

SOBORNOST

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wednesday: Lay Vespers 6:30 PM

Saturday: Vespers 5 PM

Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10 AM

June 11, 2023 – 1st Sunday

After Pentecost | Sunday of All Saints

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32).

Beloved brethren, the Feast of All Saints is today and our Church with the Gospel reading reminds us of the confession of the saints, which must take place in the whole perspective of the Orthodox life. That is, we must confess Christ, but within Orthodox ecclesiastical contexts. This means that there is a close connection between Christ, the Saint and the confession. The Saints throughout their lives, when they were united with Christ, gave the good testimony about Him and are waiting for the confession of Christ before His Father in heaven.

Christ said to His disciples: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men" (Matthew 10:32). All the Saints belong to the "whosoever". These are the Prophets, the Apostles, the Martyrs and generally those who live sacramentally and ascetically in the Church. We can say that despite the tropical, chronological and local differences, all the Saints have one thing in common: and this is Christ. The Prophets, in the Holy Spirit, saw Christ; the Apostles were disciples of the incarnate Word; and the Saints after the Apostles were, as members of the Church, as members of the Body of Christ, united with Him.



Furthermore, all the Saints throughout the ages experienced Christ through the Holy Spirit. This experience was not considered theoretical, but real. That is, the Saints felt a real communion with Christ and through Him with the Triune God. A result of this experience is the confession. It is very characteristic that the confession of the Saints, as Christ says, becomes "in Me", that is, through Christ and in Christ. Without communion with Christ and without His power it is impossible to confess Him.

Confession, then, is not a human energy that is exhausted in an external endeavor, but is a natural end to the life in Christ. The Prophets gave the testimony that Christ would come and salvation would rise. The Apostles gave the disappointed world the testimony that Christ had come. And the Saints of all ages - martyrs, venerables, etc. - gave the testimony that it is possible for one living in the Church to live this new life that Christ brought to the world.

Thus, we can assert that every Saint is at the same time a Prophet, Apostle, Martyr, etc. He is a Prophet, because as the Prophets of the Old Testament saw the first coming of Christ he sees the second coming of Christ. He is a Disciple of Christ because he lives in communion with Him and keeps His commandments. He is a Martyr because he constantly gives through his life the testimony for this new life, which the God-man Christ brought to the world.

Thus, we can well interpret the continuation of Christ's word: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32). As natural is the confession that the Saints give to Christ, since by their free complete offering to God they receive and reflect the divine splendor, so will the confession that Christ will give to the Father be natural. The Saints will shine like suns in the Kingdom of God, because they were united with the Light, Christ, "all will become divine light." They will radiate this Light "as having been born by this divine light", as Saint Gregory Palamas writes. Christ who will be inside them will testify about them and they will become beloved to the Father. This is the significance of the "will I confess also."

The interpretation given by the Holy Nicholas Cabasilas for the love of God the Father for the man who was united with Christ is very characteristic. God the Father loves His Son very much. He had declared it on the Day of Baptism and the Day of the Transfiguration: "This is My beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17). Believers who are connected with Christ and have Him dwelling in their hearts accept the love of God the Father for the sake of the Son, that is, because God the Father loves His Son, that is why He loves those whom He loves. This shows the great importance of Christ for our lives and the importance of our union with Him.

Thus, those who are united with Christ have in them the love of the Father because of His Son. Then, in the Second Coming of Christ, this presence of the Word in the Saints will be a testimony for them.

God rests in the Saints: "God who is holy, finds rest in those who are holy" (prayer during the Trisagion hymn). Of course, God does not dwell in a specific place, but He is Himself the place of everything. However, according to Saint John of Damascus, the place of God can be called the place where His energies become manifest. Thus, the place of God is the Church and those who participate in His energies, that is, the Saints of God.

All this reveals a great truth that we want to emphasize in particular. Usually we have formed the opinion that the resurrected Body of Christ is only the one that ascended to heaven and is now at the right hand of God the Father, and we forget that the resurrected Body of Christ is the Church, which is the real Body of Christ and communion of deification. Thus the Saints, having been united with Christ, are the members of His resurrected Body and have the sanctifying Grace of God. In this way, when we kiss the relics of the Saints, we kiss the members of the Body of Christ.

We must emphasize the great value of the Saints for our lives. For in the unity of faith and in the awareness of Christ one comes "together with all the saints" (Ephesians 4:13). May we be found worthy to give the confession of Christ throughout our lives, to accept the confession of eternal life. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-12:2

Brethren, all the saints through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30

The Lord said to his disciples, "whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Amen I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first."

Homily on the Ninth Eothinon Gospel – John 20:19-31

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

The Eothinon read today is very well known because the first part of it is read in church during the Agape Vespers, the first day of the Resurrection of Christ, and wherever possible it is read in many languages, and also the entire text is read on Thomas Sunday. because it refers to him.

