

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

(301) 638-5035 Church
4419 Leonardtown Road
Waldorf, MD 20601

Rev. Father Joseph Edgington, Pastor
(703) 532-8017

fredgington@gmail.com

www.apostlethomas.org

American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wednesday: Lay Vespers 7:00 PM

Saturday: Confession 4:30 PM

Great Vespers 5:00 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Sunday School 9:30

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

September 25, 2022 – 15th Sunday After Pentecost

Sts. Cyprian and Justina

By Protopresbyter Fr. George Papavarnavas

On October 2nd the Church celebrates the memory of the Hieromartyr Cyprian and the Virgin-martyr Justina. Cyprian was a magician, a persecutor of Christians and a servant of demons. "A healer by means of demons and a most bitter persecutor of Christ" (St. Gregory the Theologian). However he did not do this work consciously, but out of ignorance, because he thought there was no higher power than that of the devil. When he later realized, due to an incident we will narrate below, that Christ is more powerful and has defeated and shamed the devil, then he burned his books of magic, was baptized, and then ordained from Deacon to Priest and finally a Bishop. Furthermore, he was made worthy to spill his blood for Christ and be called a Hieromartyr. From a servant of darkness and falsehood he became a preacher of the Light and "a great struggler for the truth".

Justina was "a virgin of nobility and dignitaries, a pure bride of Christ, an animated statue, an undisturbed offering, a sacred inviolable, a garden closed and sealed, a wellspring preserved only for Christ" (St. Gregory the Theologian). She, who was inviolable and modest, became the love interest of a pagan, and because it was



impossible for him to make her his he thought up a satanic method to acquire her. He begged Cyprian to change her mind by means of his magic and bring her near him. Cyprian, who had done this before, considered this an easy job, since he believed the power of demons was able to overpower her. But despite his efforts, this time he failed. Justina, because of the purity of her life and the power of her prayers, drove away the demons who were unable to cause any damage in the least. They returned defeated and ashamed and told Cyprian they were unable to do anything, since the girl was protected by a power higher than theirs. This shocked Cyprian and it became the reason for him to abandon his idols and magic, and to come to know and experience the life of the Church, thus freeing himself from the tyranny of the devil and coming to feel authentic freedom, "the freedom of the children of God".

Whoever serves Christ and keeps His commandments tries to conquer and transform his passions, and is freed from the tyranny of the passions and the devil and acquires inner freedom, which is true freedom. The work of the Church is to abolish the works of the devil. Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, became perfect man to redeem man from the dominion of the devil and death.

Dealing with magic enslaves man to the devil. Of course, those involved with magic argue that there is a difference between white and black magic, good and evil spirits. But this is not true, since according to the teaching of the Church there are no such thing as good and evil demons, but all demons are evil. In the beginning they were angels, since God created nothing evil. Due to their pride they fell from heaven, were removed from immateriality, acquired material stoutness and became dead spirits, who kill all those that approach them. According to Patristic teaching there are evil and wicked spirits. The thinner demons fight against the soul of man through thoughts, desires, etc., and the more material ones fight especially against the body through the passions of the flesh, so that in this way they can capture the soul.

Today we are witnesses of many acts of satanism and satan-worship. Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite mentions that there are several types of magic, but they can be divided into three basic types: 1) in so-called satanism, by which people come into communion with demons; 2) in augury, in which animals, birds, the sun, the moon etc. are examined to discern the future of people; 3) in astrology, which too many people are unfortunately involved with due to media attention and reports of misleading science, though in reality it is the art of divination. Astronomy is science, not astrology which is something completely different.

Many visit astrologers and various other magicians out of curiosity, others to solve certain problems, and yet others to learn the future. But we must realize that the

devil does not solve things, instead he creates many problems and causes many and varied temptations, and nobody knows the future except God. The Church is the one that responds to all the major issues of concern to humans, and solves all their problems, in particular their existential problems such as the purpose of life, the mystery of death, the existence of hell and paradise, etc. The main reason many people become victims of satanists, spiritualists and magicians is because they are ignorant of the life of the Church and the wealth of the Orthodox tradition, as well as a lack of confidence in the love and care of the Triune God. We as Orthodox Christians have a vibrant and rich tradition and unfortunately we arrogantly ignore or despise it and wander like hungry beggars asking to feed ourselves with the suspect preparations of the subculture and the husks of sin.

