

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

www.apostlethomas.org

American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

**Wednesdays in Great Lent: Liturgy of
Presanctified Gifts 6:30 PM**

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Confession 4:30 PM

Great Vespers 5:00 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM



March 13, 2022 – 1st Sunday in Great Lent | Sunday of Orthodoxy

The first Sunday of Great Lent is called the Sunday of Orthodoxy because it commemorates the restoration of the Holy Icons and the triumph of the Orthodox Faith against the terrible heresy of the Iconoclasts, i.e. those heretics who refused to honor the Holy Icons. For more than a hundred years the Church was disturbed by the evil doctrine of iconoclasm.

The first Emperor to persecute the Church was Leo the Isaurian, and the last was Theophilus, the spouse of Saint Theodora (February 11), who reigned after her husband's death and re-established Orthodoxy in the time of Patriarch Methodios (June 14). Empress Theodora proclaimed publicly that we do not kiss the Icons as a sign of worship, nor do we honor them as "gods," but as images of their prototypes.

In the year 843, on the first Sunday of the Fast, Saint Theodora and her son, Emperor Michael, venerated the Holy Icons together with the clergy and the people. Since that time this event has been commemorated every year, because it was definitively determined that we do not worship the Icons, but we honor and glorify all the Saints who are depicted on them. We worship only the Triune God:

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and no one else, neither a Saint, nor an Angel. Originally, the Holy Prophets Moses, Aaron, and Samuel were commemorated on this Sunday. The Alleluia verses appointed for today's Liturgy reflect this older usage. (*from oca.org*)

The Mystical Journey of the Christian, Through the Desert, Towards the Resurrection and Pentecost (1 of 5)

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

The period of Great Lent, which we have entered, is a period of intense spiritual life, with fasting, prayer, repentance, temperance and all the means that Orthodoxy has.

This intense spiritual and interior life is preserved by our Church in the Sacred Services that take place at this time and in the troparia which are chanted. When one carefully reads the book of the *Triodion* and participates experientially in the worship of the Church, one will find that in this way the Church wants to give us a sense of what the purpose of Christianity is and what the content of the Christian life is. It is characteristic that all the Saints of our Church loved especially this period, which leads to Easter, and the period of Pentecost, because in this period they distinguish the inner breath of our Church.

On the occasion of our entry into this period, I would like to make a blueprint of the journey of the Christian from the Egypt of the passions to the desert of dispassion and the entrance to the Promised Land. We encounter this journey in the works of the Holy Fathers, who in this way show the purpose of human life, but also the meaning of Holy and Great Lent. In fact, it is a journey from the beginning of Holy and Great Lent until Easter and Pentecost, in a period of real desolation.

The basis will be the biography and theology of Saint Silouan of Athonite, as presented by Saint Sophrony. In this way we will see on the one hand how a Saint interprets another Saint and how through this interpretation we can understand the inner mystical life of the Orthodox Church.

And this is necessary, because unfortunately nowadays the events we are going through with the health and theological crisis disorient us and do not allow us to feel this momentum of our inner life.

It is well-known that the first book written by Saint Sophrony was the book titled *Elder Silouan the Athonite* which later, after the canonization of Elder Silouan, was published under the title *Saint Silouan the Athonite*.

This book is a great spiritual treasure, an inexhaustible spiritual wealth, a living presentation of the life of Mount Athos, in its absolute form, a living *Philokalia* of

the Holy Neptics, as lived by two Saints, Saint Silouan and Saint Sophrony. It presents to the perfect degree and in an authentic way the journey of the spiritual life for those who desire their encounter with Christ.

They will be recorded as ten basic points of the spiritual life, as shown in the first part of the book with the theological declarations of Saint Sophrony. These points must be understood in the perspective that the salvation of man takes place in the Church, which is the Body of Christ, by his union with Christ, in the Holy Spirit, with the Mysteries and asceticism according to Christ.

The quotes in quotation marks are words of Saint Sophrony.

1. "The Word of God and the Extreme Limits of Created Being"

If every human word has power and energy, much more it applies to the word of God, which has divine energy. God created the world by His word and the energy of God is in all creation, it is the substance-forming, life-forming and prescient energy of God.

