village home had become a place of religious pilgrimage. Here in Moscow Matrona continued her ministry of prayer intercession for the sick but was forced to continuously move from apartment to apartment, one step ahead of the Communist authorities who sought to put an end to her popularity. She lived as a homeless wanderer without her own home, possessions or even food, being completely dependent on what was given to her.

Once a Communist official came to arrest Matrona who did not leave her residence but calmly waited for his arrival. She greeted him with a warning: "*Go, go quickly, there is trouble for you at home! A blind woman has no place to hide. I'll sit here on the bed, I won't go anywhere.*" Fearful, the policeman ran home to find that his wife had been badly burned by the stove. He managed to get her to the hospital and saved her life. When he returned to his office the next day, his chief asked him: "*Well, did you get the blind woman?*" He replied: "*I'm not taking her anywhere. If that blind woman hadn't told me, I would have lost my wife, but I was able to get her to the hospital in time.*"

She predicted the day of her death, giving everyone instructions concerning her funeral and burial. Until the end she frequently received Holy Confession and Holy Communion. She remained very humble and like ordinary people she admitted that she was afraid of her approaching death. Before her death on May 2, 1952 she instructed those around her:

*"Everyone, everyone who will come to me: tell me, as if I were alive, of your sorrows, and I will see you, and hear you, and help you. After my death few people will visit my grave, only close friends, and when they die my grave will be abandoned. But after many years people will hear about me and come in crowds for help in their sorrows and with requests for prayer for them to the Lord God, and I will help everyone and listen to everyone."*

Blessed Matrona was glorified as a saint of the Orthodox Church on May 2, 1999. Her relics are enshrined in the Protection Monastery in Moscow where every day hundreds of people stand in long lines to bring her their problems, illnesses, and needs as they ask for her prayers before the throne of the Lord.

## Her Significance

The life of St. Matrona reminds us that all of us are called to a life of holiness and that this is possible for all of us. She was not a nun, never attended a seminary, in fact was an illiterate, peasant woman yet was so filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit that she was able to see people's needs and sins, predict the future, and perform countless miracles even after her death. The Bible teaches that when a person is cleansed of their sinful passions and is filled with the Holy Spirit the presence of the Spirit produces certain "gifts" or "fruit". These include the ability to read the hearts of people, perform miracles, predict future events... (see 1 Corinthians 12:4-11) as well as characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness... (see Galatians 5:22)

Why is it that we do not have people like her among us in America today? Where are these people who can predict the future and perform miracles? St. Matrona was immersed, she was "marinated" in the divine services of the Church, spending countless hours in her village church along with hours daily of her own private prayer. What are we in America immersed or marinated in? To what do we devote our time? Television, internet, Facebook, movies, magazines, shopping.... The Bible also describes the "fruit" of this type of immersion: adultery, fornication, hatred, jealousy, selfish ambition, dissension... (see Galatians 5:19). Which do you prefer in your life, the fruit which St. Matrona had or the fruit of this world? - Fr. Edward Pehanich (*from acrod.org*)



## **May Anniversaries and Birthdays**



### **Anniversaries:**

Ronnie & Katrina Robinson 1<sup>st</sup>      Kari & Mary Diane David 4<sup>th</sup>  
Alex & Valentina Makowelski 18<sup>th</sup>      Chris & Nicole Nicolaus 27<sup>th</sup>  
Brad & Bernadette Karbowsky 28<sup>th</sup>

### **Birthdays:**

Charlotte Flade 6<sup>th</sup>      Kelsey Moore 11<sup>th</sup>      Helen Janowiak 12<sup>th</sup>  
Amelia Hanbury 15<sup>th</sup>      Jennifer Popescu 20<sup>th</sup>      Olivia Wright 24<sup>th</sup>  
Andy Single 27<sup>th</sup>

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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 & Marlena Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, 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, Sandy Tucker, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Joe & Darlene Waters, Christine, Jo, 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.)