

SOBORNOST

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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

September 4, 2022 – 12th Sunday After Pentecost

New Hieromartyr Gorazd, Bishop of Moravia and Silesia

O Lord, make this man also, who has been proclaimed a steward of the episcopal grace, to be an imitator of You, the true Shepherd, who laid down Your life for Your sheep... (Prayer of Consecration of a Bishop)

On September 25, 1921, these words were prayed over Father Gorazd Pavlik as he was consecrated the Bishop of Moravia and Silesia. It is doubtful that anyone in attendance that day, including the new bishop, expected that he would be called upon to live that prayer in a literal way.

Matthias Pavlik was born in 1879 in the Moravian town of Hrubavrbka in what would later become the Czech Republic. He was born into a Roman Catholic family, completed the Roman Catholic seminary in Olomouc and was ordained a priest. With the end of World War I and the formation of the new nation of Czechoslovakia from the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the laws requiring observance of the Catholic religion were loosened. Father Matthias, along with thousands of others left the Catholic Church with many seeking a home in the Orthodox Church, which in that region was then under the protection of the Orthodox Church of Serbia. Taking monastic vows, he assumed the name of "Gorazd" who was a disciple of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and who succeeded St.



Methodius as the bishop of Moravia. At the age of 42, Father Gorazd was consecrated an Orthodox bishop in Belgrade Serbia by the Serbian Patriarch Dimitri along with the illustrious Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky of Kiev and several other bishops including Bishop Dositheus of Zagreb. Bishop Dositheus was a key figure in the re-birth of the Orthodox Church among Carpatho-Rusyns and was glorified as a saint of the Orthodox Church in May, 2000.

Bishop Gorazd immediately set to work building up the Orthodox Faith, building eleven churches and two chapels, translating service books into the Czech language. He paid particular attention to the Carpatho-Rusyns in the eastern part of the Czech Republic who were also returning to the Orthodox Faith of their ancestors. In that region, in 1934 he took part in the 20th anniversary commemoration of the Marmarosh-Sigotsky trial. This trial occurred in 1914 when 94 Carpatho-Rusyn Orthodox together with their priest, St. Alexis Kabaluk were tried for treason for renouncing the Greek Catholic Faith and embracing Orthodoxy.

For twenty years, the bishop faithfully cared for his flock as a good shepherd. He remained faithful to the Orthodox Faith despite attempts by many Catholics to persuade him to renounce Orthodoxy. When many Roman Catholic priests rose up against him, the Catholic Bishop Stoian said: *Leave Pavlik alone, you are not worthy to tie his laces, it would be good if everyone were like Pavlik.*

When the German Nazis invaded and conquered Czechoslovakia in 1938, the Orthodox Church was placed under the Orthodox metropolitan of Berlin, Germany, Metropolitan Seraphim (Liade). The German ruler of Czechoslovakia was Reinhard Heydrich, was assassinated on May 27, 1942 by a group of Czech resistance fighters who then were allowed to hide in the crypt of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Cathedral. When Bishop Gorazd learned of this he realized what great danger he and his flock were in if the Nazis uncovered this hiding place. Before leaving for Berlin to take part in the consecration of Father Philip Gardner as a bishop, he insisted that the resistance fighters leave the Cathedral and find another place of refuge. But on June 18, the hiding place was revealed after a betrayal and torture, and all members of the group were killed.

The Nazis immediately began massive reprisals. The two Cathedral priests and senior lay officials were arrested. Bishop Gorazd, trying to save his people and his church from destruction, wrote letters to the Nazi authorities taking the blame for the actions in the Cathedral: *"I am giving myself up to the authorities and am prepared to face any punishment, including death."*

Bishop Gorazd was arrested on June 27, 1942, tortured and executed by firing squad at the Kobylisz Shooting Range on September 4. He was 63 years old. The

two Cathedral priests were also shot. Along with the priests and bishop, a total of 550 people were executed by the Nazis in reprisal for the assassination. In one particularly heinous act, the entire village of Lidice was exterminated. All of the men were executed, the women and children placed in labor camps, and all village dwellings destroyed. Following the martyrdom of the bishop, the Orthodox Church in Bohemia and Moravia was suppressed and all churches closed. Orthodox priests were exiled to forced labor camps in Germany.

