

# SOBORNOST

**St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church**

**(301) 638-5035 Church**  
**4419 Leonardtown Road**  
**Waldorf, MD 20601**

**Rev. Father Joseph Edgington, Pastor**  
**(703) 532-8017**

[fredgington@gmail.com](mailto:fredgington@gmail.com)

[www.apostlethomas.org](http://www.apostlethomas.org)

*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

## SERVICES

**Saturday: Confession 4:30 PM**

**Great Vespers 5:00 PM**

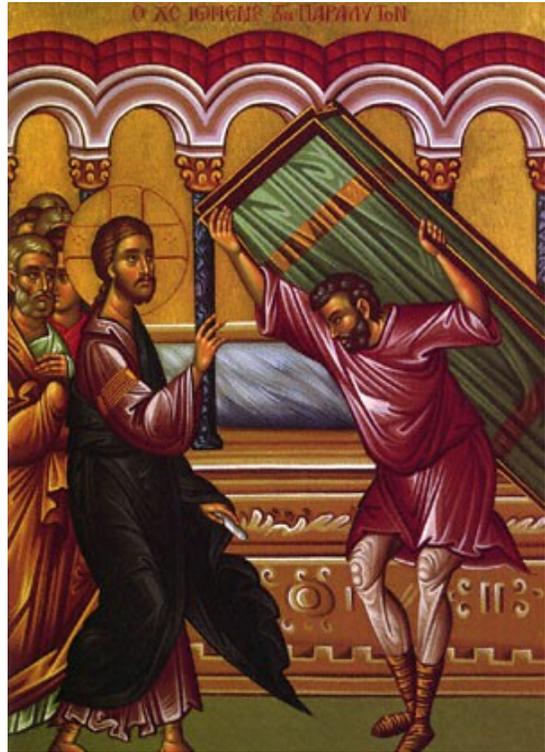
**Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM**

**Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM**

**May 23, 2021 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of  
Pascha | Sunday of the Paralytic**

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

On this Sunday the most wonderful healing of the paralytic by the Sheep's Pool, who for 38 years languished in severe illness is glorified. According to the explanation of the Synaxarion, this miracle is celebrated on this Sunday because Christ did it during the Jewish Pentecost. In the healing of the paralytic the Holy Church sees the paradigm of the renewal of life of all humanity through the resurrection of Christ. "Christ," she sings in the hymns of this day, "the first-born of creation, and the Creator of all things that have come into being, is risen from the dead as the first-fruits of those who slept. He renewed in Himself the corrupted nature of our race." "On this day is death despoiled and Hades brought to naught. And the race of men is vested in incorruption. We therefore cry to You with thanksgiving: glory, O Christ, to Your arising." Together with this the Holy Church, reminding us about the paralysis of our souls through sin, calls each of us to appeal: "O Most Gracious One, heal my soul which has been ailing for many years, as You healed the paralytic before, that I may follow Your way, which You have shown to those who love You"; "As You raised up the paralytic, O Christ, so also make whole my soul which is paralyzed by transgressions, and help me to walk in Your upright ways." As the miracle remembered now was accomplished



by the Savior at the Sheep's Pool, in which for the healing of sufferings, "an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons and troubled the water" in some troparia of the canon he is glorified as the Holy Archangel Michael. Praising him as the "chief of angels," "leader" of the "highest ministers," the Holy Church hymns him as the "guide for the erring" and, in view of our spiritual paralysis, prayerfully appeals to him: "pray for our enlightenment," "pacify our life, which is ever troubled by the assaults of the serpent and by the circumstances of an ever unstable life," "with us pray for the deliverance of our sins and correction of our way of life," and "the enjoyment of eternal blessings." (*from Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., by S. V. Bulgakov (Trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris)*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 9:32-42**

In those days, as Peter went through all *parts of the country*, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord. At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 5:1-15**

At that time, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep *Gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw

him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.” And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.” He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’” Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk’?” But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being *in that* place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.” The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

We must have positive thoughts, otherwise none of the spiritual fathers - not even the Saints - can help us. This is our aim, to totally submit our mind to the grace of God. The only thing Christ is asking from us is our humility. The rest is taken care of by His grace. When our soul lives carelessly without watching over its thoughts, it will consequently fill up with dirty and deceiving thoughts. As a result, people start developing psychological problems which gradually pile up. - St. Paisios the Athonite

