

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wednesday: Lay Vespers 6:30 PM

Saturday: Confession 4:30 PM

Great Vespers 5:00 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

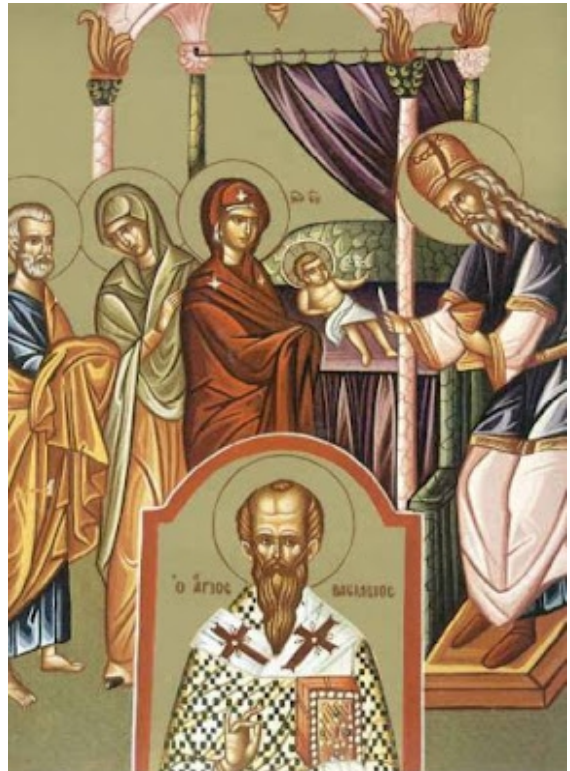
January 8, 2023 – Afterfeast of Theophany | Sunday

After Theophany | Ven. George the Chozebite

“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 4:17) With these profound and holy words, the incarnate Word began His preaching to fallen mankind. Outwardly, such simple teaching! But one must understand it with his very life: then these short and simple words which are contained in all of the Gospel will be revealed. Just as the holy Apostle Paul, when preaching the Gospel, which he did throughout almost all the known world, said that he testified “both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

Brethren! In order to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ repentance is needed; in order to remain in this salvific faith, repentance is needed; in order to be successful in it, repentance is needed; in order to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, repentance is needed.

All of this is clearly set forth in the Holy Scripture. Holy Scripture teaches us that “God sent His Son into the world ... that the world through Him might be saved,” that “he who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is



condemned already.” “That light (Christ) is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light, nor comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.” (John 3: 17-20) To those afflicted by the passion of vainglory the Scripture witnesses: “How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes only from God?” (John 5:44). Those bound by the passion of greed did not only not believe the Lord, but they even derided Him when He preached to them the important and most holy teaching concerning the remembrance of eternity, and the arranging of earthly matters in accordance to the immortality appointed for man. (Luke 16: 14) Those attracted to the evil passion of envy did not only not believe in the Lord, but they also conspired to kill Him, and they accomplished this. All those infected with vain and sinful vices, according to the unerring testimony of the Gospel, are cut off from participating in the spiritual wedding of the Son of God, making themselves unworthy of blessed union with Him (Matt. 22:5). “You can not serve God and Mammon!” (Luke 16:14); you cannot serve two masters, God and sin! “Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Gospel (Mark 1:15).

However, one who has believed in Christ, and has decided to continually prove his faith, by his actions, is also in need of repentance. What do you think, brethren; what is the first fruit of living faith? What is the first fruit of fulfilling the commandments of Christ? I will give you the answer of St. Simeon the New Theologian, who acquired his knowledge of truth through his holy experience. He said: “The careful fulfillment of the commandments of Christ teaches a man his own infirmities.” Exactly! As soon as one who believes in Christ begins to fulfill the all-holy commandments of the Gospel, or also, to perform the works of renewed nature, his fallen nature is instantly revealed to him, which had been hidden from sight until then, and it enters into a sustained battle with the Gospel. The life of one who struggles for Christ is filled with unseen falls. He involuntarily confesses with the Apostle: ”For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am!” (Acts 7: 22-24). From such an observation of oneself, blessed poverty of spirit is engendered within a Christian, rational, spiritual mourning appears, and a broken and humble heart is established, which God will not destroy (Ps. 50: 20). In living according to the Gospel, there appears in a man, as if naturally, the repentance commanded by the Gospel. Therefore, repentance is necessary not only in order to believe in Christ; it is necessary in order to have a living faith in Christ. “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