Nowadays there is this also: there is a magical understanding of all issues. People want to solve all their problems in a magical way, without anyone wanting to put any effort. Even the Mysteries of the Church are perceived as magical ceremonies that solve every concern without the contribution of personal struggle. The devil is expelled through prayer ("the name of Jesus ravages wars"), the experience of the Mysteries of the Church, and asceticism in grace; that is, with our personal struggle for the transformation of the passions and the acquisition of personal communion with the personal God of the Church. Our trust in the love and providence of God and the experience of the life-bearing tradition of the Church gives the means of being liberated from the tyranny of the passions, the dominion of the devil and the fear of death. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:1-10 EOB

Brethren, since we are God's fellow-workers, we also entreat you not to receive his grace in vain, for he says, "At a favorable time I listened to you; in a day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is the acceptable time! Behold, now is the day of salvation! We give no occasion for stumbling in anything, so that our ministry may not be blamed. Instead, we seek to be approved as servants of God in everything, in great endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in labors, in vigils, in fastings; in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in a holy spirit, in sincere love, in the word of truth, and in the power of God. There is also the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, glory and dishonor, evil report and good report; being thought to be deceivers, and yet true; unknown, and yet well-known; dying, and behold, we live; punished, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; thought to have nothing even though we possess all things!

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 6:31-36 EOB

The Lord said, "As you would like others to do to you, do the same to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them! If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same! If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive [back], what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive back as much. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back. Then your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, for he is kind [even] to the ungrateful and evil. Therefore, be merciful, even as your Father is also merciful."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

1. He who alone fashioned our hearts, who understands all our works: (cf. Ps. 33:15Lxx), who was manifested to us through flesh and deigned to become our teacher, seeks from us, now that He is re-making us, the very things which He originally put in our souls when He created them, but which have been spoiled. In the beginning He formed us in a manner that was appropriate to His future teaching, and later He renders that teaching suitable for the way we were originally made, so all he was doing was cleansing His creature's beauty which had been obscured by the addition of sin. Nothing shows this more clearly than the words of today's Gospel reading, which we propose to elucidate: "As you would like", it says, "others to do to you, do the same to them" (Luke 6:31). The prophet Isaiah did well to prophesy that, "The Lord will give a brief word upon the earth" (Isa. 10:23 Lxx). For in this short pronouncement He included every virtue, every commandment, and virtually every good deed and thought. That is why, according to the evangelist Matthew, when the Lord had said these words, He added, "for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12). Elsewhere, summing up His teaching, He said that all the law and the prophets hung on the two commandments to love God and love our neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). Now, however, He has gathered everything into one and included not only the righteousness found in the law and the prophets, but absolutely every type of good deed done among men, since He is not making laws now for just one race, but for the whole world, or rather, for all those who come to Him through faith from every nation under heaven.

2. Not only did He encompass in these words each of the commandments He had given us, He also showed that every one of them is innate in us. This is what James the Lord's brother is referring to when he exhorts us to "Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21). And it is this that God declared beforehand through the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "I will make a new covenant with them; I will put my laws in their mind" (cf. Jer. 31:31,33), for the exercise of will based on judgment is a function of the mind. Now that the Lord has revealed that all the gospel precepts are inscribed within us, He commands and ordains that we should order our lives in accordance with them. Being the lover of goodness and friend of man, He has put into our nature the knowledge of how we should act.

3. When He said, "As you would like others to do to you, do the same to them" (Luke 6:31), the Lord was demonstrating through this summary of His counsel that every gospel commandment was not only innate in human nature, but also just, easy and to our advantage, readily comprehensible to all and self-evident. What do I mean? Surely you are aware that it is bad to be angry with your brother and pour abuse on him, especially without cause, and that you yourself are unwilling to be the object of his anger or rebuke? Nor is this an opinion that you reach after some thought; rather, you are immediately vexed when anger and insults are directed at you, and you try to avoid them in any way you can, refusing to accept them because they are obviously evil, wrong, and unprofitable. You feel the same when another man looks at your wife with passion and curiosity, or when someone tells you a lie, not only to harm you, but on any subject at all. In short, we feel the same about everything the gospel commandments forbid. What needs to be said about those sinful acts which the ancient law had already prohibited: murder, adultery, breaking oaths, injustice and the like? Or about their opposite virtues and our satisfaction with people who practice them towards us? Do you see that you know for yourself each one of the commandments, and consider it just and beneficial? Not only that, but you also deem it to be easy. Otherwise you would not think that anyone who was angry with you, told lies or schemed against you in some way, deserved much blame, if you really did suppose that it was difficult or impossible for him to abstain from each of these evils.

