

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**

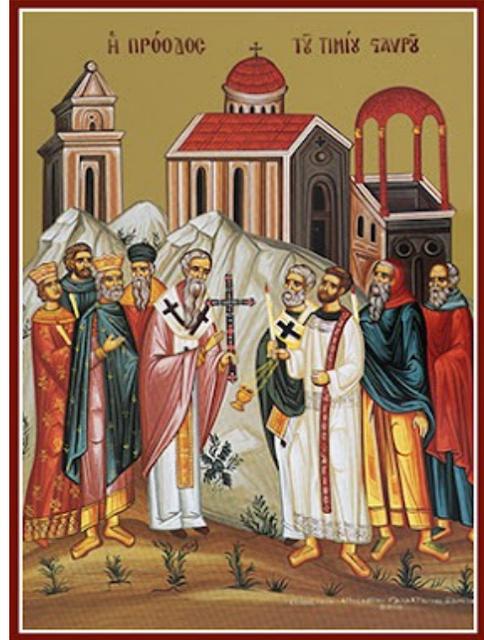
July 31, 2022 – 7th Sunday After Pentecost

Forefeast of the Procession of the Honorable & Life-Giving Cross of the Lord | Righeous Eudocimus of Cappadocia

*The Cross comes forth from the house of the emperor,
inhabitants celebrate for it brings protection to those in the City.*

On this day in accordance with custom there emerged from the palace of the emperor the honorable wood of the Cross and it was brought near to the Great Church. It was met by the second priest among the candlemakers who held a censer and censed, and at first it was brought into the Small Baptistry, where there is a sanctification of the waters in the silver fountain, and then it is placed inside the Holy Altar of the Great Church, namely Hagia Sophia. From the Holy Altar the Cross emerges and is processed throughout all of Constantinople until the fourteenth of August. Then it returns again to the palace, where it is put in its place by the chamberlains and the great Papias.

This going forth and procession of the honorable wood of the Cross takes place because, during the coming fifteen days of August, many illnesses befall the people more than any other days of the other months. Thus the honorable Cross of the Lord is taken around the City, sanctifying the air by its presence, as well as the buildings and the alleys and the wide streets, bringing health to all those it passes, and to all those it approaches.



Saint Eudokimos, a native of Cappadocia (Asia Minor), lived during the ninth century during the reign of Emperor Theophilos (829-842). He was the son of the pious Christians Basil and Eudokia, an illustrious family and known to the emperor. The righteous life of Saint Eudokimos was totally guided towards pleasing God and service to neighbor. Having given a vow to remain unmarried and chaste, he avoided conversation with women and did not look at them; only with his own mother whom he extremely respected did he carry on edifying conversation. For his virtuous life the emperor appointed Eudokimos as governor of the Kharsian district. Fulfilling his duty as a servant of God, Eudokimos governed the people justly and with kindness, he concerned himself with the misfortunate, as well as orphans and widows, and he was a defender of the common people. His personal Christian exploits which he did in secret, were known only to God. "Amid the throngs and worldly vanity, he was a lily among thorns, and as gold in the fire."

Eudokimos pleased God by his blameless life, and the Lord called him at the age of 33. Laying on his death-bed, Eudokimos gave final instructions to place him in the grave in those clothes in which he would meet death. Then he sent everyone out of the room and besought the Lord in prayer, that no one would see his end, just as no one saw his secret efforts during life. His attendants buried him as he had instructed them. Right after the death of Eudokimos miracles happened at his grave, many sick people were healed, and the news about the miracles of healing spread about. An insane man touched his tomb, and was immediately healed; likewise a paralytic child stood up and was made whole.

After eighteen months the mother of Saint Eudokimos came to venerate the relics, from Constantinople, where his parents had settled after his death. She gave orders to remove the stone, dig up the ground, open the grave, and everyone beheld the face of the Saint, bright as though alive, altogether untouched by decay. Great fragrance came from him. They took up the coffin with the relics from the earth, and they changed the Saint into new clothes. His mother wanted to take the relics of her son to Constantinople, but the Kharsian people would not clear a path for their holy one. But after a certain while the hieromonk Joseph, having lived and served at the grave of the Saint, transported all the relics of Saint Eudokimos to Constantinople on July 6, 831. There they were placed in a silver reliquary in the Church of the Most-Holy Mother of God, built by the parents of the Saint.