There remains to be explained: why is there such a close connection between the words of the Lord calling us to repent, and the announcing of the nearness of the Kingdom of heaven? Why is there not presented between them a kind of intermediate struggle, an intermediate condition? The reason is that our Lord Jesus Christ is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29) --- He has accomplished everything for our salvation. He has reconciled us with God; He has prepared and acquired for us the Heavenly Kingdom. We, mankind, have been presented with one work in the matter of our salvation: the work of accepting salvation, given to us by God free and complete, the work of repentance. The Heavenly Kingdom and the Heavenly King are ineffably close to us --- incomparably closer than we imagine. “Behold, I stand at the door” of the heart of man, exclaims this King, and I knock at it with My all-holy and almighty Word: “if any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me (Rev. 3:20). The opening of the doors of the heart to the Heavenly King is accomplished—with repentance. “Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” - St. Ignatius Brianchaninov (*from pravoslavie.ru*)



Saint George the Chozebite was born on the island of Cyprus toward the end of the sixth century. After the death of his parents, he went to Palestine to worship at the holy places. Here he entered into the monastic community of Chozeba between the River Jordan and Jerusalem, and he later became head of this monastery. Saint George presented the monks example in fasting, vigil and physical efforts. Having lived as an angel upon the earth, he died in peace. (*from oca.org*)

Today’s Epistle Lesson – St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13 EOB

Brethren, grace has been granted to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore, God says, “When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” Now, what does “he ascended” mean, if not that he first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the [same] one who also ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things. He gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some shepherds and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for a work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ. This is until we all attain to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, having reached the very fullness of Christ.

Today’s Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 4:12-17 EOB

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he came and lived in Capernaum, which is by the sea,

in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled: 'The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness saw a great light, to those who sat in the region and shadow of death o them light has dawned.' From that time on, Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent! For the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

The past feast of the nativity of our great God and our Savior Jesus Christ is glorious and precious, but more glorious and more precious is his present divine baptism; but we do not extol this feast as if that one is so much less important, but in order that we may, having contemplated the sequence that takes place by divine dispensation in respect of these matters, prepare ourselves for greater virtue.

But observe our Savior and Lord – how he effects the divine dispensation starting from the smallest and moving to that which is greater; for in the feast of the nativity the Lord was born as a child, but in this feast he receives baptism as an adult. There he was laid down in a small cave and in a manger teaching us to be humble-minded, but here he comes to that which is much greater, the river Jordan. There he was wrapped in poor and ragged swaddling-clothes, but here he en clothed himself with the waters of the Jordan. In that feast Magi worshiped him, but in this one a servant, chosen by God, baptized the same Lord. At that time a star guided the Magi to worship him, but now the Father has pointed him out to the world as his own Son. There shepherds, here the forerunner. On that occasion the most impious Herod killed the innocent infants, but now Christ has cleansed us, the defiled, and crushed the heads of the invisible snakes (Ps. 73:13). There blood was spilled, here waters were blessed. There a dirge and “wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children” (Mt. 2:18, Jer. 31:15), but here enlightenment and joy and gladness and salvation. There Bethlehem was then left childless, but here the baptismal font has many children. At that time Jesus secretly fled to Egypt, but now he comes openly to be baptized in the Jordan. There Joseph and Mary his mother journeyed with him, but here the Forerunner and the angels serve him.

