

# 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: Vespers 5 PM**

**Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM**

**Sunday School 9:30 AM**

**Divine Liturgy 10 AM**

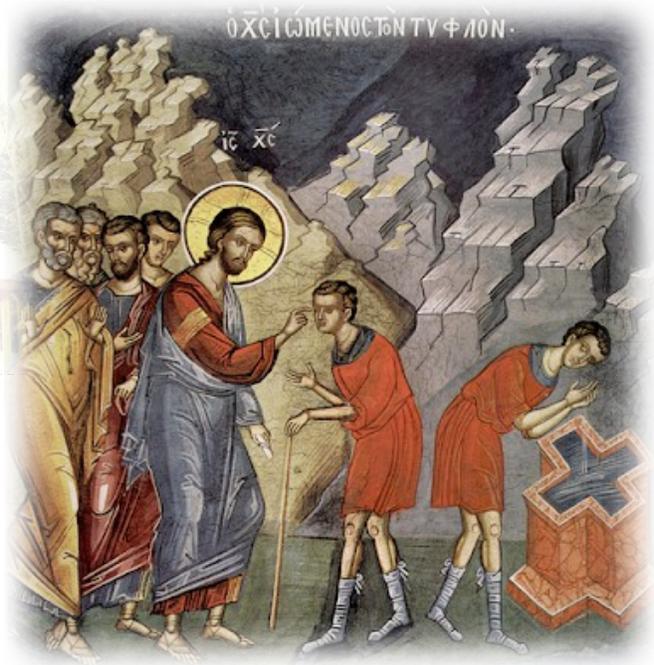
**May 29, 2022 – Sunday of the Blind Man**

**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pascha**

We are in Paschaltide, and the Bright Resurrection of Christ is still emblazoned in our hearts. Although we proceed further from that saving event, day to day, week to week, and Sunday to Sunday, it's presence remains through the chanting of the Paschal Troparion at mealtime, in the Divine Services, and during our private prayers. We continue to decorate the Church in white, and the clergy wear white vestments, the epitaphios remains on the altar. What is more, we greet each other with, "Christ is risen!"

Each of the Sundays following Pascha celebrates Gospel events which reveal Christ as the Messiah prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures - God in the flesh.

- On the first Sunday after Pascha, we are taught of the Apostle Thomas, full of doubt regarding the resurrection of Christ, who learned of the condescending compassion of Christ when he saw the risen Lord and was invited to touch the wounds of His hands and side.
- On the second Sunday, we hear that the Myrrh-bearing women were the first to bear witness to the resurrection and announce this to the Apostles.



- On the third Sunday, the paralytic was a man whose infirmity was a result of his own sin (John 5.14), which was apparent to Christ, the God-man, who healed his paralysis and instructed him to sin no more or a consequence worse than paralysis would befall him. The interaction of Christ with the paralytic is similar to that of the Samaritan woman in that when the woman leaves the well, she finds her countrymen and tells them, “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” (John 4.29). In the same way, Christ reveals to the paralytic that He knows the source of his paralysis and instructs him to not sin because a worse outcome would follow (cf. John 5.14). These events are comparative in that it reveals to the recipients that Jesus is the Christ.
- Last Sunday, following the comment, “I know that when the Messiah comes, he will tell us all things” (cf. John 4.25), the Samaritan woman, was the first to hear from the mouth of Christ, “I that speak unto thee am he” (cf. John 4.26).

Today is the *Sunday of the Blind Man*, and we have just listened to the reading of the Gospel of John chapter nine, where the Apostle describes Christ’s healing of a man blind from birth. In this narration, we have the juxtaposition of the physical blindness of this man with the spiritual blindness of the teachers of the Law, the Pharisees, who are continually seeking to condemn Christ. On this occasion, Christ reveals himself as the Creator and Messiah.

### **I. The Compassion of Christ**

In introducing this event, the Apostle John, in the only Gospel to narrate this act, writes, “And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.”(9.1). The Evangelist draws our attention to the fact that the man did not seek Christ out; Christ sought him out. In other instances, we find that centurions come to him, rulers in the synagogue, a woman with a flow of blood for twelve years, lepers, the demon-possessed, epileptics, paralytics, the mute, the blind, and many others. But at this moment, Christ came to this blind beggar. In the story of the paralytic, Christ also came to him, and also to the widow of Nain about which the Apostle Luke wrote, “When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her,” and then He spoke to her (cf. Luke 7.13). Today, Christ comes to the blind man.

