

# SOBORNOST

**St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church**

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*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

## SERVICES

**Saturday: Confession 4:30 PM Great  
Vespers 5:00 PM**

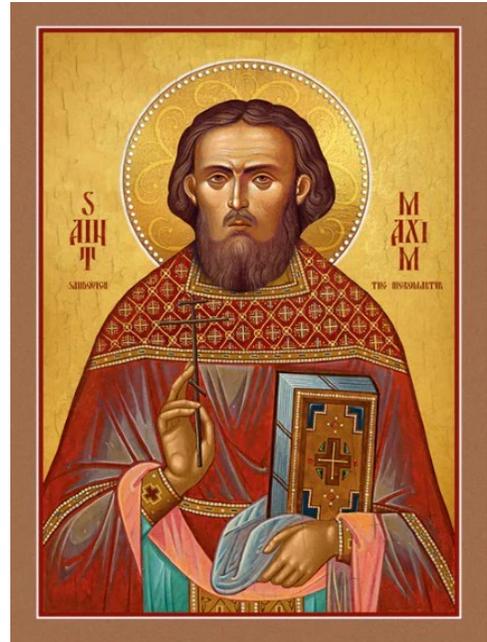
**Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM Divine  
Liturgy 10:00 AM**

**July 24, 2022 – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**

### **St. Maxim Sandovich, Protomartyr of the Lemko People**

St. Maxim was born in 1886 in Zdynia in the Lemko region of Carpatho-Rus which was then a part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in present day Poland. His father, Tymofej, was the cantor of Zydnia's Greek Catholic church. After completing his education in the nearby town of Jaslo and Nowy Sacz, he entered the Greek Catholic Basilian monastery in Krakow. Dissatisfied with the attempts to Latinize the Eastern rite to make it more acceptable to the Roman Catholic majority and also attempts to denationalize the Rusyns, he crossed the border into the Russian empire and entered the famed Orthodox monastery at Pochaev. It was while at the monastery that his outstanding potential attracted the attention of the illustrious Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) who entrolled him in the Orthodox seminary in Zhitomir.

He completed his seminary studies in 1911 and that same year married Pelagia Grigoryuk and was ordained to the Holy Priesthood. At that time in the Lemko region there was a growing movement away from the Greek Catholic Church to the Orthodox Faith of their ancestors. Fr. Maxim returned home to serve the Orthodox faithful in the villages of Hrab, Vysovatka and Dovhe. After serving his first Divine Liturgy in Hrab on December 2, 1911, the Austrian authorities, suspicious of the Orthodox Faith for its alleged *Russian sympathies*, issued an order



forbidding any further Orthodox services. Fr. Maxim ignored the order and continued to conduct services in village homes. He was repeatedly fined and held under temporary arrest. Before Pascha in 1912, he was again arrested with his friend and spiritual father, Father Ignatij Hudyma, and held in prison for two years in a Lvov prison until their trial began on March 9, 1914. After being found not guilty he immediately returned to his native village and continued minister to his Orthodox parishioners.

### **Martyrdom**

With the outbreak of World War I, Fr. Maxim was again arrested and imprisoned on August 4, 1914 along with his entire family. Fr. Maxim, his father, mother, brother, and wife were forced to travel on foot to the prison while being prodded by the bayonets of the soldiers. In prison they were placed in separate cells and denied the opportunity to see each other. This time, however, there would be no court trial. On the morning of September 6, Fr. Maxim awoke in his cell and read his morning prayers as usual. Austrian soldiers led the twenty-eight year old priest from his cell to a wall in the prison courtyard where he was bound and blindfolded. As he was being led from his cell Fr. Maxim realized where they were taking him and humbly and with dignity asked, *"Be so good as not to hold me. I will go peacefully wherever you wish."* There they ripped his priestly cross from his chest and threw it to the dirt, marking an "X" with chalk over his heart for a target. Before the command to execute the priest was given, Father Maxim was heard to shout: *"Long live the Rus' people, long live Orthodoxy!"* As the shots rang out the martyr slumped to the ground. To assure that he was dead three more blasts of a revolver were emptied into his head. On September 12, St. Maxim's father, his pregnant wife, and brother were sent to the concentration camp at Talerhof in the far western part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. While in the camp Pelagia gave birth to a son she named Maxim in honor of his father. Like his father, the younger Maxim also entered the priesthood serving the Lemko Rusyn people faithfully until his death in 1991.