At that time the idols of Egypt, the works of human hands, saw him and were crushed, but now the works of God are “The sea clearly saw and fled, the Jordan turned backwards; the mountains leaped like rams, and the hills like the lambs of sheep” (Ps 113:3-4). There shepherds, living in the fields, saw and marveled, but here the Baptist became tremulous with fear and when the Lord commanded him, he was vexed and said, “Shall I take hold of the untouchable? How shall I, the

servant, baptize the Lord? How shall I, the clay, take hold of my Maker? How shall I, the creature, lay my hand on my Creator? I am perishable grass, he is a consuming fire. I, the grass, do not have the audacity to touch the fire.” But what did Jesus answer? “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Mt. 3:15).

But let us also relate what followed. There an angel announced the birth of the Christ, but here the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove, and from above the Father gave witness to the Son. “This,” it reads, “is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Mt. 3:17). And why do I not relate the most perfect thing? At that time the Son alone appeared, but now also the Father and the Holy Spirit. And how? The Father bears witness from above and the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove and the Son is baptized.

You know the distinction of the feast, you have come to know the superiority of the feast, but observe also the virtues thereof: The Lord came to be baptized, wishing to wash out Adam's record of debt. Indeed, the one who is uncircumscribed is being circumscribed, in order that he may transform the defiled image to its former beauty. He “who weighed the mountains on a balance and the hills on a pair of scales” (Is. 40:12) is baptized by a servant, and the unchangeable is stripped naked, in order that he may cloth the naked ancestor with a robe of incorruption; and he “who covered the sky in clouds” (Ps. 146:8) is covered in the waters of the Jordan, in order that he may bury our sins in water. He “who bowed the heavens” (Ps. 17:9) bows his head, in order that he may restore our fallen nature. He who created lakes and fountains and depths causes the turbid waters of mortals' disbelief to dry up; and the spiritual sun is being illuminated, in order that he may break the drought of our sin. He who is present everywhere, and holds the universe in his hand, appears in a river, in order that he may wash away the rivers of our sins; and he is stripped naked on account of us, the naked ones, in order that he may clothe all in a robe of incorruption.

Tell, O prophets, the things that you have proclaimed concerning him; make them clear to us. Tell, O David, who it was “who turned the rock into pools of water, and flinty cliff into welling springs of water” (Ps. 113:8)? Christ converted the church of the gentiles into pools of spiritual waters, that is to say, the baptismal fonts, and filled the petrified humanity with fountains of salvation. And when and how “did the God of glory thunder, the Lord over the mighty waters” (Ps. 28:3)? The Father spoke, “This is my beloved Son” (Mt. 3:17). And how was the river of God filled with waters? The church of God was filled in the hearts of the believers with the seven gifts.

And speak also, O Isaiah, of the things pertaining to this feast. “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord’” (Mt. 3:3, Is. 40:3). That is to say, the voice of the Word, the Forerunner, cries out in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of the Lord.” And what does the phrase “Be glad, O thirsty wilderness” (Is. 35:1) signify? It signifies that the church of Christ thirsts after our salvation. And how “did the water spring up in the wilderness” (Is. 35:6)? The baptism in the church of the gentiles, which was the wilderness of former times. And explain also the phrase “Come for water, all you who are thirsty” (Is. 55:1). You who are from the Gentiles, go to the baptism. And speak also, O greatest (of the prophets – *see* Lk. 7:28) John. “Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees” (Mt. 3:10). Whom do the trees represent? Mankind. What does the root represent? Man's life. What does the ax represent? The cutting down by death. “Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Mt. 3:10). Therefore, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt. 3:2).

The prophets, O Christ, prophesied these things with a view to your glory and honor; but we, your unworthy servants, how shall we honor you, the Lord and Lover of mankind, in a worthy manner? We glorify your bountiful goodness, we honor your nativity, we also worship your baptism. “Let the light of your face be manifested towards us” (Ps. 4:6); teach us to do your will, for without you we are not able to do anything. But why do we converse with the Lord while we are unworthy? For no -ne deprived of boldness has the courage to converse with a king; Let us then now set his friends in motion to encourage us. Teach us, O most honored prophets, how we should celebrate the present feast, how we should worship its ruler.