### **II. On Physical Infirmities**

Upon approaching him, Christ is asked by his disciples what the cause of this man’s blindness is to which Christ responds that this man’s blindness was due to no sin, neither his nor his parents. Instead, he is blind so that the works of God may be manifest in him (9.2-3).

And it is for thirty-eight years, the entirety of this man's life, that he has been blind. Never was he to see the face of his father or mother or even his own countenance. Never could he see the food that he ate, the objects that he touched, the person who spoke to him. He was never a witness to physical beauty. He is the exception to what the Apostle Paul wrote when addressing the Romans saying, the invisible things are understood by the things which have been made, for this man sees nothing of the creation (cf. Rom. 1.20). However, the Creator of the world comes to him today.

As pitiful a state as this may seem, Christ answers his disciples that this man's blindness is not a result of sin, nor is it a punishment because his blindness is not an evil. Instead, it is just the opposite – he is blind so that the works of God may be manifest in him. St. John Chrysostom comments on Christ's response, noting that what people call evil may not be evil, and what they call good may not be good when he writes: "And what injury had this man by his blindness? For by means of it he recovered his sight. As then the evils of this present life are not evils, so neither are the good things good; sin alone is an evil, but blindness is not an evil."

### **III. The Virtue of the Blind Man**

How did blindness harm this man? Are there evident vices in him that we can note in his interactions with Christ or with the Pharisees? No, but very much the opposite. In their interactions, the blind man, at no time, blasphemes his Creator or blames him for his difficult life. This beggar does not complain about his lot in life or assign responsibility to another. When Christ comes to him, he does not contradict, he does not doubt, but wholeheartedly believes His instructions, and when told to go and wash his eyes at the pool of Siloam, he does and returns with his sight.

When he is brought before the Pharisees, although he knows nothing of Christ except that He gave him his sight, he considers himself Christ's disciple. When Christ finds the man after the interrogation by the Pharisees we see how receptive he is to Christ when Christ asks, "Do you believe in the Son of God," and he responds by saying, "Who is he, that I may believe on him." Where is the evil in this blindness?

### **IV. The Vice of those Who Have Their Sight**

In contrast, what gifts did the Pharisees not have, being the genealogical lineage of the Prophets and Fathers? They had the use of all of their five senses and not infirm in any of them. They had wealth and did not have to beg. They had positions of prominence amongst the people. What did they not have? But how did any of this benefit them because their spiritual blindness darkened their whole nature so what they have physically and financially were not to their benefit, but to their harm?

## **V. The Kingdom of God is within**

What is external to a man is not what harms him, as in the case of this blind man. It is not blindness that ruins one's virtue but sin. What harm was shipwreck, beatings, stonings, and perils to the Apostle Paul? Did he not glory in these instead? (cf. Rom. 5.3)

What harm did homeless wandering cause Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg, who now helps the whole world? What harm did the prison of Aiud do to Valeriu Gafencu, who received the glory of a martyr's death? What harm did blindness do to the virtue of St. Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia?

Never was it sight or wealth or country which benefits a man, but, as St. John Chrysostom writes, only "carefulness in holding true doctrine, and rectitude in life. Of these things not even the devil himself will be able to rob a man, if he who possesses them guards them with the needful carefulness."

## **VI. Conclusion**

Today, the Light of the World comes to a man who lives in a world of night.

Today, the Creator comes to his broken creation.

Today, He who formed man from the dust of the earth uses dust to restore a man

Today, the Light of the world gives light to darkened eyes.

Today, the Son of Man is seen by the man once blind.

Today, God has revealed Himself and His creation worships Him.

My brothers, let us guard the Kingdom of God that lies within us and here store our treasure which cannot be corrupted.

**CHRIST IS RISEN!** (*holycross.org*)

## **Today's Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 16:16-34 EOB**

In those days, as we were going to prayer, it happened that we encountered a certain girl who had a spirit of divination and who produced much profit to her masters by fortune telling. As she followed Paul and us, she cried out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us a way of salvation!" And she did this for many days. But Paul, becoming greatly annoyed, turned back and said to the spirit, "In the Name of Jesus Christ, I order you to come out of her!" And the spirit came out that very moment. When her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. Having brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These Jewish men are causing unrest in our city! They teach customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or observe!" When the crowd also rose up

against them, the magistrates had them stripped and flogged. After giving them a severe flogging, the magistrates had them thrown into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a command, he threw them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. But when it was about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly, there was a great earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once, all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were loosened. The jailer, awakening from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, began to draw his sword and he was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" Having asked for lights, the jailer rushed in and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. He brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household!" Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all those who were in his household. Late as it was, the jailer washed their wounds and was immediately baptized, he and his entire household. He took them into his house and set food before them. He was filled with joy for believing in God, along with his entire household.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 9:1-38 EOB**