4. Let it not be the case that when you are badly treated by someone else, but being insulted, deceived or harmed, you make a correct judgment, but when you yourself insult your neighbor, treat him unjustly and attempt to cheat him, you form a judgment without reaching the same verdict on identical actions. As a fair judge you should not do to anyone whatever obvious evils you do not wish to suffer at his hands, and whatever good things you wish to experience from another person, let him be treated in that same way by you. Perhaps you are asking someone for

assistance, or something else you need, and you really want to receive it, as you consider it beneficial? Why not? So when someone desires something from you, strive to appear self-consistent, think it good that he should receive something from you, and put it into action. What, however, if he wants from you more than you have? By means of what you do have, show that if you possessed more you would give it. "For if there is first a willing mind", says Paul, "it is accepted according to what a man has, and not according to what he does not have" (2 Cor. 8:12). Do you want to be loved by everyone and granted pardon? Do you regard being blamed as distressing and hard to bear, especially if you have done very little wrong? Love everyone yourself, be quick to forgive, avoid passing judgment, seeing, as it were, yourself in every man, and making this the basis for your verdicts, attitudes and actions. "For so is the will of God", says Peter, the chief apostle, "that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:15), meaning those among us who hate without cause and are unwilling to give to others what they desire to receive from them.

5. Anyone who does not want the same things for his fellow human beings or pass the same judgment on them as he wishes for himself, is certainly foolish, particularly as this judgment and this wish are an inherent part of our nature. For it is a natural impulse in all of us to want to be loved and well treated by others as much as by ourselves. The will to do good and to be as well disposed towards all as we are towards ourselves is therefore also inborn in us. We were all made in the image of Him who is good. Then when sin entered and multiplied, it did not extinguish our self-love, since it was not at all opposed to that, but it cooled down love for one another, the crown the virtues, changed it and rendered it useless. As a result, He who renews our nature, recalling it to the grace of His own image and putting His laws, as the prophet tells us, in our hearts (Jer. 31:33), says "As you would like others to do to you, do the same to them" (Luke 6:31), and "If you love those who love you, what thanks do you have? For sinners also love those who love them. And if you lend to those of whom you hope to receive, what thanks do you have? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again" (Luke 6:32, 34).

6. In this passage, He refers to those who are not called by His name and those who do not order their lives according to the gospel, as sinners, including them all in the same category, for it is of no benefit to us to be called Christians if we act no differently from the heathen. Just as the great Paul told the Jews, "Circumcision is profitable, if you keep the law: but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision is made uncircumcision" (Rom 2:35), so now Christ tells us through the Gospel, "You who are Mine will find grace in My presence if you keep my Commandments, but if you do nothing more than sinners do, loving those who

love you and doing good to those who do the same to you, you will have no confidence towards Me on that account." He does not speak like this to deter people from loving or doing good or lending to those who will repay them, but He shows that such acts do not earn a reward, so they have their recompense here and now, and do not bring any grace to the soul, nor cleanse it from the ingrained defilement of sin. When these things are present they bring the soul absolutely no profit or grace by way of eternal recompense, but the lack of them causes profound guilt and loss. People who do not even love those who love and care for them in return are worse than tax collectors and sinners. So how much worse are those who repay the love and concern of others with hostile words and deeds! Such men clearly include those who rebel against the rulers of the city, in spite of the fact that they shoulder the considerable burden of taking care of them every day; those who do not regard the rulers appointed by God with the good favor they deserve (*cf.* Rom. 13:1-2); those who do not humble themselves under the mighty hand of God (*cf.* 1 Pet. 5:6), but disobey Christ's Church and are annoyed for no reason with the guardians of the Church, even though they exert themselves on their behalf and desire, pray for, and do everything good and profitable for them, as far as is in their power....

10. If here you make yourself like the Son of God through your actions and show yourself kind towards all, as He is kind to everyone, there you will receive likeness to Him, and more besides. The light of the glory of the Most High will shine around you, and you will be eternally with those, in whose company Christ our God will be among gods (Ps. 82:1), distributing the honors of eternal blessedness. He revealed this by adding, "And you shall be children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35). For this purpose the Son of God bowed the heavens and came down to earth, became the Son of man, spoke and acted as He did, finally suffered and died for us, rose again and went up to heaven once more, to make us heavenly, immortal and sons of God. So the things He now asks of us, that we should love our enemies, do good, and lend to those unable to repay, are not only fitting and beneficial for us, as has already been demonstrated, but are also small in comparison with what He gave. He gave Himself for us, who not only had nothing to give in return, but who had previously shown ourselves in many ways to be ungrateful and evil. By contrast, He urges us to lend what we have in excess and to do good with what we possess. What do we have, and how much? And for the sake of these trifles He gives us in exchange likeness to Himself, sublime adoption as sons, and heavenly rewards, saying, "Be merciful, even as your Father who is in heaven is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

11. To Him, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, belong all glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

– St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily Forty-Five*

Holy Right-believing Princess Anna of Kashin

The Holy Right-believing Princess Anna of Kashin, a daughter of the Rostov prince Demetrius Borisovich, in 1294 became the wife of the holy Great Prince Michael Yaroslavich of Tver, who was murdered by the Mongol-Tatars of the Horde in 1318, (November 22). After the death of her husband, Anna withdrew into Tver's Sophia monastery and accepted tonsure with the name Euphrosynē. Later, she transferred to the Kashin Dormition monastery, and became a schemanun with the name Anna. She fell asleep in the Lord on October 2, 1338.