Speak, O David, ancestor of God. David says, “Come, children, listen to me; I shall teach you the fear of the Lord” (Ps. 33:2). “Why do you love folly and seek out the lie” (Ps. 4:3)? “Know that the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer; but the face of the Lord is against wrongdoers, to cut off all memory of them from the earth” (Ps. 33:16ff). “Serve the Lord with fear and be glad in him with trembling” (Ps. 2:11). “Come to him and be illuminated and let your faces not be covered with shame” (Ps. 33:6).

And what does Isaiah say? “Draw water with gladness from the wells of salvation” (Is. 12:3). “Seek the Lord and when you find him, call upon him. And when he shall approach you, let the ungodly leave his ways, and the transgressor his counsels, and let him return to the Lord, and he shall find mercy” (Is. 55:6-7). “Wash, be clean, remove your iniquities from your souls before my eyes. Cease from your iniquities, learn to do well, diligently seek judgment, deliver him who is suffering wrong, plead for the orphan and obtain justice for the widow, and come, let us reason together,’ says the Lord. ‘And though your sins be as purple, I will

make them white as snow. And though they be as scarlet, I will make them white as wool. And if you are willing and listen to me, you shall eat the good of the land. And if you are not willing nor listen to me, a sword shall devour you.' For the mouth of the Lord has spoken this" (Is. 1:16-20).

And speak also, O blessed Forerunner, the greatest of all the prophets, who leaped in your mother's womb and worshiped the Lord, who was judged worthy to baptize the one being proclaimed. And what does John say? "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). Therefore "bear fruit that befits repentance" (Mt. 3:8). And "he who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise" (Lk. 3:11). And "Collect no more than is appointed you; rob no one by violence, nor by false accusation, and be content with your wages" (Lk. 3:13-14). "'For he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire, whose winnowing fork is in his hand. He will gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Lk. 3:16-17).

And speak also, O apostle Paul, mouth of Christ, and teacher of the world. Paul teaches: "For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all people, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own, who are zealous for good deeds: (Tit 2:11-14).

Beloved, you have heard the teachings of prophets and apostles. Let us take them to heart! Let us also assemble at the streams of the Jordan; let us imitate the wise maidens and with spiritual lamps meet the Lord who has appeared. For "he who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29) receives all; for he came for this very reason, in order "to draw all people to" himself (Jn. 12:32). Let us not remain in the most wicked habit, but eagerly listen to him who calls out and says, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness" (Jn. 8:12). "Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you" (Jn. 12:35).

Beloved, you have also heard the Lord calling us. Let us therefore follow him from now on zealously. Quickly, brothers and sisters, quickly! For the whole of creation is illuminated today, and the universe is glad and full of joy. Let us also be illuminated and rejoice. On earth angels mingle with mankind, since the King of glory is also present here; for where a king is present, it is clear that there order also attends. Angels rejoice over the Lord's incarnation. They will from now on

also rejoice over our conversion; for if there is “joy in heaven” and on earth “over one sinner who repents” (Lk. 15:7), how much more over many who repent?

For if not before, but then certainly today when the whole world is illuminated, repent also and be illuminated! Why are you blinding yourself through the mist of sin? Christ is baptized because of you, yet you are indifferent? Christ is being illuminated, yet you exalt yourself as if you are pure? For since Christ is illuminated, let us shine likewise together by means of our virtues. Christ is on earth; let us sink downwards together, our thoughts on that which is humble and moderate, in order that we may also together go upwards into heaven with glory. Let us “bear fruits that befit repentance” (Lk. 3:8), lest the ax cut us down because we are without fruit and throw us away into the unquenchable fire. For this is the time of works, that of recompense. Here is the toil, but there the rest. Here is the struggle, there the crown. Let us work here a little, in order that we may there receive plenty. And if you have received five talents, multiply them, and if two, double them, and if one, increase it, in order that you also may hear that blessed voice of the Lord: “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little. I will set you over many” good things; “enter into the joy of your master” (Mt. 25:23).