– St. Paisios the Athonite

### **Commemorated Today: Saint Michael the Confessor**

From his youth he longed for the monastic life and was sent by Patriarch Tarasius (784-806) to a monastery on the coast of the Black Sea. Saint Theophylactus (March 8), the future Bishop of Nicomedia also entered the monastery together with him. At the monastery both monks engaged in spiritual struggles and were soon glorified by gifts from the Lord. Once, during a harvest, when the people were weakened by thirst, an empty metal vessel was filled with water by the prayer of the monks. Patriarch Tarasius consecrated Saint Michael as bishop of the city of Synnada. Through his holy life and wisdom, Saint Michael won the love of believers, and the notice of the emperors Nicephorus I (802-811) and Michael I Rangabe (811-813). Saint Michael was present at the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 787. When the Iconoclast heretic Leo the Armenian (813-820) assumed the throne, he began to expel Orthodox hierarchs from their Sees, appointing heretics in their place. Saint Michael defended Orthodoxy, bravely opposing the heretics and denouncing their error. Leo the Armenian brought Saint

Michael to trial, but not fearing torture he answered resolutely, “I venerate the holy icons of my Savior Jesus Christ and the All-Pure Virgin, His Mother, and all the saints, and it is to them I bow down. I shall not obey your decrees to remove icons from churches.” Leo then banished Saint Michael to the city of Eudokiada, where the confessor died about the year 821. (*from oca.org*)ia. Saint Theodore reposed in his old age in the year 368. (*from oca.org*)

## **Also Commemorated Today: Papoulakis: Saint Joachim of Vatopaidi**

### HIS ORIGINS

According to a brief narrative of the devout physician Panos Raftopoulos, a Christian gentleman in every sense, the amazing hero of our story came from Ithaki. He was born of pious parents in the year 1786 in the village of Kalyvia, in what was at that time the province of Polyktoria. His father was Angelos Patrikios, and his mother, who came from Preveza, was called Agnes. His father, a boat captain by trade, soon lost his first wife and married a second time - to the misfortune of little John ("Ioannis" - his name before becoming a monk). Young John's stepmother hated him and plotted against him.

From an early age, it was obvious that this young child had a good nature, and that he would reach a high level of virtue. He exhibited nothing childish or disorderly that would be characteristic of small children. For his cruel and loveless stepmother, however, this was another provocation and only increased her hatred toward the innocent John. With this venomous instinct as a basis, the depraved stepmother pressed her naive and good spouse to remove the young boy from their house, because supposedly he was preoccupied with things of the Church and was neglecting his household chores. Consequently, in order to spare young John the malice of his stepmother, he was taken onto his father's ship to work with the sailors. However, even here he was not left in peace until he was finally exiled far away on a foreign ship, where he remained working as a novice sailor. As acquaintances of his later related, while working on the ship, he did not neglect his spiritual life, and especially prayer, which he considered to be his primary duty.

Young John remained in this occupation until he was seventeen years old, and he visited various ports of trade of that time. He thus at one point arrived at Athos for business reasons. Specifically, they docked at the port of the great monastery of Vatopaidi, where the young sailor John found time to disembark in order to visit and venerate the Monastery. His devout predispositions and his entire spiritual preoccupation had matured him significantly, and he was therefore able to comprehend the monastic ideology. The various lives of Saints that he had read fostered his yearning to live the monastic life. This desire was fulfilled, and moreover at a monastery on Athos, when a suitable opportunity and circumstances

presented themselves. His entry into the Monastery, as he later recalled, enchanted him and literally took him captive. He completely forgot about his worldly concerns and affairs to the point that, if there were a way, he would never have to go back, but would be able to remain forever and stand in awe of the sublimity and sanctity of the place.

He was presented to the Abbot, to whom he made a reverence with contrition, and as a confession, humbly revealed to him his yearning and his purpose, beseeching him to keep him there in the brotherhood and to tonsure him as a monk. The Abbot marveled at the decorum and the humility of the boy, as well as at his ardent desire. Having a discerning spirit, the Abbot accurately perceived his future progress and thus did not reject his persistent supplication.