The Son and Word of God became man, took on human nature and His word had great energy with which He spoke, healed and raised the dead. His word, "humbly expressed in the easily acceptable terms of human language that can even be put into writing - this word is, in its essence, the energy of the All-powerful God and Creator of all things. It must be said of it the same thing as the Scriptures say of God Himself - that He is a 'consuming fire', to be approached with fear and trembling (Heb. 12:29).

"Christ's word is the most mysterious of words." "Christ's word is so close to us, so intelligible, so deeply related to the human heart, yet there can be no doubting that it infinitely surpasses the forces of created nature." "Christ's word, when received in profound faith, leads man to eternal life along paths where he will encounter much that is strange and unknown to them that do not follow Christ."

"The light of Christ's word probes the depths of the dark abyss, revealing the real nature of a multitude of phantoms of truth that attract man. Christ's word is fire that puts to the test everything in man and, generally speaking, everything in cosmic existence."

Also, "Christ's word is spirit and eternal life, fullness of love and heavenly joy. Christ's word is uncreated divine light,... and he who will open his heart right up worthily to receive this divine light, to merge into it, becomes like unto God."

This must be emphasized at the beginning of the journey of the spiritual life, because everything is done with theological synergy, that is, God is active and man is a co-worker. Just as the world and man are God's creation through His word, so

the recreation of the world and the rebirth of man are effected by the energy of the divine word.

Notes by Translator: 1. This is the Greek translation. In the English translation of the book *St Silouan the Athonite* by Archimandrite Sophrony, the title of this chapter is called "The Divine Word and the Bounds of Created Nature". The rest of the quotes in this section come directly from the original English translation of this book. - Translated by John Sanidopoulos. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:24-26, 30-12:2

Brethren, by faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked to the reward. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 1:43-51

At that time, Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him,

“Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Brothers and Fathers, I have been requested by your father, as I am both his father and through him yours, to talk to you about the things which concern salvation. And naturally I agreed. So in all humility I begin from these words: Our salvation, beloved children, is to believe rightly in the holy Trinity and act in ways which have the approval of God’s holy commandments. For, as the Apostle says, in Christ Jesus circumcision is worth nothing, nor is uncircumcision; what counts is faith put into practice love [*Gal. 5:6*]. Now the logic of the faith leads to orthodox doctrine, while the logic of love to the principle of good action. We believe, then, in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are three persons, one nature, one power, one sovereign majesty of all things; worshiped as one, as to nature, will, activity, might and glory. We believe that one of the holy Trinity, the Son and Word of God the Father, emptied himself and took the form of a servant [*Phil. 2,7*], manifested in our form. For this is what the Theologian says, the Word became flesh [*John 1:14*], and the great Apostle writes, God was manifested in the flesh [*1 Tim. 3:16*]. And he is one and the same in two natures, perfect God and perfect man; and in each perfection he left nothing that is proper to them both unassumed, but rather, as genuinely a son he possessed as God everything which pertains to the Father, as human everything which pertains to his Mother. And so, just as he is uncircumscribed like his Father, so like his Mother he is circumscribed, that is to say formed in the image in the likeness of his Mother. Now the Iconoclasts, concerning whom this doctrine is laid down, since they do not confess that he was circumscribed, are found quite certainly not to confess that he is the genuine son of his Mother. For what is a genuine offspring, and not one that is completely different, except one that is like the one who gives it birth in all its natural properties. For as regards his being circumscribed he has nothing in common with his Father, but everything with his Mother; and the opposite is true of his being uncircumscribed. Here his communion is with his Begetter, and not with her who gave him birth.

