

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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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

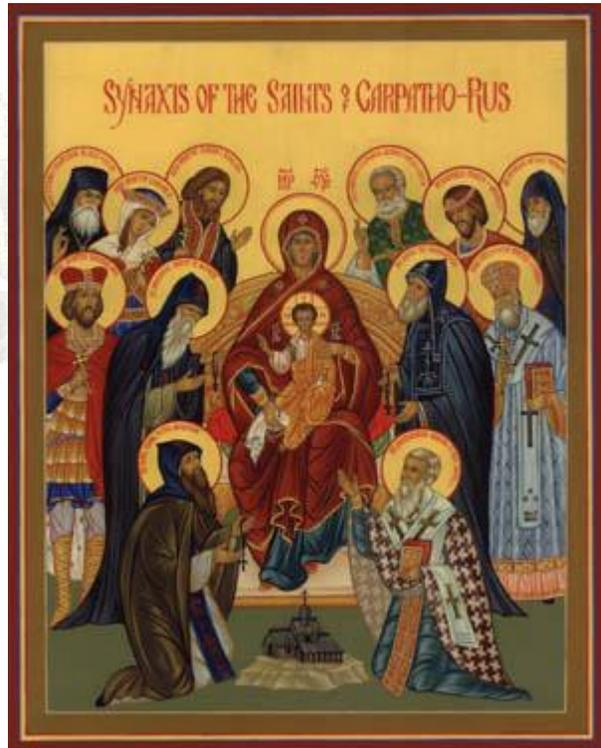
June 26, 2022 – 2nd Sunday After Pentecost

Sunday of Regional Saints | All Saints of Carpatho-Rus

On the second Sunday after Pentecost, each region in world Orthodoxy commemorates those Saints who are associated in some way with either its geographic home, or that of its roots. The Saints among the forebearers of our Diocese are primarily identified with the eastern European lands of Carpatho-Rus, especially areas of the present-day Czech and Slovak Republics, Ukraine and Poland. The icon above portrays twelve of these Saints surrounding the young Christ child and the Theotokos. Orthodoxy is relatively new to North America, and although there are already a small number of canonized Saints of North America, we were called by our Metropolitan Nicholas of thrice-blessed memory to specifically remember the Saints of Carpatho-Rus on this day. Below are the lives of two of these saints.

Holy Martyr Wenceslas

According to tradition, St. Wenceslas was born in 907 in the village of Stochov. At the age of 7, his father summoned the Slavic Archbishop of Moravia to tonsure the boy in a manner that other princes were tonsured. His upbringing and education were entrusted to his grandmother, St. Ludmila. She placed him under the direction



of a priest to learn the Slavic language as well as Latin and Greek. But his education was interrupted with the unexpected death of his father, Vratislav, and he assumed the throne of the Czech and Moravian lands. His rule was marked by the discipline of the gospel: he clothed and fed the poor, defended the widows and the orphans, and gave generously to the Church.

Although many in the kingdom rejoiced at the good works of St. Wenceslas, his envious brother, Boleslav, hoped to find a way to murder the pious king. During one of his travels through the towns of his kingdom, he stopped in a small village to attend the feast day divine liturgy of Saints Cosmas and Damian. Again, friends warned the holy ruler of his brother's evil plot to kill him, but the king refused to believe such a story. On the next morning, hearing the bells of the church calling the faithful to Matins, he set off for the church. However his evil brother, Boleslav, overtook him at the gate of his home and struck him over the head with his sword. Two other conspirators assisted in the murderous plot piercing the king's ribs with their swords. St. Wenceslas cried out, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and he breathed his last. The conspirators also killed many others, and the entire kingdom was in disarray.

A priest from the local church placed a shroud over the bloody corpse and carried the king to his home. There he was bathed and clothed, and his body was taken to the middle of the church for the funeral. Thus was the holy one brought to the end of his life in 929. Boleslav, feeling much remorse and pain, repented for his evil act and ordered the soldiers to bring the holy prince to Prague. His body was placed in the church of the Saint Vitus and remains there to this very day.