### JOHN'S NEW WAY OF LIFE

John was now a novice at Vatopaidi. Although he was quite young, he was not ignorant of worldly vanity. He began working at a very early age and, because of his profession, had traveled about the various ports of trade of that time. He came into direct contact with life's realities; consequently, he had no juvenile and dreamy fantasies about the world like others his age. For him, this was a solid base for the beginning of his new life, because he had acquired many spoils that would be useful in the upcoming combat and battles of the invisible warfare that the monastic life entails.

By our experience, we are convinced that it is not only a good intent and an innocent nature that are conducive to a good beginning toward a virtuous life, but also a strict and practical life full of difficulties, and we find the sacred words of the Psalms appropriate in the case of our exceptional John: "You have enlarged me when I was in distress" (Ps. 4:2). Both his good nature and his moral character played an important role toward this end. We learned that even when he was nursing as an infant, he kept the fast days. In general, for human life as a whole, restrictions and afflictions are of benefit, whereas ease is disorienting.

The young novice began his trial period with zeal and ardor, and his experienced guides, with equally significant circumspection and prudence, led him along the patristic lines of our sacred tradition. With the active life as a "rung toward theoria" as the fathers put it, the zealous spiritual athlete gave himself over to submission and obedience as a basis for a love of labor, by which the meaning of the Cross is conveyed. These qualities, as well as the ensuing prayer, which nurtures the continual remembrance of God, became for him his "bread day and night" (Ps. 41:4 LXX). His continual confession to his spiritual father, which, according to the Fathers, is a precise revelation of the secret thoughts of the heart, soon brought about the holy sense of mourning, by which the knocking on the door through the

"unutterable groaning" (see Rom. 8:25) of the crushed heart and the noetic supplications of grace uphold those who mourn.

Under the ever-watchful supervision of the wise elders, the ardent John was not slow to produce fruit "like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season" (Ps. 1:3). And in fact, he did bear the utmost fruit - "a hundredfold," to use the expression of the Divine Scriptures. With his vigorous nature, bright mind, and unparalleled courage, he quickly succeeded in proving himself in his life as a novice to be worthy of the monastic tonsure, and was advanced by his elder to the Small Schema as a monk. His name was changed from John to Joachim.

According to the Scripture, "when a lamp has been lit, it is not put in a secret place, or under a basket, but it is set on a lamp stand" (see Luke 11:33). Thus Father Joachim, after he was judged fit for the monastic habit, no longer remained hidden, but took on various responsible obediences for his holy Monastery according to his abilities, and he distinguished himself in these tasks, in the opinion of his elders. Because of this, he was advanced to the monastic Great Schema, and he took on even more important and responsible positions in the administration of the Monastery, continuously satisfying the brethren and everyone else. Besides his eloquence and other charismata, he had such gifts of kindness and persuasion that he was loved and welcomed wherever he happened to be. His pure disposition, coupled with the innate compassion that he always cultivated, compelled him to sympathize with the pain of the people of God. And at that time, this sympathy of his was overflowing because of the subjugation and the accompanying misfortunes that were afflicting our martyred nation. His unquenchable zeal and his exacting observance of the monastic rules, in which he was instructed from the beginning by the scholarly and very discerning fathers of his monastery, rendered him a spiritual instrument and a recipient of divine illumination capable of discerning persons, things, and situations when his monastery installed him as steward, overseer, and adviser in whatever concerned its management and administration.

Having all his hope ever fixed in God, he never wavered before any danger. He walked tirelessly from place to place, and at a good pace; no one was able to keep up with him. Having great discretion and insight with regards to activities, he was appointed a counselor for the Monastery by the Abbot, a position he held until he was sent out from it as a missionary for the liberty of the nation.

This tireless laborer of compassion and love moved about from place to place, wherever our stricken people called him, and gave himself with zeal as a support and instructor. He consoled, he taught, and he constantly bolstered the morale of the people, especially of the non-combatant civilians, who were driven to wander about without food or shelter.

