

# 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

**Wednesday: Moleben to the  
Theotokos 6 AM**

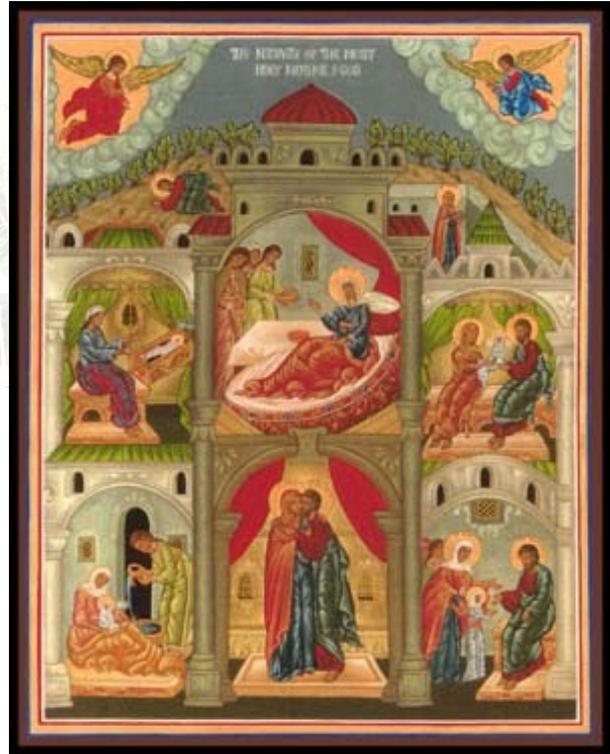
**Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6 AM**

**Saturday: Confession 4:30 PM**

**Great Vespers 5:00 PM**

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

**Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM**



**September 12, 2021 – 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**

**Sunday Before the Elevation of the Cross**

**Apodosis of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos**

**Hieromartyr Autonomus**

Today is the Leave-taking of the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Sept. 8). The Hieromartyr Autonomus was a bishop in Italy. During the time of the persecution against Christians under the emperor Diocletian (284-305), Saint Autonomus left his own country and resettled in Bithynia, in the locality of Soreus with a man named Cornelius. Saint Autonomus did his apostolic duty with zeal and converted to Christ so many pagans, that a large Church was formed, for which he consecrated a temple in the name of the Archangel Michael. For this church, the saint at first ordained Cornelius as deacon, and then presbyter. Preaching about Christ, Saint Autonomus visited also Lykaonia and Isauria.

The emperor Diocletian gave orders to arrest Saint Autonomus, but the saint withdrew to Claudiopolis on the Black Sea. In returning to Soreus, he had the priest Cornelius ordained bishop. Saint Autonomus then went to Asia, and when he had returned from there, he began to preach in the vicinity of Limna, near Soreus.

Once, the newly-converted destroyed a pagan temple. The pagans decided to take revenge on the Christians. Seizing their chance, the pagans rushed upon the church of the Archangel Michael when Saint Autonomus was serving Divine Liturgy there. After torturing Saint Autonomus they killed him, reddening the altar of the church with his martyr's blood. The deaconess Maria removed the body of the holy martyr from beneath a pile of stones and buried it.

During the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, a church was built over the tomb of the saint. In the year 430, a certain priest had the old church pulled down. Not realizing that the martyr's body had been buried beneath the church, he rebuilt the church in a new spot. But after another 60 years the relics of the saint were found incorrupt, and a church was then built in the name of the Hieromartyr Autonomus. *(from oca.org)*

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18**

Brethren, see with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 3:13-17**

The Lord said, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."

## **A Word From the Holy Fathers**

How precious the gift of the cross, how splendid to contemplate! In the cross there is no mingling of good and evil, as in the tree of paradise: it is wholly beautiful to behold and good to taste. The fruit of this tree is not death but life, not darkness but light. This tree does not cast us out of paradise, but opens the way for our

return. This was the tree on which Christ, like a king on a chariot, destroyed the devil, the lord of death, and freed the human race from his tyranny. This was the tree upon which the Lord, like a brave warrior wounded in hands, feet and side, healed the wounds of sin that the evil serpent had inflicted on our nature. A tree once caused our death, but now a tree brings life. Once deceived by a tree, we have now repelled the cunning serpent by a tree. What an astonishing transformation! That death should become life, that decay should become immortality, that shame should become glory! Well might the holy Apostle exclaim, "Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world!" The supreme wisdom that flowered on the cross has shown the folly of worldly wisdom's pride. The knowledge of all good, which is the fruit of the cross, has cut away the shoots of wickedness.