Why is Christ baptized, who alone is pure and undefiled? We have sinned, we have been defiled, we have truly become impure, yet Christ is baptized? Yes. Since the devil has blinded us and made us deviate from the right way, the Maker did not overlook his own creature; but with his ineffable compassion, he wanted to show us with the deed the way of our salvation. For this reason he was born and baptized and did all the rest, in order that he might destroy the deceit of the devil and reveal the truth. And therefore John the Baptist also proclaims the baptism of repentance, he, the Forerunner of the Savior, the speaking voice of the Word. And how and by whom is the Forerunner called the voice of the Word? By the prophet Isaiah. For as prophet he tells things to come: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight'” (Is. 40:3). And here he calls human hearts “way” and “paths”, since every good deed and wicked deed is first engendered in human hearts; then, though devised secretly, it becomes public. After this the prophet teaches those who await the Lord to set their hearts straight, in order that Christ, having come and found them pure, might sow the seed in them – his teaching, of course – and people might bear spiritual fruit and yield fruit thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold, just as we hear in the gospels.

And that this is the case, listen again to what the Forerunner says: “Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Mt. 3:10). Beloved, this saying is

frightening! For if the words are but little and few, yet the meaning thereof is great and frightening.; for this can chasten even a heart of rock. For seeing that the trees represent mankind, the root represents man's life, and the ax Death, that cuts down man's life, and the fruit is man's work. The teacher says this trying to frighten us in order that we may yield good fruits. "Behold, O human," he says, the ax is laid to your root; Death indeed succeeds your life. Do your best then in order that your fruit may not be found bad and the ax cut you down and throw you away into the outmost fire, the one 'prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Mt. 25:41). And "I," he says, "baptize you with water, but he is coming who is mightier than I; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire, whose winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Mt. 3:11-12).

Listen to another most frightening example: He spoke there of "tree", here of "threshing floor"; there of "ax", here of "winnowing fork"; there he speaks of "fruit", but here of "wheat" and "chaff". For the world is a threshing floor and the wheat is the people who live according to God's will; but the chaff is the workers of evil, the prostitutes, the thieves, the swindlers, the dishonest, the slanderers, the evil-speakers, the evilworkers, the deceitful, those doing the evil deeds of the devil. And just as the farmer takes his winnowing fork and separates the wheat from the chaff to one side respectively, and gathers the wheat into his granaries but burns the chaff, thus also the good farmer, our Creator and our God, is coming with his judgment in himself as his winnowing fork and will separate the just like wheat and store them into his beautiful granaries, - that is, the heavenly abodes - but will burn the sinners like chaff with an unquenchable and eternal fire.

Beloved, you have come to know these kind of examples; you have learned how we ought to live; you have heard how we shall be judged; you have perceived the granaries into which those who do good will enter; you know how the unrepentant sinners will be destroyed with fire. Con on then, let us be enlightened in our minds, and though we have sinned, let us repent. Let us confess our sins; let us abstain from the evil habit of life; let us flee from the most wicked sin; let us show works befitting repentance. For behold to us is given "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Lk. 3:3). And of what kind is it? The tear of contrition. For he saw that no one among mankind was without sin; he saw that no one is "pure from uncleanness, not even if his life should be one day" (Job 14:5). And therefore, the Lover of mankind gave us repentance and confession as healing remedy, in order that we may through it shake off all evil from us. Let us do good; for he says, "Turn away from evil and do good" (Ps. 33:15). For doing thus we can be cleansed and rendered white as snow. And let us in such a way also do honor to the nativity and baptism of the Lord, and like obedient and faithful

servants reign with him and be glorified with him, to whom is fitting glory, honor and worship forevermore. Amen. – St. Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople, *Homily 28 On Holy Theophany*

The Neurosis of the Holidays

Now that the Twelve Days [of Christmas and Theophany] have passed we must remember an interesting view of the great psychotherapist Victor Frankl that is related to the different types of neuroses, which are associated with the so-called noögenic neuroses.

In the works of this great psychotherapist he makes a distinction between psychogenic neuroses, which are reduced to the psychological field, and noögenic neuroses, which is associated with the noological dimension of human existence, namely the acquisition of meaning for life. He presents the truth that people today are suffering mainly because they have no meaning in their life, which manifests itself in many ways.