### **His Canonization**

In September 1994, the official glorification of St. Maxim began in the courtyard of the Gorlice Court House where the saint had been martyred, where a bronze plaque marking the tragic event was placed on the wall. Following this service, a procession of hierarchs, including our Metropolitan Nicholas of blessed memory, clergy and faithful entered the Holy Trinity Church in Gorlice for the service of glorification.

For the glorification of a saint, ordinarily the saint's relics would be exhumed from their grave and transferred in procession to the church. The bishops of the

Orthodox Church of Poland decided to delay the transfer, fearing it would provoke the areas' Roman Catholics who reluctantly tolerate the Orthodox presence. Finally on September 5-6, 2007, the martyr's relics were transferred from the village cemetery in Zdynia to the Holy Trinity Church in Gorlice, Poland where they are enshrined on the right side of the icon screen.

### **The Witness of Martyrs**

Our Lord said: *“Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”*. (Matthew 10:28) The life of this new hieromartyr (priest/martyr) echo the words of Jesus. St. Maxim had no fear of threats from the government, imprisonment, abuse, insults and even a firing squad. When this newly-ordained priest was arrested for serving an Orthodox Divine Liturgy his first action on being freed was to immediately return to his flock and resume his priestly ministry. The Lord's words in the Book of Revelation apply well to St. Maxim: *“Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life.”* (Revelation 2:10)

In my many years working as a hospice chaplain I have often been summoned by doctors and nurses to the bedside of a terminally ill patient who is fearful of his approaching death. These medical professionals assume, rightly so, that it is primarily an active faith that can help a person face this fear. The promise of the Lord Jesus to us is that if we believe in Him and our lives are joined to His we have nothing to fear in death. But while the death and resurrection of our Savior have removed our fear of death, Jesus does not desire that all of our fears vanish. He does want us to be afraid of something! He wants us to be afraid of the right things, to be fearful of things that should be feared: *“...fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”*. *“What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?”* (Matthew 16:26) The life of St. Maxim Sandovich, faithful priest shines forth this truth! - Fr. Ed Pehanich (*from acrod.org*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 12:6-14 EOB**

Brethren, we have different gifts according to the grace given to us: if it is prophecy, let us prophesy according to the measure of our faith. If it is service, let us dedicate ourselves to service! He who teaches should do his teaching; or he who exhorts his exhorting. As for the one who gives, let the giving be done with generosity. He who rules should rule with diligence and the one who shows mercy should do so with joy.

Let your love be without hypocrisy. Reject with horror what is evil. Cling to what is good. In love for the brethren, be tenderly affectionate with one another; place

the honor of others above your own. Do not fall back in zeal; be fervent in the spirit, serving the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in troubles, persevere in prayer; contribute to the needs of the saints; look for opportunities to be hospitable. Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse!

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 9:1-8 EOB**

At that time, Jesus entered into a boat, crossed over [the lake] and came into his own town. Behold, some people brought him a man who was paralyzed, lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer! Your sins are forgiven!" At this, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man blasphemes!" Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil [thoughts] in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or, 'Get up, and walk?' But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (then he said to the paralytic), "Get up, take up your mat, and go up to your house." The man got up and departed to his house. But when the crowds saw this, they were astonished and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