## HIS RETURN TO HESYCHIA

When the tempest of the war subsided by the mercy of God, though only after a multitude of casualties in the liberation of the nation, blessed Joachim Papoulakis withdrew to his beloved hesychia. However, he did not return to Athos and Vatopaidi, the monastery of his repentance, but preferred instead the quiet areas of the land of his birth, Ithaki; but this was not by human design. Holy men always speak and act "not by their own will, but as they are moved by the Holy Spirit" (see 2 Peter 1:21). This devout athlete in the spiritual arena and instrument for the twofold love of God and man not only always disregarded his own interest, but also directed his every action to the benefit of the people; this was his reason for residing outside of Athos. Throughout the entire course of his lifelong struggle, according to those who knew him, he always linked compassion for others with his own personal asceticism. This is why he preferred to live the hesychastic life within the world, binding together these two callings. Having arrived in Ithaki, he chose to reside in the forest called Aphentikos Longos, meaning "Master's Thicket." He remained there for about five years in strict asceticism, barefoot and half-naked, living in fasting and hardships.

During this period, Elder Joachim's chief occupation was prayer; and he went about it using all of the rules and principles of spiritual inwardness and sobriety that he had practiced so intently during his stay on Athos. His five years of extreme asceticism in his carefree surroundings, coupled with his earlier training, raised him to the level of godly illumination; and Divine Grace elevated him to deified theoria - now a normal state for him - at which point his blessed soul was adorned with clairvoyance and foreknowledge. What is more blessed than the mind that has been illumined and the heart that has been purified? The person who is found worthy of these things sees, by means of them, God and the things of God. How very little we know about the life of holy men - and only in a faint way do they become known to us - and this from glimpses of their life that they themselves have allowed us to see.

Everyone drew attention to the Saint's prophetic and therapeutic charismata, which were usually revealed when he associated with the people for their benefit. But what struggle did this spiritual giant undergo in order to put off the "old man" (Eph. 4:22) of corruption and lies, to mortify the "members which are on the earth" (Col. 3:5), and to crush the beast of egocentricity - which is truly the "abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15) - so that "mortality might be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor. 5:4)? Only fellow spiritual athletes who are one in heart, in way of life, and belief know these things; those who take up the cross of Christ; those who have hurled themselves with zeal into the sea of painstaking diligence and have fully embraced "spiritual poverty" (see Matt. 5:3) by means of voluntary obedience and

submission. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them" (Gal. 6:16), and this is precisely what the blessed Elder Joachim Papoulakis did. "By their fruits you will know them" (Matt. 7:20), says our Lord. The spiritual charismata that adorned his benevolent soul and his innumerable miracles, through which he still today benefits the faithful, tell us of his spiritual riches and of the boldness he has before God.

### THE ACTIVITY OF SAINT JOACHIM

Living in strict asceticism in the ravine known as Gouves, Elder Joachim was becoming known especially by the nearby inhabitants. At first, a few elderly women were visiting him for their spiritual benefit, something that often happens with the Greek people. Those that benefited from their visits spoke about it to others, and soon Papoulakis, as they called him, became the center of interest for the people of Ithaki. With his winsome and eloquent manner of expression, he captivated the masses, but even more so he consoled the distressed, supported the weak and infirm, and continually promoted piety and a virtuous morality, which during that period of foreign occupation had been brushed aside. He gave more of his attention to the poor and destitute, and whatever money or material goods were given to him, he distributed to them. To those, however, whose needs were spiritual rather than material, blessed Papoulakis repeated the saying of the Chief Apostle Peter: "What I do have I give you" (Acts 3:6); and by means of the clairvoyant gift that Divine Grace had so lavishly bestowed upon him, he resolved the uncertainties that troubled believers, rescuing them from dangers or harm that they would have suffered had they followed their own devices. He thwarted plots and retaliatory murders that were being planned in absolute secrecy, freed people from sterility, foretold future events that would happen to various persons, and revealed things about people who were missing or were far away.

The virtuous life and continual teaching of this blessed man so influenced this forsaken people that it brought about a palpable transformation in their moral behavior. The otherwise unchecked crime was significantly reduced, and a moral life and order became the general rule on the island. But out of resentment for this spiritual progress and prosperity, Satan, that evil leader, incited others to make his first assault in order to hinder the Elder. Some envious and malicious men spread rumors that the Elder had prophesied that a great earthquake was about to happen, and because of it, the pregnant women would miscarry their children, something that upset the British governor of the area. This pompous fellow summoned Papoulakis and arrogantly began to threaten him. With a humble demeanor, the blessed Elder answered in defense that he had never said such a thing, that it was slander. However, the haughty governor reproached the Elder, and monasticism in general, and in anger rose from his seat in order to mistreat the humble monk. But,