St Moses the Hungarian

One of the greatest monks of the famous Kiev-Pechersk Lavra Monastery, St. Moses labored for much of his life as a pious layman. In his early years, he devoted himself to the service of the holy princes, Saints Boris and Gleb. After the princes' death, Moses fled to Kiev where he remained in the home of Predislava, Prince Yaroslav's sister.

A great battle was fought in Kiev, and Prince Yaroslav's forces were defeated. Moses was led away in chains to Poland to serve as a slave to King Boleslay. While serving the king, a Polish noblewoman saw the young and exceedingly handsome Moses, and begged the king to sell him to her. He agreed to this plan, and she brought Moses to her vast estate with the intention of marrying him. When they arrived at her estate, the woman tried to seduce Moses in many ways. The pious layman refused her advances, and she became enraged by his unwillingness to accept her offers. Seeing that her plan was not working, she ordered that Moses be placed in prison and fed only dry bread and water. The holy servant of God

prayed and fasted more diligently than ever, and many came to his aid offering food and prayers.

Seeing that her plan was failing and that Moses would not yield to her advances, the woman devised another scheme by which she hoped to convince him to marry her. She led Moses throughout her villages showing him all that he would gain by submitting to her wishes. Moses simply replied, "You are doing all this in vain. You cannot entice me with corruptible things of this world, and you cannot steal from me incorruptible spiritual wealth."

By God's mercy, a priestmonk from the Holy Mountain who was traveling in the area heard of Moses, and came to him one night. After much conversation, the priestmonk tonsured Moses and taught him about the spiritual life. Later the next day, servants informed the woman about the priestmonk and all that he had done. She ordered that Moses be beaten with metal rods. During his torture, a rebellion broke out in the land, and King Boleslav as well as the noble woman perished. Moses was now a free man.

After his liberation, he traveled to Kiev and entered the Monastery of the Kiev Caves where he struggled as a hesychast for ten years. He reposed on July 26, 1043. To this day, his sacred and fragrant relics lie in the cave of St. Antony, founder of the Kiev Caves Monastery. (*from acrod.org*)

A Serbian Saint For Carpatho-Russia: Metropolitan Dositheos of Zagreb

Well-documented and well-known among Orthodox Christians in America are the stories of the countless bishops, priest and lay people martyred by Communists throughout the countries of Eastern Europe. Less known are the lives of the thousands of Serbian Orthodox Christians, estimated at nearly one million, martyred for their Faith during World War II. Notable among these stories is the life of a Serbian bishop who played an important role in the resurrection of the Orthodox Faith in Carpatho-Russia in the early part of the 20th century.

The life of Metropolitan Dositheus (Vasich) of Zagreb, and the story of his suffering for the Orthodox Faith is closely tied with the political and religious history of the Balkan nation formerly known as Yugoslavia. The nation of Yugoslavia was formed in the aftermath of World War I from the states of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, and Montenegro. This new nation attempted to unite in a single state all of the South Slavic peoples who possessed a diverse ethnic identity as well as religious diversity of Roman Catholicism, Islam, and Orthodox Christianity. This fragile unity exploded in 1941 when the Nazi Germans invaded Yugoslavia and split up the nation. An independent state of Croatia was established as a Nazi

satellite ruled by a fascist militia known as the Ustashi. It has been well documented that from 1941-1945 the Croatian Ustashi regime murdered approximately 500,000 people, 250,000 were expelled and another 200,000 forced to convert to Roman Catholicism. The target of their persecutions: Jews but primarily Serbian Orthodox Christians. Among the victims of their terror, the Metropolitan of Zagreb, Croatia -- Dositheus.

To Carpatho Russia

St. Doseitheus was born in Belgrade Serbia in 1887, was educated at the seminary in Belgrade later graduating from the theological academy in Kiev. He also studied theology and philosophy in Berlin and Leipzig, Germany. Following graduation he was tonsured a monk, ordained deacon, and assigned as a teacher in the St. Sava Seminary in Belgrade in 1907. In 1909 he continued his studies at the Sorbonne in Paris and in 1913 he was consecrated Bishop of Nish.