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

Will we never learn restraint, however late? Will we not repudiate our want of feeling, not to say petty selfishness? Will we not take note of our human condition? Will we not dedicate our own resources to the misfortunes of others? Nothing in human life is naturally secure or smooth or self-sustaining or permanent. Our fortunes run in a cyclical pattern that brings changes one after another, frequently within the space of a single day and sometimes even an hour, and one may rather count on the shifting winds, or the wake of a sea-faring ship, or the illusory dreams of night with their brief respite, or the lines that children at play trace in the sand, than on human prosperity. The wise are those who because of their distrust of the present save for themselves the world to come and because of the uncertain and fickle nature of human success embrace the kindness that does not fail. Their aim is to gain in any case one at least of three things: never to become the victims of misfortune, since the Deity who elicits our compassion by His own kindness frequently honors the pious in kind here on earth; or to have a deep-seated confidence in God and believe that their misfortunes result not from sinfulness but somehow because of His plan; or, finally, to demand as their right from the prosperous the generosity that they showed to the needy when they enjoyed good fortune themselves.

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom," says Scripture, nor "the rich man in his riches," nor the "mighty man in his might," (Jer. 9:23) even if they have

reached the pinnacle, respectively, of wisdom or wealth or power; and, I should add also the corollaries, nor the celebrity in his fame, nor the robust in his health, nor the handsome in his good looks, nor the young man in his youth; in short, let no one be puffed up in anything else that is valued here on earth, but let him who glories glory in this alone, in the understanding and seeking out of God, in sympathy for the afflicted, and in the laying by of something that will benefit him in the life to come. The other advantages are transitory and ephemeral and, like the pieces in a children's game, move this way and that and pass back and forth to different persons at different times, and nothing is so particularly one's own that it does not come to an end in time or change hands as a result of malice. These, on the other hand, are permanent and abiding; they never withdraw or fail or cheat the faithful of their hopes. But I think there is a further reason why no earthly good is trustworthy or durable for man (and, like everything else, the creative Word and the Wisdom that exceeds every intelligence has well contrived this too, that we be pawns amid the objects of sight, which change and are changed now one way now another, are borne up and down and all around, and slip away before we can lay hold of them): that when we contemplate the changeableness and caprice of this world we may seek out the secure haven of the one to come. For what should we have done if our prosperity were permanent, given that now, though it is not, we are so firmly attached to it and held in such thrall by its deceptive pleasure that we cannot imagine anything better or higher than our present circumstances; and this despite the fact that we are taught and believe that we are created in the image of God which exists on high and draws us to itself?

“Who is wise, and will understand these things”? Who will leave behind what is fleeting? Who will throw in his lot with what abides? Who will think of the present as passing away? Who what is hoped for as here and now? Who will distinguish between appearance and reality, ignore the one and court the other? Who between fact and fiction? Who between the tabernacle below and the city above? Who between temporary and permanent home? Who darkness from light? Who between the slime of the abyss and holy ground? Who between flesh and spirit? Who between God and world-ruler? Who between the shadow of death and the life eternal? Who will barter the things of the present for the future? Who the wealth that slips away from the kind that is not lost? Who things visible for things unseen? Yes, blessed is the man who distinguishes between these things, dividing them in accordance with the separation of the Word that divides the better from the worse, and purposes “in his heart to go up,” as the divine David says at one point, and, fleeing this “valley of weeping,” (Ps. 83:6-7 LXX) seeks with all his might “the things that are above,” (Col. 3:1) and takes his place at Christ's side, crucified to the world along with Christ, and together with Christ ascends, heir to

the life that no longer fails or deceives, where there is found no more “a biting viper by the path,” (Gen. 49:17) watching against our heel, even as his own head is watched against. The same David, just like a herald most loud of voice booming an important public proclamation, calling the rest of us slow of heart and lovers of lies, rightly cries out to us not to cling so tightly to the visible world or to regard the sum of earthly happiness as nothing more than a full supply of food and drink, perishable things. And I expect the blessed Micah too has something like this in mind when he says, confronting those who make a show of virtue as they creep along the ground, “Draw near to the everlasting mountains. Arise; for this is not your rest.” (Mic. 2:9-10 LXX) These are almost the very words that our Lord and Savior uses to admonish us. What does he say? “Rise, let us go hence.” (Lk. 21:19) He is not merely conducting his disciples of the moment from that specific place, as one might think, but he is drawing all his disciples as well away for all time from the earth and the things of earth to the heavens and the blessings of heaven.