O Thy wonders, Lord All-bountiful and our King! The armchair of the governor was spontaneously shattered into pieces, and he fell to the ground unconscious. His guards moved him immediately to his bed, where he came to after several hours following medical intervention. As soon as he got up, this previously presumptuous man fell at the Elder's feet and asked his forgiveness. He gave him permission to go about freely wherever he wanted and to exercise his spiritual duties, and proclaimed to everyone that he was a saint. This was one of the first acts by which the most blessed Elder revealed the supernatural power of Grace that had come to reside in his soul, because God's holy ones, according to the sacred verse, "judge all things, yet they themselves are judged by no one" (see 1 Cor. 2:15).

According to the description of his first biographer, the blessed Elder was in this supernatural state of Grace from the initial stage of his repentance at Vatopaidi Monastery. At some nearby harbor - which most certainly would have been that of Vatopaidi Monastery - some vessels were mooring in order to exchange goods? Blessed Joachim foresaw approaching bad weather and warned the ships' captains to leave the area where they were docked and to move to a safer place, which most likely he himself indicated. All of them complied with his advice except one, who instead mocked the Elder. Suddenly, however, such a tempest arose that only those who believed him and fled were saved, whereas the ship of the man who scorned his warning was destroyed.

Another time, while still a monk on Athos, when he had been sent for duties out in the world - perhaps to the dependencies of the Monastery which at that time were outside the Holy Mountain - he met a family man in a wretched state that belied his misfortune. The Saint asked him the reason for his trouble, and he explained that he was living as a bondservant to a doctor. He owed the doctor money because he had healed his wife and his children from a serious disease, and he had nothing else to offer him. Thus, for recompense, he became his permanent servant; consequently, his family was suffering from abject poverty. Blessed Joachim's heart went out to the man, and he suggested that he allow him to take his place, if the doctor would agree to the arrangement. Hence, with the agreement of the doctor as well, Papoulakis stayed on as a servant in place of the poor householder, and he continued his duties. Seeing the monk's earnestness, the doctor was filled with admiration for him. He bought him a new pair of shoes so that he would not have to go about barefoot and suffering. The next day, he saw him once again barefoot and asked where his new shoes were. The monk told him that he had given them to some poor person. Afterwards, he bought him some clothes, since his own were little more than rags, but these shared the same fate as the shoes. After this, the doctor, seeing among other things his austere way of life, relieved

him of his servitude because, as he admitted, he could not bear to be waited on by such a holy person. Papoulakis himself disclosed this to the doctor's former bondservant when the poor man saw him going about freely and asked how he was released from his service to the doctor.

It is feasible for a person to know things and facts about the world through scientific research and comparison; but to penetrate into the heart of a spiritual person is not only unfeasible, it is impossible. Only if he himself wants it to be revealed will it become known. This mystery of the interior world of every human being is what the Lord was referring to when he said, "two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left" (Matt. 24:40). Divine Providence was now calling blessed Elder Joachim Papoulakis to enlighten and purify others as well, since he had arrived at perfection by means of the strict practical life he had lived, becoming "taught by God" (Jn. 6:45), "bringing out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52). "Experiencing, he was taught," according to the patristic maxim, "having learned, he taught" whatever he had acquired through his blessed discernment and insight. Illuminating and sanctifying Divine Grace filled him to overflowing, particularly with the divine qualities of clairvoyance and foreknowledge, which were precisely what the circumstances required during that grievous period. One might say that he was an answer on the part of the Divine Benevolence to the supplication of the Christian people. Every supernatural intervention of Divine Grace is certainly an encouragement to the faithful, because it is a consolation in their tribulations. The prophetic characteristic, however, is even more so, because it anticipates misfortunes and increases faith, upon which the entire spiritual edifice is built. If, according to the Scriptural maxim, "each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that" (1 Cor. 7:7), then rightly the charisma of prophecy was found in abundance in this blessed luminary, which he exercised with deep humility, hidden from curious eyes, for the building of the Church and the Christian people.