Because Bishop Gorazd willingly laid down his life in order to protect his flock, he was recognized by the Orthodox Church of Serbia as a new martyr on May 4, 1961. On August 24, 1987 he was glorified in the Cathedral of St. Gorazd in Olomouc Moravia. His feastday is observed on the day of his martyrdom, September 4. Today, at the site of his martyrdom at the Kobylisz Shooting Range, a monument has been erected in his memory and those others who suffered at the hands of the Nazis.

– Fr. Ed Pehanich

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 15:1-11 EOB

Brethren, I declare to you the Good News which I preached to you, which also you accepted, in which you also stand. And you are saved by it, that is if you hold firmly to the word which I preached to you. Otherwise, you believed in vain. For I delivered to you, first of all, what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Kephias, then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to over five hundred brethren at once, most of whom remain [alive] until now, but some have also fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, c then to all the apostles, and last of all, as to the child born at the wrong time, he appeared to me also. Indeed, I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am. His grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain, but I worked more than all of them - yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. It does not matter whether is it I or they: this is what we preach, and so you believed.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 19:16-26

At that time, a man came to him and asked, "Good teacher, what good thing shall I do in order to have eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." The man asked him, "Which ones?" Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder.' 'You shall not commit adultery.' 'You shall not steal.' 'You shall not bear false witness.' 'Honor your father and mother;' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" The young man then said to him, "All these things I have

observed from my youth! What do I still lack?" Jesus replied, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, give it to the poor, and you will have [a] treasure in heaven. Then come, and follow me!" But when the young man heard <these words>, he went away sad because he was a person with great possessions. Jesus said to his disciples, "Amen I say to you: it will be hard for someone who is rich to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven! Indeed, I tell you that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this, they were extremely astonished and said, "Who then can be saved?" Gazing at them, Jesus answered, "By human resources, this is impossible, but with God all things are possible!"

A Word From the Holy Fathers

I was anxious today to pay the debt which I promised you when I was lately here. But what am I to do? In the meanwhile, the blessed Babylas has appeared, and has called me to himself, uttering no voice, but attracting our attention by the brightness of his countenance. Be not, therefore, displeased at the delay in my payment; at all events, the longer the time is, the more the interest will increase. For we will deposit this money with interest. Since thus did the master command who entrusted it to us. Being confident, therefore, about what is lent, that both the principal and the profit await you, let us not pass by the gain which falls in our way today, but revel in the noble actions of the blessed Babylas.

How, indeed, he presided over the Church which is among us, and saved that sacred ship, in storm, and in wave, and billow; and what a bold front he showed to the emperor, and how he lay down his life for the sheep and underwent that blessed slaughter; these things and such as these, we will leave to the elder among our teachers, and to our common father, to speak of. For the more remote matters, the aged can relate to you but as many things as happened lately, and within our lifetime, these, I a young man will relate to you, I mean those after death, those after the burial of the martyr, those which happened while he remained in the suburbs of the city. And I know indeed that the Greeks will laugh at my promise, if I promise to speak of the noble deeds after death and burial of one who was buried, and had crumbled to dust. We shall not assuredly on this account keep silence, but on this very account shall especially speak, in order that by showing this marvel truly, we may turn their laughter upon their own head. For of an ordinary man there would be no noble deeds after death. But of a martyr, many and great deeds, not in order that he might become more illustrious (for he has no need of glory from the multitude), but that you, the unbeliever may learn that the death of the martyrs is not death, but the beginning of a better life, and the prelude of a more spiritual conversation, and a change from the worse to the better. Do not then look

at the fact, that the mere body of the martyr lies destitute of energy of soul; but observe this, that a greater power takes its place by the side of it, different from the soul itself — I mean the grace of the Holy Spirit, which pleads to all on behalf of the resurrection, by means of the wonders which it works. For if God has granted greater power to bodies dead and crumbled to dust, than to all living, much more will he grant to them a better life than the former, and a longer, at the time of the bestowal of his crowns; what then are this saint's noble deeds? But be not disturbed, if we take our discourse a little further back. For they who wish to display their portraits to advantage, do not uncover them until they have placed the spectators a little way off from the picture, making the view clearer by the distance. Have patience, then, with me while I direct my discourse into the past.