Such is the right doctrine of the truth; this is the apostolic faith: to confess that Christ is circumscribed in the flesh. So wrote Basil the Great, "Let there be inscribed on a tablet Christ, the umpire of the contests." And to honor the image inscribed, as Christ is worshiped in it. For Chrysostom the golden declares that he has seen an angel in an image [For these two passages see St Theodore's *Refutation of the Poems of the Iconoclasts* [PG 99:468-469], where they are quoted in full. St John uses the word "picture", *graphê*]. And if [he saw] one who is without a body in an image, how much more the Word who was embodied? And if he sees, it is clear that he also worships the angel in an image; just so Christ. For to be granted to see in a depiction is equivalent to worshipping, "since the honor of the image ascends to its prototype", as Basil the Great also says. Those who insult Christ's image, deny him, for through their rejection of the image they apply their rejection to him, even though they claim to confess Christ; in as much as the demons confess God [Cf. *James 2:19*], Scripture says, while they deny him by their works [*Titus 1:16*]. Great therefore, brothers, is their impiety, and great our confession, and in no way falls short of that of the martyrs of old. Therefore stand firm without wavering at all over those things whose truth has already been demonstrated; but submit yourselves to the struggles for this faith to shedding of blood, should occasion demand. From here there also dawns the radiant life, a sun from a sun; since the one is indeed proof of the other, as the Brother of God has declared [Cf. *James 2:18*]. Love God with the totality of your three powers [Cf. *Matt. 22:37*], as the commandment orders. Love yourselves also, as limbs of Christ. For by this, as Scripture says, all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among each other [*John 13:35*]. Treat your superior with faith; let there be no one who has not confessed to him: such a person nourishes serpents. Let no one be tepid in his faith: such a person has no share in the fervor of the Holy Spirit. Let no one have secret possessions: such a person is no monk. Let no one be over confident in speech: such a person is a worker of destruction. Let no one be a secret eater: such a person is like a slave. Let no one give offense in anything, lest his service be brought into discredit, as the Apostle declares, but in everything let him conduct himself as God's servant, with great endurance, in tribulations, in difficulties [*2 Cor. 6:3-4*], and in all the other circumstances, which he enumerates, so perfecting himself as a true Christian. Now if this is how the subject should be, what and how much should be required of the abbot, who should be held up as good exemplar for those he teaches? The struggle is great; but the reward is infinite, the kingdom of heaven, of which may we, both rulers and ruled, be found worthy by living godly lives in Christ Jesus our Lord. To whom be glory and might with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

– St. Theodore the Studite, *Book II Letter 156*

Inspiration from the Lenten Triodion

Restraining the passions with the bridle of pure fasting, let us all in perfect faith strive to raise our mind to holy contemplation! Let us despise the pleasures of this earthly life, that we may gain the life of heaven and divine enlightenment!

Setting before us a mystical table, the fast invites us all to take our fill! Our food shall be the eternal gifts of the spirit; our drink, divinely flowing streams of tears. Let us rejoice and ever give praise to God!

If you are lazy, my soul, why do you work at sin? Why, if you are ill, do you not run to the physician? This is the acceptable time! This is truly the day of salvation! Arise, and wash your face with tears of repentance, illumine your light with the oil of good deeds, so that you might acquire cleansing and great mercy from Christ!

Because of the great number of my evil and unlawful deeds, I have fallen into the troubled waters of despair. I am utterly perplexed and held captive by despondency. O sovereign lady Theotokos, save and help me, for through you sinners receive atonement, cleansing and salvation!

- stichera from Matins, 2nd Tuesday of Great Lent

Also Commemorated Today: Translation of the relics of Saint Nikēphóros, Patriarch of Constantinople

Saint Nikēphóros was a dignitary at the court of the empress Irene (797-802), and then after receiving monastic tonsure, he became known for his piety. In the year 806 he was elevated to the patriarchal throne. The saint was a zealous defender of the holy Icons. When the Iconoclast emperor Leo the Armenian (813-820) came to rule, the saint in 815 was exiled to Prokonnis, where he died in the year 828.

In the year 846 the holy relics of Patriarch Nikēphóros were opened, and were found incorrupt and fragrant. They transferred them from Prokonnis to Constantinople and placed them for one day in Hagia Sophia, and then transferred them to the Church of the Holy Apostles. The saint's hands are preserved in the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos.

The saint left behind three writings against Iconoclasm. The main Feast of Saint Nikēphóros is celebrated on June 2, but today we commemorate the finding and transfer of his holy relics. (*from oca.org*)

Social Team for March 13

Team 2 is up next week - Dewey, Carrie LaMere, H. Shear. Thank you!

Help People in Need

As things in Ukraine have changed rapidly this week, all of us at IOCC have been fervently praying for everyone affected.