So let us now follow the Word; let us seek the repose on high; let us cast aside the opulence of this world; let us have recourse to only that portion of it that serves a good end; let us gain our lives by acts of charity; let us share what we have with the poor that we may be rich in the bounty of heaven. Give a portion of your soul too, not just your body; give a portion to God too, not just the world; take something from the belly, dedicate it to the Spirit; pluck something from the fire, place it far from the devouring flame below; rob from the tyrant, commit to the Lord. “Give a portion to seven,” that is, to this life, “and even to eight,” (Ecc. 11:2) the life that will receive us after this one; give a little to him from whom you have so much; give even the whole to him who has bestowed all. You will never surpass God's generosity even if you hand over your entire substance and yourself in the bargain. Indeed, to receive in the truest sense is to give oneself to God. No matter how much you offer, what remains is always more; and you will be giving nothing that is your own because all things come from God. And just as a man cannot overtake his own shadow, which recedes with every forward step and always stays the same distance ahead; nor his bulk surmount the head that always lies above it, in the same way also we cannot outdo God in our gifts, for we do not give anything that is not his or that surpasses his own bounty.

Recognize the source of your existence, of your breath of life, your understanding, your knowledge of God (itself the greatest of all gifts), your hope of gaining the heavenly kingdom, equality of honor with the angels, the contemplation of glory that now appears in a mirror, dimly, but then will be more perfect and clear; recognize that you have become a son of God, fellow heir with Christ, if I may be so bold, even very God. Where did you obtain all these things? From whom? Or,

to speak of lesser matters, that is, the visible world around us, who gave you to see the beauty of heaven, the sun in its course, the orb of the moon, the countless stars and the harmony and order, just as in a lyre, that prevails among all these, the turning hours, the changing seasons, the cycle of years, the equal portioning of night and day, the burgeoning earth, the flowing air, the expanse of ocean at once fixed and free, the river depths, the streaming winds? Who gave you rain, husbandry, food, the arts, dwellings, laws, governments, a civilized mode of life, friendly converse with your fellow man? How is it that some animals have been domesticated and pull a plow while others supply you with meat? Who made you lord and king of everything on earth? Who, without listing them individually, endowed you with all the things that lift man above the rest of creation? Is it not he who now in return and exchange for all asks that you show kindness to your fellow man? Can we than not be ashamed if we, after all we have received from him and hope yet to receive, will not grant him even this one thing, kindness? He set us apart from the brute beasts and alone of the creatures on earth honored us with reason. Shall we now brutalize our own selves? Have we been so corrupted by our life of ease, or deranged, or I know not what, that along with the bran and barley cakes that we have procured for ourselves, possibly by foul means, we shall imagine that we are naturally superior to our fellows? And just as there was once, at least so legend tells us, a race of giants set apart from the rest of mankind, shall we too tower over these people like supermen, like the famous Nimrod or the race of Anak that once oppressed Israel, or those who provoked the flood that swept the earth clean? He who is God and Lord does not shrink from being called our Father; shall we for our part deny our own kinsmen?

In no way, my friends and brothers! Let us not become bad stewards of the gifts we have received lest we hear Peter say to us, 'Shame on you for clinging to what belongs to another; imitate God's equality, and no one else will be poor.' Let us not struggle to amass and hoard fortunes while others struggle in poverty, lest from one direction the divine Amos reproach us with these harsh and ominous words, 'Come now, you who say, "When will the new moon be over," that we may sell, "and the Sabbath," that we may open our treasures?' (Am. 8:5) along with the words that follow, which hold the threat of God's wrath over the heads of those who possess a large and small weight; and the blessed Micah (*actually, Amos – ed.*), from another, who, convinced that excess breeds a wanton contempt towards others, rails, it would seem even against all extravagance itself, the living delicately on beds of ivory and pampering oneself with the sleekest of ointments and waxing fat on the flesh of tender calves from the midst of the stall and lambs from the flock and clapping to the sound of the harp and, still more, believing that any of these things is abiding and permanent (but it may be he regards these

activities as less shocking when compared with the fact that in their revelry they were not grieved over the ruin of Joseph, for he adds this to his indictment of excess). (Am. 6:4-7). May we avoid the same fate in our day; may we not be so addicted to luxury as actually to scorn the compassion of a God who condemns this behavior, even though he does not turn his wrath upon sinners at the moment of their transgression or immediately after it.