For when Julian who surpassed all in impiety, ascended the imperial throne, and grasped the despotic sceptre, straightway he lifted up his hands against the God who created him, and ignored his benefactor, and looking from the earth beneath to the heavens, howled after the manner of mad dogs, who alike bay at those who do not feed them and those who do feed them. But he rather was mad with a more savage madness than theirs. For they indeed turn from, and hate their friends and strangers alike. But this man used to fawn upon demons, strangers to his salvation, and used to worship them with every mode of worship. But his benefactor, and Savior, and him who spared not the only Begotten, for his sake, he turned from and used to hate, and made havoc of the cross, the very thing which uplifted the whole world when it was lying prostrate, and drove away the darkness on all sides, and brought in light more brilliant than the sunbeams; nor yet even then did he desist from his frenzy, but promised that he would tear the nation of the Galilæans out of the midst of the world; for thus he was wont to call us; and yet if he thought the names of the Christians an abomination, and Christianity itself to be full of much shame, for what reason did he not desire to put us to shame by that means, but with a strange name? Yes, because he knew clearly that to be called by what belongs to Christ, is a great ornament not only to men, but to angels, and to the powers above. On this account he set everything in motion, so as to strip us of this ornament, and put a stop to the preaching of it. But this was impossible, O wretched and miserable man! As it was impossible to destroy the heaven and to quench the sun, and to shake and cast down the foundations of the earth, and those things Christ foretold, thus saying: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Well, you do not submit to Christ's words; accept therefore the utterance which thus his deeds give. For I indeed having been privileged to know what the declaration of God is, how strong, how invincible a thing, have believed that is more trustworthy than the order of nature, and than experience in all matters. But

you, still creeping on the ground, and agitated with the investigations of human reasoning, receive the witness of the deeds. I gainsay nothing. I strive not.

What then do the deeds say? Christ said that it was easier for heaven and earth to be destroyed than for any of his words to fail. The emperor contradicted these words, and threatened to destroy his decrees. Where then is the emperor who threatened these things? He is perished and is corrupted, and is now in Hades, awaiting the inevitable punishment. But where is Christ who uttered these decrees? In Heaven, on the right hand of the Father, occupying the highest throne of glory; where are the blasphemous words of the Emperor, and his unchastened tongue? They have become ashes, and dust and the food of worms. Where is the sentence of Christ? It shines forth by the very truth of the deed, receiving its luster from the issue of the events, as from a golden column. And yet the emperor left nothing undone, when about to raise war against us, but used to call prophets together, and summon sorcerers, and everything was full of demons and evil spirits.

What then was the return for this worship? The overturning of cities, the bitterest famine of all famines. For you know doubtless, and remember, how empty indeed the market place was of wares, and the workshops full of confusion, when everyone strove to snatch up what came first and to depart. And why do I speak of famine, when the very fountains of waters were failing, fountains which by the abundance of their stream, used to eclipse the rivers. But since I have mentioned the fountains, come, immediately, let us go up to Daphne, and conduct our discourse to the noble deeds of the martyr. Although you desire me still to parade the indecencies of the Greeks, although I too desire this, let us abstain; for wherever the commemoration of a martyr is, there certainly also is the shame of the Greeks. This emperor then, going up to Daphne used to weary Apollo, praying, supplicating, entreating, so that the events of the future might be foretold to him. What then did the prophet say, the great God of the Greeks? "The dead prevent me from uttering," says he, "but break open the graves, dig up the bones, move the dead." What could be more impious than these commands? The Demon of grave-robbing introduces strange laws and devises new methods of expelling strangers. Who ever heard of the dead being driven forth? Who ever saw lifeless bodies ordered to be moved as he commanded, overturning from their foundations the common laws of nature? For the laws of nature are common to all men, that he who departs this life should be hidden in the earth, and delivered over for burial, and be covered up in the bosom of the earth the mother of all; and these laws, neither Greek, barbarian, Scythian, nor if there be any more savage than they, ever changed, but all reverence them, and keep them, and thus they are sacred and venerated by all. But the Demon raises his mask, and with bare head, resists the common laws of nature. For the dead, he says, are a pollution. The dead are not a