At that time, as Jesus was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but [it was] in order that the works of God might be revealed in him. I must do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva and anointed the blind man's eyes with the mud. He then said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). And so, the man went away, washed, and came back seeing. At this, the neighbors and those who saw that he had been blind before said, "Is this not the man who sat and begged?" Others were saying, "It is he!" Still others were saying, "He looks like him." The man said, "I am he!" Therefore, the people asked him, "How were your eyes opened?" He answered, "A man called Jesus made mud, anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash.' And so, I went away and washed, and I received sight." Then they asked him, "Where is he?" The man replied, "I do not know." They brought the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. It was a Sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Again, the Pharisees also asked the man how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and I see!" At this, some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath."

Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” There was division among them. Therefore, they asked the blind man again, “What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet!” The Jews did not believe [the report] about this man, that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of this man who had received his sight. They asked the parents, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. He is of age. Ask him! He will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone would confess Jesus as Christ, this person would be expelled from the synagogue. Therefore, his parents said, “He is of age. Ask him!” And so, they called the man who had been blind a second time, and they told him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner!” At this, the man answered, “I do not know if he is a sinner. One thing I do know: that though I was blind, now I see!” Again, they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You do not also want to become his disciples, do you?” Then they insulted him and said, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.” The man answered them, “How amazing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners; God will listen to anyone who is God-fearing and who does his will. Since the world began, it has never been heard of that anyone opened the eyes of someone born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born completely in sins, and do you teach us?” And they threw him out. Jesus heard that they had thrown out the man born blind, he found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” The man answered, “Who is he, Sir, that I may believe in him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking with you.” Then the man said, “Sir, I believe!” and he expressed adoration to Jesus.

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

Brethren and fathers, a feast of feasts, the Assumption of our Savior Jesus Christ, is at our doors, and a great and supernatural mystery; for our nature is being taken up beyond heaven, as it written: *By grace you have been saved; and he has raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [Ephesians 2,5-6] who is at the right hand of God, [Romans 8,34] far above every principality and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named,*

*not only in this age, but in that which to come. And he has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.* [Ephesians 1,22-23]

Do you see then to what height of glory human nature has been raised? Is it not from earth to heaven? Is it not from corruption to incorruption? How hard would not someone toil in order to become the intimate friend of a corruptible king here below? But we, although we were alienated and hostile in our intent by evil deeds, have not only been reconciled to God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, but we have also soared aloft to sonship, and now our nature is worshiped in the heavens by every creature seen and unseen. Such is the mighty work of the ineffable love for mankind of our good God, and with this in mind the blessed Apostle cried out: *What is the hope of his calling, and what the wealth of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of the might of his strength which he worked in Christ?* {Ephesians 1,18-20} For what came to pass? He who is supremely good came to us through a virgin birth, he became a slave to the normal laws of nature, he ascended the cross, nailing to it the record against us, he descended *to the lowest parts of the earth* [Psalm 138,15] and abolished the pains of death and raised humanity with himself, finally *he was taken up in glory* [Timothy 3,18], manifesting himself for us to God the Father.

These then briefly are the events of the holy feast. And as we contemplate them, brethren, and because we are the body of Christ, let us reverence the gift, let us preserve the nobility, let us not betray the grace, let us not *make the members of Christ members of a harlot*; [1 Corinthians 6,15] but let us sanctify ourselves in both thoughts and deeds, let us yet refrain *from carnal desires that war against the soul*, [1 Peter 2,11] maintaining good conduct in ourselves, peaceable, compliant, obedient, humble, reliable. And this is the blessed life: but pleasures and trifles, occasions of laughter and dissoluteness and all such inordinate behavior should be left to the lovers of the flesh and to the lovers of life, who see and do not see and hear and do not hear, for their hearts are insensitive [Cf. Mark 8,17-18] and their ears blocked up so as not to distinguish good from bad, light from darkness, life from death, but so as to go towards the fire that is ready. For the desire of the flesh is fire, and yet they rush towards it unbridled; love of money is a pit, and yet deep embedded they do not cease to follow their self-chosen demon and to be entitled to be called miserable rather than blessed, because despising what is truly good they embrace rather perishable corruption.