Saint Eudokimos is considered in the Russian Church to be one of the special protectors and intercessors before God of the family hearth. A fragment of the relics of Saint Eudokimos are in Great Lavra Monastery in Mount Athos. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 15:1-7 EOB

Brethren, we who are strong should bear the weaknesses of the weak, and not just please ourselves. Let each one of us please our neighbor for what is good, to be edifying to him. Even Christ did not please himself. But, as it is written, "The insults of those who insulted you fell on me." For whatever things were written before were written for our instruction, so that through patience and through the Scriptures' encouragement we might have hope. Now, may the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to be together of the same mind according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord, you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept one another, even as Christ also accepted you, e to the glory of God.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 9:27-35 EOB

At that time, as Jesus passed by, two blind men followed him, calling out and saying, "Have mercy on us, son of David!" When he entered the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They replied, "Yes, Lord." He then touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith, let it be done to you!" And their eyes were opened. Jesus strictly commanded them, saying, "See that no one knows about this." However, they went out and spread his fame throughout that entire land. As they were leaving, behold, a mute man who was demon-possessed was brought to him. When the demon was cast out, the mute began to speak. The multitudes marveled, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of the demons that he casts out demons." Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Good News of the Kingdom. He also healed every kind of disease and sickness among the people.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Let us put into practice the supreme and first law of God, who sends rain on the just and on the sinners and makes his sun rise on all alike. To all the earth's creatures he has spread out land in spacious expanse and springs and rivers and forests; to the winged species he has given air, and to the creatures of the deep, water, and the basic requisites for life to all without stint, subject to no power, restricted by no law, isolated by no boundaries. On the contrary, he has set out the same necessities amply for all to share yet, for all that, in no way in short supply, thus both bestowing honor by the impartiality of his gift upon the equality of honor within the natural world and displaying the abundance of his own goodness. Yet men squirrel away gold and silver and quantities of soft and superfluous clothes and glittering jewels and similar items that bear the stamp of war and dissension

and of the first act of rebellion, and then in their folly arch their brows and refuse to show compassion towards the unfortunate among their kinsmen. They are neither willing to help them with basic necessities out of their superfluity – what perversity! what stupidity! – nor do they reflect, if on nothing else, at least on the fact that poverty, wealth, what we call freedom, slavery, and such kinds of terms were introduced into human history at a later stage and stormed upon the scene like so many epidemics, as the companions of evil, whose brain-children they in fact are. But as Scripture says, from the beginning it was not so (Mt. 19:8). He who created man from the beginning left him free and with free will, subject only to the law of his commandment and rich in the delights of Paradise. This was the gift he chose to bestow upon the subsequent generations of mankind also, through the one first seed. Freedom and wealth meant simply keeping the commandment; true poverty and slavery are its transgression.

But ever since, there have been jealousies and dissensions and the deceitful tyranny of the serpent, which constantly seduces us with lewd pleasures and incites the more audacious against the weaker.; and our human family has been so fragmented that we are now alienated from one another with a variety of labels, and greed has hacked away at the nobility of our nature to the point of arrogating even the legal process, the right arm of the power of government. But as for you, I ask you to look to that original egalitarian status, not the latter-day discrimination; not the law of the tyrant, but that of the Creator. Help nature as much as you can; honor your ancient freedom; cultivate your self-worth; draw a veil over the ignominy of our race; treat sickness; alleviate need: the healthy man, the need of the sick; the rich man, the need of the poor; the man who has not stumbled, that of him who lies fallen and crushed; the man full of spirit, that of the one discouraged; the one who enjoys prosperity, that of him who toils in adversity. Offer a gift of thanks to God that you are among those who are able to benefit others instead of those who require assistance; that you do not look to others' hands for help, but they to yours. Grow rich not in property alone but also in piety; not in gold alone, but also in virtue, or rather in this alone. Come to be held in higher esteem than your neighbor by proving yourself more kind. Come to be a god to the unfortunate by imitating God's mercy.

In nothing does man's affinity with God lie so much as in his capacity to do good. Even though God performs good works in greater and we in lesser number, each, I think we may say, does so in accordance with his power. God created us; and, when he frees us, he gathers us to him again. Do not you, in turn, neglect the one who has fallen. God has been merciful in the greatest ways, giving us in addition

to everything else law and the prophets and, before these, the unwritten law of nature, the watchdog of our actions, by way of pricking our consciences and advising and directing us; ultimately surrendering himself to redeem the life of the world; blessing us with apostles, evangelists, teachers, pastors, healings, miracles, restoration to life, abolition of death, triumph over him who prevailed over us, covenants, one in realization, gifts of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the new salvation. As for you, if you are in fact capable of even higher things, things that have a salutary effect on the soul – for here too God has made you rich, if you should so choose – do not withhold also these benefactions from the one in need; or rather, as your first and foremost concern, try to give to him who begs from you even before his petition, being merciful and ever lending your words and solicitously seeking repayment of the loan with interest in the form of the spiritual increment of the one you have benefited. In this way the beneficiary adds steadily to the deposit of your words and little by little makes grow in his own right the seeds of piety. If you cannot, do at least the secondary, less important things and all that you can: extend a helping hand; offer food; give old clothes; provide medicine; bandage wounds; ask after them; counsel fortitude; offer encouragement; keep them company.