pollution, most wicked demon, but a wicked intention is an abomination. But if one must say something startling, the bodies of the living full of evil are more polluting than those of the dead. For the one minister to the behests of the mind, but the other lie unmoved. Now that which is unmoved, and destitute of all perception would be free from all accusation. Not that I even would say that the bodies of the living are by nature polluting; but that everywhere a wicked and perverted intention is open to accusations from all.

The dead body then is not a pollution, O Apollo, but to persecute a maiden who wishes to be modest, and to outrage the dignity of a virgin, and to lament at the failure of the shameless deed, this is worthy of accusation and punishment. There were at all events, many wonderful and great prophets among ourselves, who spoke also many things concerning the future, and they in no case used to bid those who asked them to dig up the bones of the departed. Indeed, Ezekiel standing near the bones themselves was not only not hindered by them, but added flesh, and nerves and skin to them, and brought them back to life again. But the great Moses did not stand near the bones of the dead, but bearing off the whole dead body of Joseph, thus foretold things to come. And very reasonably, for their words were the grace of the Holy Spirit. But the words of these, a deceit, and a lie which is no wise able to be concealed. For that these things were an excuse, and pretense and that he feared the blessed Babylas, is manifest from what the emperor did. For leaving all the other dead, he only moved that martyr. And yet if he did these things, in disgust at him, and not in fear, it were necessary that he should order the coffin to be broken, thrown into the sea, carried to the desert, be made to disappear by some other method of destruction; for this is the part of one who is disgusted. Thus God did when he spoke to the Hebrews about the abominations of the Gentiles. He bade their statues to be broken, not to bring their abominations from the suburbs to the city.

The martyr then was moved, but the demon not even then enjoyed freedom from fear, but straightway learned that it is possible to move the bones of a martyr, but not to escape his hands. For as soon as the coffin was drawn into the city, a thunderbolt came from above upon the head of his image, and burnt it all up. And yet, if not before, then at least there was likelihood that the impious emperor would be angry, and that he would send forth his anger against the testimony of the martyr. But not even then did he dare, so great a fear possessed him. But although he saw that the burning was intolerable, and knew the cause accurately; he kept quiet. And this is not only wonderful that he did not destroy the testimony, but that he not even dared to put the roof on to the temple again. For he knew, he knew, that the stroke was divinely sent, and he feared lest by forming any further plan, he should call down that fire upon his own head. On this account he endured to see

the shrine of Apollo brought to so great desolation; For there was no other cause, on account of which he did not rectify that which had happened, but fear alone. For which reason he unwillingly kept quiet, and knowing this left as much reproach to the demon, as distinction to the martyr. For the walls are now standing, instead of trophies, uttering a voice clearer than a trumpet. To those in Daphne, to those in the city, to those who arrive from far off, to those who are with us, to those men which shall be hereafter, they declare everything by their appearance, the wrestling, the struggle, the victory of the martyr. For it is likely that he who dwells far off from the suburb, when he sees the chapel of the saint deprived of a shrine, and the temple of Apollo deprived of its roof would ask the reason of each of these things; and then after learning the whole history would depart hence. Such are the noble deeds of the martyr after death, wherefore I count your city blessed, that you have shown much zeal about this holy man. For then, when he returned from Daphne, all our city poured forth into the road, and the market places were empty of men, and the houses were empty of women, and the bedchambers were destitute of maidens. Thus also every age and each sex passed forth from the city, as if to receive a father long absent who was returning from sojourn far away. And you indeed gave him back to the band of fellow enthusiasts. But the grace of God did not allow him to remain there for good, but again removed him beyond the river, so that many parts of the country were filled with the sweet savor of the martyr. Neither even when he came hither was he destined to be alone, but he quickly received a neighbor, and a fellow-lodger, and one of similar life. For he shared with him the same dignity, and for the sake of religion showed forth equal boldness. Wherefore he obtained the same abode as he, this wonderful man being no vain imitator, as it seems, of the martyr. For for so long a time he labored there, sending letters continually to the emperor, wearying the authorities, and bringing the ministry of the body to bear upon the martyr. For you know, doubtless, and remember that when the midday summer sun possessed the heaven, he together with his acquaintances, used to walk there everyday, not as spectator only, but also, as intending to be a sharer in what was going on. For he often handled stone, and dragged a rope, and listened, in advance of the workmen themselves, to one who wanted to erect any building. For he knew, he knew what rewards lie in store for him for these things. And on this account he continued doing service to the martyrs, not only by splendid buildings nor even by continual feasts, but by a better method than these. And what is this? He imitates their life, emulates their courage, throughout according to his ability he keeps the image of the martyrs alive, in himself. For see, they gave their bodies to the slaughter, he has mortified the members of his flesh which are upon the earth. They stopped the flame of fire, he quenched the flame of lust. They fought against the teeth of beasts, but this man bore off the most dangerous of our passions, anger. For all these things let us give