Among the various neuroses he includes "Sunday neurosis", which is when a person realizes their existential vacuum, exactly when "the burden of the busy week ends on Sunday, and the emptiness inside him suddenly appears." That is, when a person all week with continuous busyness and employment tries to forget this existential vacuum, forgetting that their life is meaningless. Thus, when they stop this activity, then they are occupied by melancholy, pain and with terrible consequences in their existence.

We could extend this aspect of Frankl, arguing that we observe many times the people around us holding on to the neurosis of the holidays. What he realized in regards to Sunday, is also noticeable during the major holidays of Christendom, such as Christmas, Easter, etc.

Apart from what Frankl says as to what takes place on Sundays, on major holidays we observe the same situations. People, especially here in Greece, prepare for the great feasts of Christmas and Easter. They think they will find something to satisfy their existential hunger and thirst. But they are not looking for it from the depths of their heart and approaching the deeper and true meaning of the events of the holiday. These involve repentance, humility, mental preparation, Confession and Holy Communion. Rather they focus on the external aspects, such as the purchasing of various items, traveling, making visitations, and the festive table. It is true, of course, that these external standard procedures do not satisfy a person's spiritual state of being, and thus the existential vacuum or emptiness remains.

Therefore, while a person expects the holidays to answer their existential questions, in regards to matters of life and death, yet they do not achieve it, since

they remain on the surface and do not go deep into the events. This just leads to melancholy, despair and emptiness. It has been noted by many that during the festive season bickering takes place among families, crimes increase and psychic traumas grow. All of this is explained through this perspective, since on these major days man fails to give rest to his spirit, despite the vivid nostalgia and search.

One way to avoid the pain of the neurosis of the holidays is to follow the entire teaching of the Church with the forty-day preparation for the feasts. And of course, to participate as much as we can in the worship services. - By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Pray for our priests!

Prayer is powerful, and we need more priests in our Diocese. So, this year, Metropolitan Gregory is asking that each one of us pray daily that we have more vocations to the priesthood. He also wants us to pray by name for our clergy and seminarians--they aren't sick! The clergy that we are to pray for are: Fr. Peter Paproski, Fr. Photios Parks, and Deacon Robert Conjelko. The seminarians are: Thomas Kovalak, Nicholas Woroby, Seamus Murray, Thomas Slosky, Samuel Loposky, Timothy Paproski, Nicholas Fong, and Nicolas Laliberte. We started this two years ago, and we already have more seminarians! I can't wait to see what happens next!

Prayer for vocations

Master of all, You promised us, "I will be with you always, even until the very end of the world," and You have taught, "I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Mindful of this pledge, we beseech Your great goodness to inspire men to the Holy Priesthood, the service of Your Holy Orthodox Church, so that she may properly be able to fulfill Your will for Your people in this age. There are children to baptize, the sick to heal, and the dying to care for. There is the Bread of Life to distribute, and the Word of God to teach. There are sins to forgive, and charity to be done in Your Name. Send Your Church in this hour and in every age "vessels of clay" to be instruments of Your presence. Hear us, O Lord, and have mercy.

Prayer for the priesthood

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our Metropolitan Gregory, and our spiritual father Joseph, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Remember also, O Lord, our priests Fr. Peter Paproski, Fr. Photios Parks, and Deacon Robert Conjelko, and seminarians

Thomas Kovalak, Nicholas Woroby, Seamus Murray, Thomas Slosky, Samuel Loposky, Timothy Paproski, Nicholas Fong, and Nicolas Laliberte. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God who loves us, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Venerable Domnica of Constantinople

Saint Domnica came from Carthage to Constantinople in the time of the holy Emperor Theodosius the Great. Here she was baptized by Patriarch Nectarius and entered a women's monastery.