Saint Anna's sons also imitated their father's steadfast confession of faith in Christ. Demetrius Mikhailovich ("Dread Eyes") was murdered at the Horde on September 15, 1325; and later, Alexander Mikhailovich, Prince of Tver, was murdered together with his son Theodore on October 29, 1339.

Miracles at Saint Anna's grave began in 1611, during the siege of Kashin by Polish and Lithuanian forces. There was also a great fire in the city which died down without doing much damage. The saint, dressed in the monastic schema, appeared to Gerasimus, a gravely ill warden of the Dormition cathedral. She promised that he would recover, but complained, "People show no respect for my tomb. They ignore it and my memory! Do you not know that I am supplicating the Lord and His Mother to deliver the city from the foe, and that you be spared many hardships and evils?" She ordered him to tell the clergy to look after her tomb, and to light a candle there before the icon of Christ Not-Made-By-Hands.

At the Council of 1649 it was decided to uncover her relics for general veneration and to glorify the holy Princess Anna as a saint. But in 1677 Patriarch Joachim proposed to the Moscow Council that her veneration throughout Russia should be discontinued because of the Old Believers Schism, which made use of the name of Saint Anna of Kashin for its own purposes. When she was buried her hand had been positioned to make the Sign of the Cross with two fingers, rather than three. However, the memory of Saint Anna, who had received a crown of glory from Christ, could not be erased by decree. People continued to love and venerate her, and many miracles took place at her tomb.

On June 12, 1909 her second glorification took place, and her universally observed Feast day was established. Her Life describes her as a model of spiritual beauty and chastity, and an example to future generations.

In her Magnification, Saint Anna of Kashin is described as "an instructor of monastics and converser with Angels." She is commemorated on the following dates: October 2 (her blessed repose); June 12: the Recovery of her Holy Relics in 1650, and her second Glorification in 1909; the Synaxis of the Saints of Tver, (movable Feast) on the Sunday after June 29. (*from oca.org*)

Also Commemorated Today

Blessed Andrew, fool-for-Christ at Constantinople (911).
St. Theodore of Sanaskar (Ushakov), admiral of the Russian Navy (1817).
Virgin-martyr Alexandra (1938).
Venerable Cassian, monk, of Uglich (1504).
Martyrs David and Constantine, princes of Argveti, Georgia (740) (Georgia).
Blessed Cyprian of Suzdal, fool-for-Christ (1622).
New Martyr George the Sandal-maker of Philadelphia in Asia Minor (Mt. Athos) (1794)
Venerable Damaris of Athens (1st c.) (Greek).
Great-martyr Theodore (Gavra) of Atran in Chaldia of Pontus (1180) (Greek).
Venerable Theophilus the Confessor (Greek).
Ven. Beregisus of France (c. 725)
Martyr Gerinus of France (676)
and his brother Hieromartyr Leodegarius, Bishop of Autun (France) (678)
Leudomer, Bishop of Chartres in France (c. 585)
Ursicinus, Bishop of Chur in Switzerland (760)

Social Team for October 9

Team 6 is up next week - Cooper, M. Blaydoe, Roberta Corson, Mary V. Thank you!

Become a Distinguished Diocesan Donor

We would like to invite you to become a Distinguished Diocesan Donor. Help us to edify Christ by building up The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese ministries and apostolates through the Distinguished Diocesan Donors Program. We invite you to view our [brochure](#).

Annual Donation Levels

\$100 - Entry
\$250 - Bronze
\$500 - Silver
\$1,000 - Gold
\$10,000 & Up - Platinum



Making Your Contribution

It is easy to participate in the DDD Program: either donate via Apostle Thomas, marking your contribution for “DDD”, or visit <https://www.acrod.org/ministries/dddprogram/ddd-become> to donate online.

Follow Our Diocese On-Line

Diocesan Website: <http://www.acrod.org>

Camp Nazareth: <http://www.campnazareth.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acroddiocese>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri & Mt. Kenya, Bennett family, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Roberta Corson, Jon Church, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, Helen P. Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Helen, Brian, Luke and Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & family, Nicholas Pavlik, Weston Perry & family, John Reece, Mary Reed, Marge Rusnak, Rose Song, Fr. 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 and Carolyn Shull, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)