thanks to God, because he has thus granted us noble martyrs, and pastors worthy of martyrs, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ with whom be glory, honor, and might to the Father, with the Holy and life-giving Spirit, now and always, for ever and ever. Amen.

– St. John Chrysostom, *Homily on the Martyr Babylas*

Also Commemorated Today: Martyr Babylas of Antioch

This "great and wonderful man, if he could be called a man" - as St. John Chrysostom spoke of him - was Bishop of Antioch during the reign of the wicked Emperor Numerian. This Numerian concluded a peace treaty with a barbarian king, who was more noble and peace-loving than he. As a sign of his sincere desire for a lasting peace, the barbarian king gave his young son to be brought up and educated in Numerian's court. One day Numerian stabbed this innocent boy to death with his own hands, and offered him as a sacrifice to the idols. Still hot from the crime and the innocent blood, this criminal with an emperor's crown went to a Christian church to see what was going on there. Saint Babylas was at prayer with the people, and heard that the emperor had come with his retinue and desired to enter the church. Babylas interrupted the service, went out in front of the church, and told the emperor that as he was an idolater he could not enter the holy temple where the one, true God was glorified. In a homily about Babylas, Saint John Chrysostom said: "Who else in the world would he fear - he who, with such authority, repulsed the emperor?... By this, he taught emperors not to overreach their authority beyond the measure given to them by God, and he also showed the clergy how to use their own authority." The shamed emperor turned back, but planned revenge.

The following day, he summoned Babylas and berated him, urging him to offer sacrifice to the idols, which, of course, the Saint steadfastly refused to do. The emperor then bound Babylas and cast him into prison. The emperor also tortured three children: Urban age twelve, Prilidian age nine, and Hippolitus age seven. Babylas was their spiritual father and teacher, and they, out of love for him, had not run away. They were the sons of Christodoula, an honorable Christian woman who had herself suffered for Christ. The emperor first ordered that each child be beaten with a number of blows corresponding to his years, and then had them cast into prison. He finally had all three beheaded with the sword. The chained Babylas was present at the beheading of the children and encouraged them. After that, he laid his own honorable head under the sword. He was buried in his chains by the Christians, in the same grave as those three wondrous children, as he had willed before his martyrdom. Their holy souls flew off to their heavenly habitation, while

their miracle-working relics remained for the benefit of the faithful, as a constant witness to their heroism in the Faith. They suffered in about the year 250.

– from the *Prologue of Ochrid*, by St. Nicholai Velimirovich

The Holy Martyr Hermione

The most holy Apostle Philip, one of the seven Deacons, who baptized one of the eunuchs of Candice, had four daughters, who Luke the Evangelist in his Acts testifies were virgins and prophetesses (Acts 21:8). Of these Hermione and Eutychis went to Asia Minor in search of John the Theologian. Not finding him, since God transposed him like Enoch and Elijah, instead they found Petronios the disciple of the Apostle Paul. Having been taught by him, they also sought to imitate his virtues and intelligence. Hermione was taught the art of medicine. Because of this large crowds of people hastened to her, and all were healed by her entreaty and the name of Christ.