In December, 1920 the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church of Serbia decided to send Bishop Dositheus to Czechoslovakia at the repeated requests of Orthodox Christians who had renounced the Greek Catholic Uniate Church for their ancestral Orthodox Faith. He arrived in Carpatho-Russia in August, 1921 and visited the village of Iza, one of the centers of the Orthodox revival, a town forever sanctified by the presence of two Carpatho-Russian saints: St. Alexis Kabaluk, known as the Apostle of Carpatho-Russia and St. Job Kundria. He presided over a meeting at which delegates from sixty Orthodox parishes discussed the organization of a new Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese. A constitution for the new church was written and Bishop Dositheus went to Prague to have it approved by the Second Council of the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia on August 28-29, 1921. On September 25 of that year he was a co-consecrator of the new bishop, Gorazd Pavlik who was executed by the Nazis in 1942 and has since been glorified by the church as a saint and new martyr. While Bishop Dositheus soon returned to Serbia he never forgot his former flock. He returned in 1935 to take part in the consecration of the Cathedral of Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Prague and in 1939 for the consecration of the new Orthodox cathedral in Olomouc.

Persecution

In 1931, Bishop Dositheus was appointed the first bishop of the newly established Zagreb Diocese. Here in the capital city of Croatia, Orthodox Christians were a minority in a predominately Roman Catholic nation. The new bishop arrived in his diocese among Catholics who were not welcoming of an Orthodox bishop especially since his missionary work was well known in leading Carpatho-Russians out of the Greek Catholic Church. Bishop Dositheus became the target of insults in the streets and stones were thrown into his windows at night. When told that he should contact the police he responded that it was inappropriate for a

bishop to do this. The bishop told a friend "When they swear at me or spit at me, I simply raise my hand and bless them". Bishop Dositheus took seriously the words of the Beatitudes: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

With the invasion by the Nazi Germans and the establishment of the Croatian Ustashi regime, Serbian Orthodox schools and orphanages were closed. The Ustashi were firmly pro-Catholic and anti-Serb and anti-Orthodox. In their view Croatia was a Catholic nation with a Catholic heritage and identity. All Orthodox Christians were forced to wear an arm band with the letter "P" for pravoslavnyj – Orthodox, similar to the star forced upon the Jews. Those who refused to convert to Catholicism were executed. The Catholic Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac initially warmly welcomed the new regime and blessed them. Stepinac is currently a candidate for sainthood in the Catholic Church for his rescuing of Jews threatened by the Nazis and his persecution by the Communists. Modern historians are divided on his role in the persecution of the Orthodox. At best, he was passive as Orthodox clergy and people were massacred or forced to convert to Catholicism.

Upon the ascent of the Ustashi, Bishop Dositheus was immediately arrested. Ill and lying in bed, half-dressed, he was taken into the street to face a Catholic mob. He was led through the streets, beaten and mocked by the crowd. On his arrival at a hospital for treatment, he was nearly unconscious. His mistreatment at the hospital continued where he was the object of scorn and derision by the Catholic nuns who staffed the hospital. Seriously ill, he was taken by two Nazi SS guards to a prison in Belgrade, Serbia where he was found dressed in rags, his body covered with bruises. At the request of the Serbian government, Bishop Dositheus was released from the hospital and placed in the Monastery of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple. The nuns of the monastery cared for him until he died from his injuries on January 13, 1945. He was buried in the church yard of the monastery and was glorified as a confessor of the Faith by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Church in May, 2000. He is commemorated on the day of his falling asleep in the Lord and on June 28, the commemoration of the New Martyrs of Serbia. (*from acrod.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 2:10-16 EOB

Brethren, glory, honor, and peace are for everyone who does good; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, because there is no partiality with God. Hence, all those who have sinned apart from the law will also perish without the law, and as many as have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles who do not have the law do by nature the things of the law, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law, by

showing that the practical expression of the law is written in their hearts. Their conscience bears witness, and their thoughts alternately accuse or defend them). This is for the day when, according to my proclamation of the gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.