The wonders accomplished through this tree were foreshadowed clearly even by the mere types and figures that existed in the past. Meditate on these, if you are eager to learn. Was it not the wood of a tree that enabled Noah, at God's command, to escape the destruction of the flood together with his sons, his wife, his sons' wives and every kind of animal? And surely the rod of Moses prefigured the cross when it changed water into blood, swallowed up the false serpents of Pharaoh's magicians, divided the sea at one stroke and then restored the waters to their normal course, drowning the enemy and saving God's own people? Aaron's rod, which blossomed in one day in proof of his true priesthood, was another figure of the cross, and did not Abraham foreshadow the cross when he bound his son Isaac and placed him on the pile of wood?

By the cross death was slain and Adam was restored to life. The cross is the glory of all the apostles, the crown of the martyrs, the sanctification of the saints. By the cross we put on Christ and cast aside our former self, By the cross we, the sheep of Christ, have been gathered into one flock, destined for the sheepfolds of heaven.

- St. Theodore the Studite

## **The Immense Joy of the Birth of the Theotokos**

By Archimandrite Fr. George Kapsanis, former Abbot of Gregoriou Monastery,  
Mt. Athos

The Most Holy Theotokos is she who participated like no other person in the incarnation of the Son and Word of God, who gave birth to Christ in virginity, and gave herself entirely to Christ. She also became the first citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven and the first to be divinized after Christ, the first divinized human being, a god after God, according to Saint Gregory Palamas, having a second place to the Holy Trinity, and is at the head of the saved, according to the phrase of an Orthodox theologian.

The Lady Theotokos is therefore at the head of the Church and of all the gatherings and celebrations and feasts of the Church, and in its prayers she has the first seat after Christ, her Only-Begotten Son. The Ever-Virgin fulfills her own prophecy in her person, which she said in the Holy Spirit: "Behold, all generations shall call me blessed," as well as the prophecy of that woman who said: "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts that nursed You."

This authentic joy of the world and the Church we also share in today with the holy Nativity of the Lady Theotokos. And always as her children - unworthy though we be, yet by her grace - we today celebrate, and are grateful to her, thankful to her, and glorify her, surrounding her with joy and gladness and shouts, and we supplicate her to not distance her maternal protection and covering from each of us, from the Church, from the Holy Mountain, and from all Christians, but to continue in her vigilant intercessions before God for our salvation.

There rings in our ears in particular the words of our God-bearing Holy Father Gregory Palamas, who was among those great Fathers of the Church who theologized on the holy Theotokos and experienced the mystery of mysteries of the Theotokos, the Ever-Virgin. The words of this God-bearing Father, which are exhortations to married Christians, but mainly directed to the bearers of virginity, ring particularly in the ears of our souls of we who have left the world for the sake of Christ and desire to live the mystery of the virginity of the Theotokos and the Saints.

We hear Saint Gregory tell us, what a great mission virgins bear, to not only have their bodies pure but also their soul from every thought which corrupts their purity, so as to be a vessel of purity for the Most-Holy Spirit and their virginity is a virginity of worship and love towards God. A virgin is also one who burns with divine eros and does not know any other way to express their eros for Christ except through sacred virginity, with complete purity of soul and body.

May the Lord Jesus, who was virginally born of the Virgin, the Son and Word of God, Who was virginally born of the Father, according to Saint Gregory, Who was virginally born pre-eternally, through the intercessions of the Lady Theotokos, help us to walk on the path of virginity rejoicing "with fear and trembling working out our salvation," and that we may aspire to the Virgin Theotokos and the perfection of virginity, which she experienced, so that the measure of our own virginity will always be the virginity of our Panagia.

In this way, I think, will we who are bearers of virginity here on the Holy Mountain, which is her Garden, will we please the Lady Theotokos, by being in her image and imitating the virginity of the Most Holy Theotokos. And with joy she will honor us, with joy will she oversee the brotherhood of the Holy Mountain,

and with joy will she lead each of us in the love of her Only-Begotten Son, and will help us to have a good end to the struggles of this life and to be made worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven. (*from oca.org*)

## **Social Team for September 19**

Team 8 is up next week – Samson, Brady, Wyman, Joseph Frey. Thank you!

## **Nativity of the Theotokos**

We will celebrate the Nativity of the Theotokos with a Vespereal Divine Liturgy on Tuesday Sept. 7 at 6:30 PM. Please observe at least a 3 hour fast if you plan to receive the Eucharist.

### **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. Nectarios & 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.)