When Emperor Trajan went to war against the Persians, Saint Hermione was accused to him of being a Christian. She therefore stood before the emperor, and he tried to beguile her through flattery, in order to separate her from her faith in Christ. Unable to persuade her, he ordered for her to be struck in the face for a considerable amount of time. But the Martyr beheld our Lord Jesus Christ, sitting in judgment in the form of Petronios, speaking with her and strengthening her, therefore allowing her to consider the strikes to her face as nothing. When the emperor saw her firm and unchanging mind, he was shamed and let her go free.

From that time therefore Saint Hermione opened in Asia Minor a sacred guesthouse. There she received all the strangers, whom she consoled mentally and physically. There all could see the Lord glorified on a daily basis by each person, until the time Trajan died. When Hadrian, who was related by marriage to Trajan, became emperor in the year 117, and learned of Saint Hermione, he immediately sent for her and brought her before him, saying: "Tell me, O old woman, how old are you? And from what race do you come from?" The Saint responded: "My Christ knows how old I am, and from which race I come from." The emperor said: "Remove her outer garment, and flog her without mercy, saying, 'When the emperor asks, you answer with respect.'" As long as the Saint was being flogged, a psalm was not absent from her mouth.

When the torturers grew tired from flogging, the emperor ordered for nails to be put under the feet of the Martyr. Receiving this torture, the Saint thanked God even more, and for this reason the emperor became enraged even more. He therefore ordered that a cauldron be filled with pitch, sulfur, asphalt and lead, and for the Saint to be placed within. Looking up to heaven, she asked for strength from God, and sealed herself with the sign of the cross, and in this manner she entered the lit

cauldron. And - O the wonder! - immediately the fire was extinguished, and the lead along with everything else spilled out. Thus the Martyr remained unharmed.

When the emperor beheld this wonder, he grew more angry. He thus ordered a second cauldron to be heated so much, that even the bones of the Martyr would melt away. When the torturers did this, they saw the Martyr standing in the cauldron as if she was standing in a cool mist. Then she said to the tyrant: "Emperor, the Lord God lives! Just as you are seated at a distance and do not feel the heat of this cauldron, so also I do not feel it." The emperor was astonished by this, got up from his throne, and went near. And having touched the cauldron with his hand, immediately the skin and nails of his hand came off.

Then the Saint cried out from the cauldron: "Great is the God of the Christians." When the emperor heard this, he became greatly angered, and ordered a large furnace to be heated up, so much that it sparked out flames, and for the Saint to be put within naked. When the Saint entered the lit furnace, an Angel of the Lord guarded her, and scattered the flames to one side of the furnace. Those who watched this were burned, while the Saint continued to stay in the furnace as if it was a bright green field, and there she sang hymns and glorified the Lord with thanksgiving.

When Hadrian saw this strange miracle, he became terrified. Then he ordered for the Martyr to be removed from the furnace, afraid that perhaps he also would be burned by the fire. When the Saint came out, she said to Hadrian: "Emperor, know that the Lord made me sleep in the furnace, and I saw in my sleep, that the great god Hercules was being worshiped." When the emperor heard this, he rejoiced. He then ordered her to enter the Greek temple. When the Saint entered and prayed to the true and philanthropic God, suddenly thunder was heard from heaven, and with the thunder all the idols fell that were in the temple, and thus shattered they became like dust.

The Saint left the temple and said to the emperor: "Enter, O emperor, inside the temple, and help your gods; for they have fallen, and cannot get up." When the emperor entered, and saw the idols shattered, he ordered for the Saint to be beheaded outside the city. The executioners Theodoulos and Theotimos therefore took her outside the city. And because they went to behead her before she could say her prayers, their hands withered. Wherefore they fell down before the Saint, believed with all their souls in our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus were healed. They then begged the Saint to pray on their behalf, so that they may deliver their souls to the Lord before her, and thus they reposed and died a blessed death. Then the Saint reposed in the same place. Some pious Christians took their sacred relics, and

buried them in the city of Ephesus, in a revered and honorable place, to the glory of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