Today's Gospel Lesson - Saint Matthew 4:18-23 EOB

At that time, walking by the sea of Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers: Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother. They were casting a net into the sea since they were fishermen. He said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fish for people!" Immediately, they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. Jesus called them. At once, they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people. His fame spread into all Syria, and they brought him all who were sick, afflicted with various diseases and torments, people possessed with demons, epileptics, and paralytics; and he healed them. Great crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and from beyond the Jordan followed him.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

"It is really sad that we despise the great treasure we received through Holy Baptism, that is the adoption [by God, see Eph. 1:5], and which we have, as the Apostle says, in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7). And that's why **we easily laze the days away**, we easily become **neglectful**, we easily despise it, and in a word, **we easily fall**.

Blessed is the one who received the grace and died with it! Yet even more blessed is the one who lived, multiplied the grace, and then fell asleep!

Set an hour during the day or the night and say the prayer, word by word and perceive it with your mind!

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me...

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me...

Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me...

This is how you should say the prayer!

And with time, according to the measure of your purity, and according to the measure of your zeal, **the first thing you will find is 'joy'!** Joy will make you determined to say the prayer **more often**. And prayer will give you even more and greater joy. Another joy will be inside of you, that you didn't know before. Another light, another **beauty**, another **sweetness**, another state of well-being.

You will see the whole nature bathed in a beauty, in a sweetness... You will see the entire nature, the entire creation of the unseen God. And these are nothing, they are small things, a pebble on the beach...

There are many more great things that you will feel by saying the prayer! Then you will have **another spiritual horizon**, another spiritual food, another spiritual garment, which **now you can not even imagine**.

When God will see your desire, your zeal, that you are looking for Him in the prayer, then you will see what the spiritual things are, the unspeakable goods, what is that Paradise which you feel, foretaste, glimpse, even here in this life... **We foretaste the eternal good things even while living on the earth...** And they will give us much zeal to serve Christ even more."

– St. Ephraim of Katounakia

Also Commemorated Today: St. David the Dendrite of Thessaloniki

By Protopresbyter Fr. George Papavarnavas

The venerable David came from Thessaloniki and lived in the sixth century during the reign of Emperor Justinian I. His way of life was austere and ascetic and a continuous sacrifice on the altar of love and philanthropy. In emulation of the stylites he remained for three consecutive years in a tree praying continuously. Burning with love for God he endured "the heat of the day and the frost of night", "striking a blow" to his body that he may not find himself to be "disqualified", according to the words of the Apostle Paul. He especially liked to pray the words of the sacred Psalmist, which he applied in his own life: "I have become like a pelican of the wilderness; I have become like an owl in a ruined house. I have watched, and am become as a sparrow dwelling alone on a roof" (Ps. 101:6-7 LXX).

Saint David, shortly before the end of his earthly life, led a team of Thessalonians who travelled to Constantinople to ask the emperor to send them a District Officer for their City. On the return journey the venerable one delivered his sanctified soul "into the hands of the living God", and from the heavenly mansions he prays for all, especially those who invoke him with faith and desire and request his God-persuading intercessions.

His life and deeds give us the opportunity to highlight the following:

First, the ascetic life is the way of life taught and inspired by the Orthodox Church and which was lived by the holy Apostles, as well as all the saints throughout the centuries until our day. Asceticism can take place in various ways, in accordance

with the strength of the individual, as well as ones age, temperament and character. Always, however, with the guidance of a discerning spiritual father, because there lurks the danger of excessiveness and delusion. Asceticism is the effort to implement all the commandments of Christ and the crucifixion of the flesh, or the mind of the flesh. It is the struggle for the transformation of the passions and the spiritual rebirth of man. Asceticism in the Orthodox Church is always coupled with prayer and the sacramental life. Fasting, vigils and whatever other ascetic exercise, if it is not coupled with prayer and the participation in the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, which is the center of all the Mysteries, then there is no benefit and it does not contribute to our spiritual rebirth and our sovereignty over the passions. St. Maximus the Confessor, referring to fasting, which is a way of spiritual asceticism, says that "fasting without prayer is the invention of demons". This is because even the demons fast, and in fact they don't eat at all, being without a body, yet they do not pray.