Through strict and prolonged ascetic effort she attained to high spiritual perfection. The saint healed the sick, demonstrated power over the natural elements, and predicted the future. By her miracles the saint moved inhabitants of the capital towards concerns about life eternal and the soul. Adorned by virtues, the saint departed this life a spotless virgin in her old age. (*from oca.org*)

Also Commemorated Today

Venerable Gregory, wonderworker of the Kiev Caves (1093).

Venerable Gregory, hermit of the Kiev Caves (14th c.).

Hieromartyr Isidore and 72 companions at Yuriev (Dorpats) in Estonia, slain by the Latins in 1472.

New Hieromartyr Victor priest (1937).

New Hieromartyr Demetrius priest (1938).

New Hieromartyr Vladimir priest (1938).

Martyr Michael (1938).

St. Michael confessor, priest (1941).

Venerable Paisius of Uglich (1504).

Hieromartyr Carterius (priest) of Caesarea in Cappadocia (304).

Martyrs Theophilus the Deacon and Helladius in Libya (4th c.).

Martyrs Julian and his wife Basilissa, and with them Marcionilla and her son Celsus, Anthony, Anastasius, seven children, and twenty soldiers, at Antinoe in Egypt (313).

Venerable Elias the Hermit of Egypt (4th c.).

Martyr Abo the Perfumer of Baghdad, who suffered at Tbilisi, Georgia (786)

Sts. Atticus (425) and Cyrus (714), patriarchs of Constantinople.

Venerable Agatho of Egypt, monk (c. 435) (Greek) (also March 2 – Russian)

Holy Virgin Gudula of Brussels (659) (Celtic & British).

St. Gregory of Ochrid, bishop of Moesia (1012) (Bulgaria).

St. Severinus, apostle of Noricum, Austria (482).
St. Theodore of Constantinople (595).
St. Erhard (Albert, Erhart), bishop of Regensburg (Ratisbon) (Bavaria) (686).
St. Emilian the Confessor, bishop of Cyzicus (9th c.).
St. Macarius (Macres) of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos (1431).
St. Severin, bishop of Cologne (397).
St. Nathalan (Nethelm) Bishop of Aberdeenshire. (late 7th c.)
St. Guihelin (Guilhelin, Guethelin, Guethlein), 5th bishop of London (445)
St. Pega, virgin hermitess, of Peakirk. (719)
St. Wulsin, bishop of Sherborne. (1005)
St. Athelhelm (Athelm, Atheim), Bishop of Wells and Canterbury (Athelm) (923)
St. Ergnada (Ercnacta) of Ulster (5th c.)
St. Albert, Bishop of Cashel, Ireland (7th or 8th c.) (could be same person as Erhard above)
St. Gervant (Gurvan), son of King Erispoe (876) (Brittany)
St. Lucian, apostle of Beauvais, priest-martyr, with Maximian and Julian (290) (Gaul)
Hieromartyr Eugenian, bishop of Autun (4th c.) (Gaul)
St. Frodobert, monk of Luxeuil (673) (Gaul)
St. Garibaldus (Garibald), first bishop of Regensburg (762) (Germany)
St. Maximus, bishop of Pavia (511) (Italy)

Social Team for January 15

Team 5 is up next week - Cooper, M. Blaydoe, Roberta Corson, Mary V., Steven Watts. Thank you!

Study on the Divine Liturgy Wednesday Evening

As a reminder, we are holding the Study Series: *Exploration of the Divine Liturgy* on Wednesdays in the parish hall (house behind the church) at 7:00 pm following Lay Vespers (6:30 - 7:00). In the series, will work through the Liturgy to understand why each part is there, its significance in our Corporate Worship and our personal Christian development with a goal of bringing us closer to Christ. We will look at historical writings and explanations to gain a better understanding of our Liturgy.

Save the Date!

Even with the overturn of Roe v. Wade, the hard work of creating a pro-life culture has a long way to go. So, the annual March for Life in Washington, DC will continue to gather hundreds of thousands of people from all over the country to pray together and stand for life. As usual, parishioners from St. Thomas will meet behind the Orthodox Christians for Life banner on the Mall on January 20.

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

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

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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, Fr. 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.)