But we, brethren, let us hold fast to the confession *in which we stand, and let us boast in the hope of the glory of God*, [Romans 5,2] let us keep to the discipline in which the saints disciplined themselves, as indeed did the blessed Pachomius,

whom we recently celebrated. Let us see healthily, let us hear healthily, let us touch healthily, using all our members healthily, so that guided by the word and as servants of the word we may become inheritors of eternal life according to the promise, [Cf. 1 Timothy 4,8] in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be the glory and the might with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

– St. Theodore the Studite, *Catechesis 7, on the Feast of the Ascension*

## **Also Commemorated Today: Virgin-Martyr Theodosia of Tyre**

*Theodora is adorned with majesty and beauty, a well-pleasing gift to the Lord. Theodosia is drowned in the waters of the sea, Christ cherishes her in refreshing water.*

*On the twenty-ninth Theodosia was struck by the current of the sea.*

### **The History of the Martyrs in Palestine By Eusebius of Caesarea**

The Confession of Theodosia, a Virgin of God

In the Fifth Year of the Persecution in our Days (306 A.D.): The persecution in our days had been prolonged to the fifth year. And it was the month Nisan, and the second day of the same month, when a godly virgin, and holy in all things, one of the virgins of the Son of God in the city of Tyre, who was not yet eighteen years old, out of pure love for those, who on account of their confession of God were set before the tribunal of the governor, drew near and saluted them, and entreated them to remember her in their prayers: and because of these words which she had spoken to them, the wicked men were filled with anger, as if she had been doing something unjust and improper; and the officers seized her forthwith, and took her before the governor Urbanus, for he still held the power in Palestine. And I know not what happened to him, but immediately, like one much excited by this young woman, he was filled with rage and fury against her, and commanded the girl to offer sacrifice. And because he found, that although she was but a girl, she withstood the imperial orders like a heroine, then did this savage governor the more inflict tortures on her sides and on her breast with the cruel combs; and she was torn on the ribs until her bowels were seen. And because this girl had endured this severe punishment and the combs without a word, and still survived, he again commanded her to offer sacrifice.

She then raised her lips and opened her eyes, and looking around with a joyful countenance in that time of her suffering, (for she was charming in beauty and in the appearance of her figure), with a loud voice she addressed the governor: "Why, oh man, do you deceive yourself, and not perceive that I have found the thing which I prayed to obtain at your hands? For I rejoice greatly in having been

deemed worthy to be admitted to the participation of the sufferings of God's martyrs. Indeed, for this very cause, I stood up and spake with them, in order that by some means or other they might make me a sharer in their sufferings, so that I also might obtain a portion in the kingdom of heaven together with them, because so long as I had no share in their sufferings, I could not be a partaker with them in their salvation. Behold therefore now, how, on account of the future recompense, I stand at present before you with great exultation, because I have obtained the means of drawing near to my God, even before those just men, whom but a little while ago I entreated to intercede for me." Then that wicked judge, seeing that he became a laughingstock, and that his haughty threats were manifestly humbled before all those who were standing in his presence, did not venture to assail the girl again with great tortures like the former, but condemned her by the sentence which he passed to be thrown into the depths of the sea.

And when he passed on from the condemnation of this pure girl, he proceeded to the rest of those confessors, on whose account this blessed maiden had been called to this grace, and they were all delivered over to the copper mines in Palestine, without his saying a word to them, or inflicting upon them any sufferings or torture; for this holy girl prevented all those confessors by her courageous conduct against error, and received in her own body, as it were on a shield, all the inflictions and tortures which were intended for them, having rebuked in her own person the enemy that opposed them; and subdued by her valor and patience the furious and cruel judge, and rendered that fierce governor like a coward with respect to the other confessors. It was on the first day of the week that these confessors were condemned in Caesarea; and in the month above written and in the year noted by us was this act accomplished. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

## **St. Ypomoni, Empress of the Romans**

St. Ypomoni the Righteous (Feast Day - March 13 and May 29)