The core of IOCC's work has always been responsibly and effectively offering humanitarian aid. As of today, I can share with you that we've been in touch with partners in Ukraine and across the region. Our immediate response will consist of:

- Supporting basic needs, like supplying fuel and generators
- Providing flashlights, batteries, and candles

I invite you to do three things to help today:

- First and foremost, pray for everyone affected.
- Share this update with friends and loved ones so they know how the Orthodox community in the US is responding.
- Support IOCC's efforts with a gift to our [International Emergency Response Fund](#), which allows us to respond quickly and effectively to help those in need.

Thank you for your prayers and your faithful support of IOCC's mission.

Yours in Christ,



Constantine M. Triantafilou

CAMP NAZARETH SUMMER CAMP 2022

The time for Summer Camp is Rapidly Approaching!!! The clock is ticking!!

REGISTER ONLINE STARTING MARCH 15, 2022

@ 6PM (Eastern Time)!!!

Dates for the Summer Camping Program

Week 1: Sunday, July 17 – Saturday, July 23, 2022 – Pittsburgh, Mid-Atlantic, Tri-State and Washington D.C. Deaneries

Week 2: Sunday, July 24 – Saturday, July 30, 2022 – New England, NY, NJ, Florida and Canada Deaneries

Week 3: Sunday, July 31 – Saturday, August 6, 2022 -- Johnstown, Pocono, Southern Tier, Youngstown and Chicago Deaneries

Science and Nature Camp: Sunday, August 7 – Saturday, August 13, 2022

BEFORE you register, please read the information below carefully!!!

Register Online Starting March 15, 2022 @ 6pm (EDT)

Register at – campnazareth.org

Registration for Camp will be on a **First-Come First-Serve Basis!!** Once capacity for a given week is filled, all other campers will be put on a waiting list.

\$20 Early Bird Discount Per Child!!!!

(one-time only, not per week)

Must Register & pay by May 1, 2022!!!!

Online Registration MUST be complete AND payment must be submitted by May 1 in order to qualify for the Early Bird Discount.

Registration will close on June 1, 2022 @ 12pm!

Important Information Re: 2022 Diocesan Summer Camping Program

- 1. A camper must be 8 years old BY the beginning of their camping week AND must have completed 2nd Grade in order to register for Camp!!!**
- 2. We are planning to have Camp at full capacity, which means up to 16 campers in each cabin.**
- 3. You must register by June 1, NO EXCEPTIONS!** Once registration has concluded on June 1, no one will be able to register for Camp. No exceptions!!
- 4. Registration will be done on a First-Come First-Serve basis.** Once we've reached the limit, the rest of those registering will be put on a Waiting List. If a spot opens up, those on the Waiting List will be contacted, again on a First-Come First-Serve basis.
- 5. Because of the number of Male and Female Counselors and the number of cabins Camp has, the maximum number of females or males attending any one week will be 80.** Once that limit has been reached for males or females, the rest will be put on the Waiting List.
- 6. VERY IMPORTANT: You may ONLY register for 1 Week!!!** It does not have to be your Deanery's Week, but you may only register for 1 Week! You may NOT register for multiple weeks. Exception: Any camper whose Senior Year it is, may register for multiple weeks. The Science and Nature Camp is NOT included as 1 Week. In other

words, a camper may attend 1 Diocesan Camping Week **AND** the Science and Nature Camp as well.

Once you register, Camp will email you instructions, including the Physical Form and other necessary information.

Also, those who are of age (at least 18 by the beginning of the Summer Season and have completed High School) are encouraged to be part of the Camp's Summer Staff. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to get involved in this vital and meaningful Diocesan apostolate, form lasting friendships, and use your God-given talents for the benefit and up-building of our Church. We have worked with a number of students to design internship positions that help them earn credit in their program of study as well. Staff Applications can be found on the Camp's website campnazareth.org. **Staff applications are due by March 15.** If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Stephen Loposky at 724-662-4840 or campnazareth@acrod.org.

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, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri & Mt. Kenya, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Roberta Corson, Jon Church, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Howl family, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, David & Kathryn Newman, John Reece, Mary Reed, Rose Song, Dcn. Nectarios & Ia, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the suffering peopl of Ukraine, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)