As mentioned in the notes of his biographer, Papoulakis - as the people now always called him after he became publicly known - most often stayed at Vathy on Ithaki. With contributions from the faithful, he was able to marry off the two daughters of a widowed woman who most frequently gave him hospitality. He traversed Vathy and, when possible, those needy precincts in the surrounding area, teaching, consoling, and upholding the faith and Christian morals, trying never to be a burden to anyone. Whatever alms and items of assistance the faithful furnished him with, he distributed among the poor and destitute, keeping nothing for himself, by virtue of the great frugality that was his lifelong practice. The greater part of the year, he dwelt outdoors. Only during the four months of winter did he live indoors; he slept very little, keeping vigil and struggling through

various methods to "discipline the body" (see 1 Cor. 9:27). As an ascetic practice, he carried about a lead plate in order to weary the flesh. During this period, God allowed him to receive criticism and ridicule from negligent men who sometimes turned against him with viciousness. These people struck him and spat upon him; the children especially joined them in hurling stones at the Saint, who patiently suffered everything, never complaining or bearing resentment towards anyone.

During his time, the Ionian Islands, including his homeland of Ithaki, were not under the Turkish yoke like the rest of our country, but were instead under English domination, supposedly being protected by the British. In reality, however, they imposed another kind of yoke, often more severe than that of the Turks. The faithful people, aware of the cunningness of this "civilized fox" that had assumed leadership, sought their liberation and their union with Greece. This irritated the would-be guardians, who also had on their side the local opportunistic betrayers of the homeland. At this time, Papoulakis played a very important role among his struggling compatriots, continually rousing their zeal for union. To those who had become fainthearted, he gave much courage, and foretold that soon Britain would depart and, moreover, without a war. This prophecy of the Saint was soon realized; the areas that had been severed from the fatherland for so many centuries were once again united with it. The counsel of Papoulakis, who tirelessly motivated the people toward the aspirations of the nation, was crowned with success.

While staying in the community of Stavros, he saw that there was no parish church and, consequently, that this would likely serve as a justification for the residents to neglect their duty of attending the services. Once again, he zealously took the initiative to see that a church be built there as well in order to serve the people. On the northern slopes of Mount Niritos, in the community of Stavros, there had been a little church many years ago, but only its ruins remained. According to tradition, it had been dedicated to Saint Barbara. During the many years that the chapel was deserted, a carob tree sprouted in the sanctuary and eventually took on such dimensions that there remained no visible sign of what had once been there. Following the decision to reestablish the church on this site, Papoulakis undertook the uprooting of the huge tree, as well as the preparation of the needed materials for the construction - no easy task at that time of poverty and when such means and resources were hard to acquire. With the ready support of the residents, he at first built a small church in the name of the Holy Great-Martyr Barbara. It proved, however, to be insufficient for the needs of the community; consequently, he began planning a larger church on the same spot, around the smaller church, which was demolished after the completion of the larger.

The blessed founder Papoulakis was not satisfied simply with the construction of the church; he also built cells for monks, which later served as accommodations for

devout pilgrims. The indefatigable Elder extended the same care to the furnishing and embellishment of the church, as well as to the rest of the necessities, which he provided for from the generous offerings of the emigrant Ithacans. He had written to all of them in order to urge them to support this cause, since it had already become the parish church of the community of Stavros.

During approximately the same period of time, a deadly plague broke out on Ithaki, and in the community of Anogi especially, there were many fatalities. The people ran to the "volunteer doctor" Papoulakis, beseeching him to pray to God to bring an end to this great fury. This prompted the blessed one to build a church in their community dedicated to Saint Athanasius the Great. He himself prayed to Saint Athanasius, and indeed this terrible scourge abated. Everyone confessed that this miracle happened through his prayers, particularly since the little church had been built in one day.

In order to conceal his miracle-working grace, this blessed man of God instructed those who approached him for help ostensibly to take some holy water, to make a votive offering, or to do some other good work; thus he covered over his own supernatural intervention, just as so many of our Fathers have done.

\*\*\*Margarita Moraiti related that once her aunt's mother, Charikleias Priovolou, was traveling down by foot from Lefki, carrying her sick little child in a crib on her head, in order to take him to the doctor in Ithaki. On the way she met Papoulakis, who asked her where she was going. "I'm taking the child to the doctor, my dear Papoulakis, because he's very sick." Papoulakis made the sign of the Cross over him and said, "Your child doesn't have anything wrong with him", and indeed he became completely well.