St. Ypomoni (Patience), in the world named Helen Dragaš, and later as the wife of Manuel II Palaiologos was called: "Helen, in Christ God Augusta and Empress of the Romans, Palaiologos". She was the daughter of Constantine Dragaš, one of the many leaders and inheritors of the large Serbian kingdom of Stefan Dusan. She came from a royal and blessed genealogy. Many of her ancestors were Saints (e.g. Stefan Nemanja, the Serbian king and founder of the Holy Monastery of Hilanderion on Mount Athos, and known as St. Symeon the Myrrh-gusher). Constantine Dragaš assumed the leadership of what is today the Bulgarian portion of northeast Macedonia, in the area between the rivers Axiou and Strymonos. Her birth took place immediately after the death of the Dusan years. Her upbringing, education, and her formation were greatly influenced by the Byzantine ideal,

because the Serbs were greatly influenced by Byzantine culture. They thought of themselves as more identified with the culture and especially the national consciousness of the Byzantine Empire. Emotionally and essentially they were considered Byzantine/Roman, as she was later allowed to become Augusta and Empress due to her birth in the Serbian homeland. Above and beyond these, she was raised with the family tradition of the unshakeable Orthodox faith. This faith guided and illumined her, and would inspire her life which would be full of sorrows and trials. She was about 19 years old when she married Manuel II Palaiologos (1390), a few days before becoming Emperor.

The new life of Helen from the beginning showed itself to be a Golgotha. Many times she had to drink the cup of insults and debasement by her husband's side, not only from those of other religions, but from the Christians of the Western nations, in their desperate attempt to find ways to save the dying Empire. Helen demonstrated to be an outstanding person who gathered many great virtues and spiritual strength. She showed that she had a total sense of her position and circumstances, and her role and what was required, at all levels. She loved the people. She was the Great Mother whom anyone could approach. She shared in the anxieties and concerns of her fearful nation and whatever she did was accompanied by prayer, with her meek, sweet and consoling words. What was briefly written about the Empress by George Gemistos-Plethon was very characteristic and eloquent: "This Queen with much humility and perseverance appeared to address the two ways of life. Neither at the time of testing was she swayed, nor when she was granted rest, but in each case she did what was required. She joined together intelligence and bravery, more than any other woman. She was distinguished for her chastity. She had completely deep righteousness. We did not know how to do evil to anyone, either men or women. Instead we know that she did much good to many. With what other way can righteousness be shown in practice, other than to never do your own will or show evil towards anyone, but only show good to many?"; She proved worthy of her philosophical and Christ-loving husband, Manuel. She proved worthy to work next to him for 35 years, in accordance with their martyrdom, in other words, everything was held in agreement and harmony, co-spirits of Christ in holiness of struggles. They managed to honor virtue with words and deeds. "By word of teaching the practical, their work became prototypes and icons of applied love."

To this blessed couple God graced eight children. From the six boys two of them ascended the Emperor's throne, John VIII and Constantine XI; the last being the legendary Emperor. Theodore, Demetrios and Thomas became leaders of Mystra, and Andronikos of Thessaloniki. The two girls, however, passed away at a young age. The mother who had so many children and who loved them so much, nurtured

them with the faith and the sweet teaching of our Orthodox Church, taking them to holy shrines and sacred Monasteries of the Kingdom, and sought prayers for them by the holy ascetics and elders. She raised them “in the law of the Lord from youth”, and never “ceased with tears of prayer and love to instill the law in each one”. With patience and persistence, with care and prayer she shaped their characters, and together gave them “life” and “good life”. In this way, she managed, among others, to end 90 years of conflict between the members of the Imperial Family, which had extinguished the Empire. Any differences of opinion or conflicts that occurred (after the death of Manuel) were overcome silently with the prestige of her motherly intervention and her prayer.

Her love towards the monasteries was special. There she felt rest, her soul would rest, and she drew strength and courage for what would follow. This she imparted to her whole family. Her husband, who ceded the throne to his first-born son John two months before his death (May 29th 1425), he enrolled in the Pantocrator Monastery in Constantinople, where he was tonsured a monk with the name Matthew. She, after the death of her husband became a nun (1425) in the Monastery of Lady Martha, with the name Ypomoni (Patience). And three from their children became monks, Theodore and Andronikos (Monk Akakios) in the Pantocrator Monastery, and Demetrios (Monk David) in Didymoteicho. Further, as long as they were in their homeland, together with her father she built the Holy Monastery of Panagia Pammakaristos in Poganovo of the city of Demetrovgrad in southeast Serbia.