– St. Gregory the Theologian, *Oration 14.25-27*

Also Commemorated Today: Martyr Julitta at Caesarea

The Holy Martyr Julitta lived at Caesarea in Cappadocia during the reign of the emperor Diocletian (284-305). A certain pagan stole all her property, and when Julitta turned for relief to the courts, her antagonist reported to the judge that she was a Christian, which placed her outside the law's protection.

The judge demanded that the saint renounce Christ, for which he promised to return her unlawfully taken property. Saint Julitta resolutely refused the deceitful conditions, and for this she was burned to death in the year 304 (or 305). Saint Basil the Great wrote an Encomium to Saint Julitta 70 years after her death as a martyr. (*from oca.org*)

The Dormition Fast

The Dormition fast was established as preceding the great feasts of the Transfiguration of the Lord and of the Dormition of the Mother of God. It lasts two weeks — from August 1–August 14. The Dormition fast comes down to us from the early days of Christianity.

We find a clear reference to the Dormition fast in a conversation of Leo the Great from around the year 450 A.D.: “The Church fasts are situated in the year in such a

way that a special abstinence is prescribed for each time. Thus, for spring there is the spring fast — the Forty Days Great Lent; for summer there is the summer fast [the Apostles' fast]; for autumn there is the autumn fast, in the seventh month [Dormition fast]; for winter there is the winter fast [Nativity fast].”

St. Symeon of Thessalonica writes that, “The fast in August [Dormition fast] was established in honor of the Mother of God the Word; Who, foreknowing Her repose, ascetically labored and fasted for us as always, although She was holy and immaculate, and had no need for fasting. Thus, She especially prayed for us in preparation for being transported from this life to the future life, when Her blessed soul would be united through the Divine Spirit with Her Son. Therefore, we also should fast and praise Her, emulating Her life, urging Her thereby to pray for us. Some, by the way, say that this fast was instituted on the occasion of two feasts — the Transfiguration and the Dormition. I also consider it necessary to remember these two feasts — one which gives us light, and the other which is merciful to us and intercedes for us.”

The Dormition fast is not as strict as the Great Fast, but it is stricter than the Apostle's and Nativity fasts. On Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays of the Dormition fast, the Church rubrics prescribe xerophagy, that is, the strictest fast of uncooked food (without oil); on Tuesdays and Thursdays, “with cooked food, but with no oil”; on Saturdays and Sundays wine and oil are allowed.

Until the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, when grapes and apples are blessed in the churches, the Church requires that we abstain from these fruits. According to the tradition of the Holy Fathers, “If one of the brethren should eat the grapes before the feast, then let him be forbidden for obedience's sake to taste of the grapes during the entire month of August.”

On the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the Church rubrics allow fish. After that day, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the fruits of the new harvest would always be included in the meals. The spiritual fast is closely united with the bodily, just as our soul is united with the body, penetrates it, enlivens it, and makes one united whole with it, as the soul and body make one living human being. Therefore, in fasting bodily we must at the same time fast spiritually: “Brothers, in fasting bodily let us also fast spiritually, severing all union with unrighteousness,” the Holy Church enjoins us.

The main thing in fasting bodily is restraint from abundant, tasty and sweet foods; the main thing in fasting spiritually is restraint from passionate, sinful movements that indulge our sensual inclinations and vices. The former is renunciation of the more nourishing foods for fasting food, which is less nourishing; the latter is the renunciation of our favorite sins for exercise in the virtues which oppose them.

The essence of the fast is expressed in the following Church hymn: “If you fast from food, my soul, but are not purified of the passions, in vain do we comfort ourselves by not eating. For if the fast does not bring correction, then it will be hateful to God as false, and you will be like unto the evil demons, who never eat.” The Great Fast and the Dormition Fast are particularly strict with regard to entertainment — in Imperial Russia even civil law forbade public masquerades and shows during these fasts. (*from pravoslavie.ru*)

Social Team for August 7

Team 5 is up next week - Vallandingham, Tony Papadakis, Andrew and Katy. 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.)