\*\*\*Angeliki Kallinikou from Ithaki relates that her grandmother, Giorgoulla, had been married for six years without having children. One day she was sitting outside the door of her house, crying. At that moment, Papoulakis was passing by, and when he saw her crying, he asked her the reason for her tears. "My dear Papoulakis," she replied, "I've been married for so many years and I'm not able to have children." "You'll have them, my Giorgoulla;" he responded, "you must simply open and tend to three chapels: one to Saint Constantine below Hani, one to Saint John over on the mountain at Spatharata, and one to the Life-Giving Spring over at Stellatata. Giorgoulla indeed tended these three chapels and soon bore children.

#### THE SAINT'S REPOSE

On March 1, 1868, blessed Papoulakis was resting on his hard mat at the home of a Christ-loving man named H. Paizi Lianou in Vathy. He peacefully and calmly foretold that he was preparing for his eternal journey. Lying on his scanty mat on

the floor, and now completely exhausted, he refused all food. His friend Maratos the doctor visited him and asked if there was anything that he needed or that he could do for him. The Elder replied, "There is nothing that I need; I'm getting ready to depart." He called for the devout and virtuous priest-monk Agapios to draw near him for the last time. Having confessed, he then became silent, waiting to give over his spirit to its Maker whom he so loved and to whom he had devoted his entire life.

As Friday night progressed toward Saturday - March 12 - Papoulakis' condition became quite serious; at five o'clock on Saturday morning, he slept the blessed sleep of the righteous, in whose ranks he had shown himself to be numbered since childhood through a life of fasting, vigils, and ardent struggles. At the instruction of the Metropolitan, the Abbot of the Monastery of the Katharon (the Pure) undertook the Saint's burial. Going through his clothing, they found not even the smallest amount of money. With his material poverty he set his seal on the meaning of poverty in its fullest sense, something he had practiced throughout his entire ascetical life.

They discovered that in his right hand, on a paper rolled up like a small cylinder, he was holding his final wish: to be buried outside behind the sanctuary of the church of Saint Barbara - for which he had toiled so much for its construction and completion - in the place where he had planted a myrtle tree with his own hands.

#### THE TRANSLATION OF HIS RELICS

As was proper and natural, the place of Saint Joachim's spiritual birth assumed the duty of bringing to light and honoring its saintly offspring. In 1991, the Abbot of Vatopaidi Monastery, Archimandrite Ephraim, and fathers of the Monastery went to Ithaki and, with the help of the inhabitants of the island, identified the place of the Saint's grave. They arranged with the Metropolitan Bishop of the diocese for the translation of the Saint's relics on May 23 of the following year, 1992.

At the Saint's grave, which had been transformed into a small chapel, a few of the faithful began breaking up the flooring with sledgehammers, while the rest of the people were exuberantly singing "Christ is Risen." Indeed the event was Resurrectional and fitted perfectly with the Paschal period of the Pentecostarion, in which it took place. Soon, amid a general atmosphere of pious emotion, monks who were digging at that moment found the first piece of the holy relics and, shortly thereafter, the Saint's holy skull. Finally, they gathered all of the pieces of the holy relic that they washed and accordance with the usual ordinance, they were washed and arranged.

It is worth pointing out that Saint Joachim had prophesied, "A priest from the Holy Mountain, with a red beard, will take me up [his relics] and be the first to bring me

to the people." This prophecy indeed came true in the person of the Abbot of the Holy Monastery of Vatopaidi!

It is also noteworthy that the Saint had appeared to a priest in his sleep on the eve of the translation. He told him, "During the translation, I will satisfy everyone." In fact, initially there was a dispute about who had the right to take the Saint's skull: the Monastery or the Diocese. In the end, however, there was no problem; as soon as they removed the grace-filled skull of the Saint from the grave, it split in two!

That same day, Abbot Ephraim and his company set off for Vatopaidi Monastery, arriving the following day. The brotherhood reserved an especially fervent reception for the Saint, who was returning after nearly 170 years to his beloved monastery, which he had abandoned in order to serve the people of God, particularly in his native homeland of Ithaki.

St. Joachim was officially canonized a Saint of the Orthodox Church in 1998 by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. His official feast day is May 23 (the date of the uncovering of his relics). (*abridged from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

### **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 & 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.)