Therefore, asceticism, the sacramental life and continuous prayer consist of the Orthodox way of life, which lead to the purification of the heart from the passions, the illumination of the nous and the personal communion of man with the living God, who is a Person and not an abstract idea.

Second, dealing with the common good of the Country or City in which one lives must be done by people like Saint David, with unimpeachable internal purity and true love for the City and its residents. In other words, persons who have no selfish ends, but their only motivation is for the progress and prosperity of the City and its residents. Of course, such people are rare and hard to find, but they do exist and should be highlighted and promoted, for there can be no real progress in a City or a State without such, and to avoid undesirable situations and undesirable happenings like the ones that we experience nowadays here in our homeland.

The contribution of the Orthodox Church in this case is very important, since with the lifestyle it lives and inspires it transforms people from individuals to persons, changing them from being selfish to being selfless, thus advancing society. In democratic societies, citizens, and especially the people who are living members of the Church and struggle to live according to the commandments of Christ, with their votes they must make visible and highlight leaders in local communities, and in the State in general, who by their way of life show that they are persons, or at least are struggling to eliminate various guises which garb people in sin, and to make them persons. That is, people with genuine love and internal freedom, free from dependencies that create the passions, but also from internal insecurities and inferiority complexes.

Our personal life is not independent from our social life, since sin has social implications. Besides, all social disorders are rooted in selfishness, which is the mother of three great passions, that of avarice, sensuality and vanity, which darken the nous and lead man to catastrophe. A tragic example is the case of Judas, who was "darkened by the illness of love for money", and this resulted in him being led to self-destruction and eternal loss.

May we who fight for our salvation imitate the way of life of the venerable David, and desire the common good, to be a bright lighthouse and signpost. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Virgin-Martyr Perseveranda of Spain

St. Perseveranda (also known as Pecinna or Pezaine) was born in Spain of a noble family in the seventh century. She had two sisters, Sts. Columba and Magrina. They gathered other religious young women around them and led an ascetic and devotional life, until the fame of their sanctity attracted the attention of King Oliver, who reigned in one of the western provinces of Spain and was a fierce persecutor of Christians.

In 726, St. Columba told her sisters and their friends that they were to become the victims of persecution. She had hardly finished speaking when letters were brought, ordering them to appear before King Oliver. St. Columba, after directing her sisters to be firm in the faith, departed. The king asked her who she was and of what religion, and when she answered that she was a Christian, he told her she would not be harmed if she would renounce her faith. One of the bystanders told him this woman was not to be compared for beauty to her two sisters, and the king at once ordered his guards to go and seize the other women, swearing by the pagan gods that he would take them for his slaves.

Meantime, Perseveranda and Magrina, warned by a dream, gave themselves over to the protection of God and fled. They travelled for seven days, but Perseveranda died, exhausted with hunger and fatigue. Christians happened to come to the spot, and saw a dove, surrounded by a celestial light, hovering over the body. As they knew the noble birth and piety of the maiden, they buried her with honor in Poitou, which was renamed after her.

The messengers returned to the king and told him they could not find the holy maidens. He was furious and set off in search of them. One of the king's followers found the body of St. Perseveranda and attempted to bring it to King Oliver; but was struck blind. The relics of St. Perseveranda were afterwards translated to Niort, and eventually to St. Queutiu. (*from antiochian.org*)

Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (June 29)

We will celebrate the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul with a Vespers Divine Liturgy on Tuesday evening at 5:30. Please observe at least a three hour fast if you plan to receive Holy Communion.

Social Team for July 3

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

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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.)