– St. Gregory the Theologian, *Oration 14.19-24*

## **Also Commemorated Today: Great Martyr Christina of Tyre**

By Protopresbyter Fr. George Papavarnavas

Saint Christina was born in Tyre around the year 200. Her parents were both pagan idolaters, with her father being a general in the Roman army whose name was Urbanus. A pious woman catechized her in the truth of the Christian faith. From the moment she became a member of the Church her life changed and she lived within the love of God and in service to others. It was not long after that her father was informed that his daughter became a Christian, and in a rage he shut her up in a tower and tried by every means to persuade her to return to idolatry. Because she remained firm in her faith, he had her imprisoned. After her father died, the eparch Dion had her horribly tortured. Then the eparch Julian cast her in a place of wild beasts and fierce snakes, but the Saint remained unharmed, since the irrational beasts, as opposed to the rational ones, respected her. When many pagans had seen that the Saint remained unharmed after her horrible tortures, the wild beasts and the fierce snakes, they believed in Christ and boldly confessed their faith. Then the eparch ordered for all of them to be killed, and in this way they received the unfading crown of martyrdom. Saint Christina delivered her pure and untainted soul into the hands of the living God, when a spear was driven through her side and heart.

Her life and conduct gives us the opportunity to emphasize the following:

First, Christ after His Resurrection sent His Disciples to preach the gospel throughout all of creation, and He said that those who believed in their message and are baptized, would be saved, while those who did not would be condemned. Furthermore, for those who believed, the following signs would follow: "In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Indeed, after Pentecost the Apostles traveled to the ends of the earth and preached everywhere, while the Lord helped them and intervened in their preaching with miracles that followed. One of these miracles was that wild beasts and deadly snakes would be calm near them and not bring harm to them. This was repeated throughout the centuries in the lives of

many saints, and indeed several times this was the reason for multitudes of well-intentioned people to believe and be baptized.

Miracles take place in every age, since Christ is "yesterday and today and forever." This is why we must not be impressed by miracles, but we must be inspired by the way of life of the saints, which attracts the Grace of God, and in turn brings about miracles. And this way of life of the saints, which flows from their love for God, is associated with prayer, the sacramental life and the application of all His commandments, which leads to the acquisition of humility, meekness, love for all people and all creation, patience, and endurance through temptations and the difficulties of this present life.

Second, many times, influenced by teachings that are foreign to our Orthodox tradition, we believe that material wealth and social recognition are blessings from God and, also, if someone loves God then everything in their life will run smoothly and things will come easily. But the Gospels say the complete opposite, since it speaks of the cross, martyrdom, mourning and sorrow. Christ Himself told us, "In this world you will have sorrow." He added however, "Take courage! I have overcome the world." Indeed courage is needed, that we may not fail, because by patiently enduring sorrows in this present life and bearing our personal cross, which is our partaking of the sufferings of Christ, there is consolation and joy. A true consolation and inner joy, spiritual, which no one can remove from the people of God, no matter how many external sorrows may come. A typical example is the Holy Martyrs, who were tortured harshly and unrelentingly, but because they were united with God and flooded with His Grace, they faced everything calmly, serenely and joyfully. The idolaters would see them and be astonished and, naturally, they could not understand how something like this could take place.

This truth is also stressed by the divine Chrysostom, when referring to the Apostle Paul who suffered many and various temptations and numerous sorrows, but Christ, Who appeared to him on the road to Damascus, strengthened him and also consoled him. He said: "For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our consolation abounds through Christ." Elsewhere he said that God "consoles us in all our sorrows, so that we can console those in any sorrow with the consolation we ourselves receive from God."