In Constantinople she was associated with the Holy Monastery of the Precious Forerunner of Petra, where the Holy Relic of St. Patapios the Righteous Wonderworker was kept, to whom St. Ypomoni showed a special reverence. The Monastery was founded by the fellow ascetic of St. Patapios in Egypt, Vara the Righteous, outside of the Roman gate before 450 AD. With St. Ypomoni's help she founded in the Monastery a female old-age home with the name “The Hope of the Hopeless”. Her reverence towards St. Patapios was revealed by the fact that the iconographer of the cave of St. Patapios on the Geraneia Mountain of Corinth considered it essential to depict St. Ypomoni next to the body of the Saint. St. Ypomoni was a bright and illumined person, endowed with many talents, which she “traded” with wisdom and prudence and gained much, managed with virtue, asceticism and endurance to reach a hard to scale measure of virtue.

A meaningful physiognomy of her time, Gennadios Scholarios, the first Ecumenical Patriarch after the Sack of Constantinople, in his *Paramythetiko Logo to King Constantine XI* in the section titled: “At the dormition of his mother St. Ypomoni”, he offers the following characteristically: “This blessed Queen when she was visited by someone wise, he would leave amazed from her unique wisdom.

When she met some ascetic, he would leave after the meeting, shamed by his poor virtue and ashamed by her virtue. When she met someone intelligent, he would be struck by her greater intelligence. When she would meet with a legislator, they became more careful. When she spoke with some lawyer, they believed that they had before them the Rule of Law in practice. When someone brave would meet her, they would feel defeated feeling amazed by her patience, wisdom and strength of character. When she was approached by some philanthropist, they were struck by her greater and perceivable feeling of philanthropy. When she met some friend of amusements, they would gain wisdom, and coming to know their humility before her, repented. When she met some a zealot of piety, they would gain greater zeal. Every one suffering, after meeting with her, received some relief of their pain. Every arrogant person berated his great self-love. And in general there was no one who came into contact with her and did not become better.”

God granted her to not live through the last tragic moments of the Empire. He called her close to Him on March 13th 1450, having lived 35 years as Empress and 25 years as a humble nun. Her servant John Eugenikos, the brother of St. Mark Archbishop of Ephesus, in his *Paramytheniko Logo to Constantine Palaiologos* "At the dormition of his Mother St. Ypomoni", wrote: "As for your eternal Lady Mother, everything as long as she lived was excellent: faith, works, generation, the way life, word and everything together was pure and worthy of divine honor, and as she lived as a partaker of divine Providence, thus she ended." The "Holy Lady" as she is named by George Frantzes, is joined with the thought of her monastic name (Patience) with the way she confronted the good and also the many problems in her whole life. Patience in life, deed and monastic name. "In patience she possessed her soul."

The holy skull of St. Ypomoni is kept today at the Holy Monastery of Saint Patapios in Loutraki of Corinth.

### **A Recent Miracle of the Saint**

Many are the appearances of St. Ypomoni in the last few years to the faithful and also to non-Christians. The following miraculous appearance involved the healing of a sick man.

St. Ypomoni appeared as a nun to a taxi driver from Athens. She stopped his taxi and sought to be driven to Loutraki. The taxi driver had skin cancer on his hands and was experiencing a great lack of faith. On the way, the nun, who wore a cowl with a red cross, asked him: "Why are you sad?" And he did not hesitate to confess the whole truth. After she asked him if he wanted her to make the sign of the Cross on him so that he would become well, and he agreed. In a short time however, he started to get sleepy, and he asked the nun if they could stop for a little so that they

wouldn't be killed. They had arrived close to the destination, and it would be easy for her to find another taxi. He stopped on the side of the road and fell asleep. When he woke up he noticed that his hands were better, but the nun had disappeared. He asked people in the area if they saw a nun near there, but no one had seen her. He therefore returned to his taxi and realized that it had been some saint who had then disappeared. He headed right away to his doctor and related what had happened. At that instant his eyes fell on an icon which was hanging in the doctor's office, and he fell from his chair and cried: "That was her."

The icon was of St. Ypomoni. Thus he learned who it was that healed him and softened his unbelief. The cowl with the red cross showed her origin before becoming Empress of Byzantium, and with this monastic schema her life ended. Later it became known that the day when the miracle occurred was March 13th, the day when the Saint celebrates. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

### **Social Team for June 5**

Team 4 is up next week - Samouris, Kopan, Connell. Thank you!

#### **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, Bennett family, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Roberta Corson, Jon Church, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, Helen P. Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Helen, Brian, Luke and Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & family, Nicholas Pavlik, Weston Perry & family, John Reece, Mary Reed, Marge Rusnak, Rose Song, Dcn. Nectarios & Ia, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the suffering people of Ukraine, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)