The Holy Prophet Moses As A Model For Our Lives

By Protopresbyter Fr. George Papavarnavas

He was born in Egypt in an era in which the killing of every male Hebrew child was legislated. He lived, because God willed it so. In order to save him from death, his mother lay him in a basket, which she smeared with tar to prevent it from sinking, and she left it in the river. There he was found by Pharaoh's daughter, and because his cheerful face made an impression on her, she wanted to adopt him so she gave him to a Hebrew woman in order to raise him. God allowed the events to take place so that the child was brought back into his mother's embrace and he was breastfed with his mother's milk. When he grew up, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He despised riches, sinful pleasures and false human glory and preferred to dwell with the people of God.

In the desert God showed him the miracle of the flaming and unburnt bush, where He revealed Himself as "He Who Is", and then He invited him to be the leader of His people to lead them out of Egypt, the land of bondage, to the promised land. Out of humility he refused because he was slow of speech, that is, he had a weak voice and was a stutterer. But God elected him because he had greater gifts, such as obedience, prayer, patience, justice, sacrificial love, etc., which make worthy a true leader.

He was the leader of a people that were "hardened and uncircumcised" and difficult to govern, that received great beneficence from God and by Moses as well, but they easily forgot His beneficence and very often they turned against His beneficence. But whenever the people grumbled and grew agitated, Moses tried to assuage their anger with false promises. He did not even seek "reasonable solutions", but he would turn to God and with fiery prayer he would ask Him for the solution. And God always directed him at the right moment giving a proper solution to the problem. The prayer of Moses was powerful, fiery, because it was done with purity of heart, pain of soul and love for the people. Although outwardly he could not be heard, he would go up before God shouting, which forced God to ask Him: "Why are you shouting out to me?" Such power he had.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa calls him the prototype of virtue and the perfect life. Responding to a spiritual child who asked him in a letter to write about the perfect life, Saint Gregory describes and then analyzes the life of the Prophet Moses. He calls him "God-seer", because he was made worthy to see God. For, according to the command of God, after he fasted for forty days and went up to Mount Sinai, he saw the glory of God and received the plates of the "God-written Law". According

to the biblical description, he saw the back of God and not His face, which means he shared in the uncreated energies of God and not His uncreated essence. The Saints do not share in the uncreated essence of God, but in His uncreated energies. We could say that something similar occurs with created things, such as the sun; every day we share in its energies, either as light, heat, etc., but never in its essence, which is impossible.

He further writes that Moses was great and continuously becoming greater and his ascent had no end, since perfection has no end, which is why the Fathers call it unending.

"The great Moses, as he was becoming ever greater, at no time stopped in his ascent, nor did he set a limit for himself in his upward course. Once having set foot on the ladder which God set up (as Jacob says), he continually climbed to the step above and never ceased to rise higher, because he always found a step higher than the one he had attained."

"He denied the specious kinship with the Egyptian queen. He avenged the Hebrew. He chose the desert way of life where there was no human being to disturb him. In himself he shepherded a flock of tame animals. He saw the brilliance of the light. Unencumbered, having taken off his sandals, he made his approach to the light. He brought his kinsmen and countrymen out to freedom. He saw the enemy drowning in the sea."

"What do we learn from all of this? To look towards an end to our lives, so that with the works of our lives we may be called servants of God... To consider the only thing fearful to be to fall from friendship with God, and to consider it our only treasure and desire to become friends of God, something which is, according to my word, perfection of life."

At Tabor, the Mountain of the Transfiguration of Christ, he was present along with the Prophet Elijah, and this happened, according to the sacred hymnographer, in order to make apparent that the God-man Christ "rules the living and the dead".

The Prophet Moses is a prototype of faith ("Moses was great in faith"), free obedience, fiery prayer, justice and selfless love. He was and remains the prototype of a true leader, and a leader from the Egyptian slavery of the passions in our current life, to real freedom, the freedom of the children of God. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Social Team for September 11

Team 2 is up next week - Dewey, Carrie LaMere, H. Shear. 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, the newly reposed servants of God Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Sarah Comfort and BJ Weber, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)