The more sorrows we have, the more we participate in the sufferings of Christ. This is why he goes on to stress that we should not fear afflictions and sorrows, but sin, which alone should cause us sorrow. For when there is no sin, then the prudent soul is unable to sorrow in afflictions, for just as if you take a flaming spark and dipped it into the sea it would immediately extinguish, so does sorrow disappear completely when we acquire a good conscience.

The most poisonous snake is sin, because its bite causes eternal death. The antidote to the poison of sin is repentance, which brings about a good conscience and inspires a life according to Christ, through Whom all sorrows are overcome, which brings us perfect joy and true consolation. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

## **Venerable Father Symeon the Newly-Revealed**

Our Venerable Father Symeon the Newly-Revealed is only known to us from a Divine Office in his honor which was published in Venice in 1777. The Synaxarion contained in this Office presents a paradoxical case, which is rare but not unknown among the pious. The source for the Synaxarion is a text that no longer exists, but it was written by a hieromonk named Daniel from Kerkyra, who was told about this Saint in a dream which was narrated to him by the Holy New Martyr Anastasios of Paramythia (7/18/1750), who had previously converted Daniel before his martyrdom from Islam and whom Daniel afterwards honored and revered.

The reason why Saint Anastasios revealed to the Hieromonk Daniel the life of Saint Symeon was because Daniel was dissatisfied with the commissioner of the Church of Saint George in Venice, Nicholas Kanelis, who, as the Neomartyr Anastasios revealed, was a relative of Saint Symeon, who had great boldness before God, and interceded on behalf of his relatives, and was upset with the grumbling of Daniel against one of his relatives.

According to the narrative of the New Martyr Anastasios, Saint Symeon was born in Thessaloniki in 1042, during the reign of the Empress Zoe (together with her sister Theodora), to pious parents. Due to his virtuous way of life, the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki (who is not named) sought to ordain him to the priesthood. Symeon however, as one who loved solitude and quiet, departed Thessaloniki and went to Alexandria, and from there went to the famous monastic area of the Upper Thebaid in Egypt. There he settled in a cave and lived in strict asceticism till the end of his life, which took place on July 24th, but the year is not given in his Synaxarion, though we can assume he was in deep old age since he is called an "elder". The Synaxarion also says that his body was left incorrupt, and he was buried in the place where he lived in asceticism.

When these things were revealed to the Hieromonk Daniel by Saint Anastasios in a dream, at first he did not believe in its authenticity. This resulted in Saint Symeon himself appearing in the dream of Daniel, who informed him to tell Nicholas Kanelis about this revelation, and ordered him to commission an icon of Saint Symeon and compose a Divine Office in his honor that he may be liturgically celebrated.

Archbishop Cyril of Sinai and Raitho was informed about this revelation, due to his friendship with Nicholas Kanelis. Cyril contributed substantially to the establishment of the commemoration of the newly-revealed Saint. He was present at the reception of the icon of Saint Symeon sent from Kerkyra by Daniel to Venice, which arrived there in a miraculous fashion, having survived a shipwreck. Cyril also composed the Divine Office to Saint Symeon and wrote the Synaxarion based on the text by the Hieromonk Daniel which was sent to him, as well as the testimony of Nicholas Kanelis, and of course his own experiences.

The Divine Office to Saint Symeon was published in 1777 at the expense of Nicholas Kanelis, and on the back cover of this publication is an icon of the Saint, which is a faithful copy of the icon commissioned by the Hieromonk Daniel which he sent to Venice. Saint Anastasios and Saint Daniel are commemorated together by the Church on November 18th. There we are told that Daniel was formerly a Muslim named Musa, converted by Anastasios, was later baptized Demetrios in Venice at the Church of Saint George, and later became a monk with the name Daniel. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

### **Social Team for July 31**

Team 4 is up next week - Samouris, Kopan, Connell. 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, Sarah Comfort, 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.)