This Gospel reading describes two appearances of Christ to His disciples. The first appearance took place in the evening of the first day of the Resurrection, while Thomas was absent, and the second appearance took place the next Sunday, after eight days, in the presence of Thomas.

In His first appearance, Christ gave His disciples three great gifts. The first is peace. He told them "Peace be with you." It is an inner peace, which by the grace of God frees people from inner doubts, turmoil, fear and insecurity. It is the peace of the Resurrection and such peace creates in the soul joy, which is why it is said "the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord." The second gift is the mission to the world. He gave them the power to send them on an apostolic mission around the world. He said to them, "As My Father sent Me, so do I send you into the world." Christ is an Apostle, Christ's disciples are Apostles. But this mission of the

disciples in the world was not to do what other people do, but to do what others cannot do, that is, to forgive their sins. And this is the third gift He gave them; He gave them the Holy Spirit to forgive sins. Therefore, those who accept their mission will gain the experience of their sins being forgiven, and those who do not receive them will not be forgiven of their sins.

Whoever sees the Risen Christ receives these three gifts, that is, they receive peace, transcending death, thereby becoming a beneficial person in society and throughout the world. When they receive the apostolic office, that is, the priesthood of Christ, through the Church, then they benefit people in various ways by the forgiveness of their sins.

In His second appearance after eight days, in the presence of the Apostle Thomas, Christ showed His philanthropy and His love, having accepted being touched by Thomas, and of course he went on to grant great faith that is the fruit of the experience of the Resurrection. In the teachings of our Fathers, Thomas was not an unfaithful Apostle, as we understand and mean by unfaithful, but he wanted to move from faith by hearing to faith by vision. Faith by hearing is belief associated with information that others give us. The disciples assured the Apostle Thomas that they had seen Christ, but this faith was not enough for him, since he wanted to go on to faith by vision, he wanted to see Christ personally. Christ therefore let him be catechized for a whole week, and then He appeared to give him faith by vision. Then Thomas said, "My Lord and my God."

The Resurrection of Christ, my beloved brethren, which we celebrate every Sunday, is the fullness of life, it is the greatest gift one can obtain in their life. It is an initiation into a mystery, which is at the same time a mystery of the regeneration of our existence. Such alteration creates peace, faith and joy within all of us. God's economy and love, however, makes us gradually become initiated into this event perhaps because we could not otherwise take it. We accept the words of the eyewitnesses of the Resurrection of Christ, we remain in it, and then we can gain a personal experience of the Resurrection. Our church attendance every Sunday and hearing the words of modern apostles will give us the certainty of the existence of the resurrected Christ. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Having, you see, cast out the fear and distress that was agitating their soul; by what follows He encourages them again, casting out fear by fear; and not by fear only, but also by the hope of great prizes; and He threatens with much authority, in both ways urging them to speak boldly for the truth; and says further, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, I will also confess before my Father who is

in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, I will also deny before my Father who is in Heaven.” (Mat. 10:32-33) Thus he urges them not from the good things only, but also from the opposites; and He concludes with the dismal part.

But why is He not satisfied with the faith in the mind, but requires also the confession with the mouth? To train us up to boldness in speech, and a more abundant love and determination, and to raise us on high. Wherefore also He addresses Himself to all. Nor does He at all apply this to the disciples only in person, for not them, but their disciples too, He is now rendering noble-hearted. Because he who has learned this lesson will not only teach with boldness, but will likewise suffer all things easily, and with ready mind. This at any rate brought over many to the apostles, even their belief in this word. Because both in the punishment the infliction is heavier, and in the good things the recompense greater. I mean, whereas he who does right has the advantage in time, and the delay of the penalty is counted for gain by the sinner: He has introduced an equivalent, or rather a much greater advantage, the increase of the recompenses. “Do you have the advantage,” He says, “by having first confessed me here? I also will have the advantage of you by giving you greater things, and unspeakably greater; for I will confess you there.” Do you see that both the good things and the evil things are there to be dispensed? Why then be in a hurry, and why seek your rewards here, for you are “saved by hope?” Wherefore, whether you have done anything good, and not received its recompense here, do not be troubled (for with increase, in the time to come, the reward thereof awaits you): or whether you have done any evil, and not paid the penalty, do not be at ease; for vengeance will receive you there, if you do not turn and amend your ways.

But if you do not believe it, from the things here form your conjecture about things to come. Why, if in the season of the conflicts those who confess are so glorious, imagine what they will be in the season of the crowns. If the enemies here applaud, how shall that tenderest of all fathers fail to admire and proclaim you? Yea, then shall we have both our gifts for the good, and our punishments for the evil. So those who deny shall suffer harm, both here and there; here living with an evil conscience, though they were never to die, they shall be surely dead; and there, undergoing the last penalty: but the other sort will profit both here and there, both here making a gain of their death, and in this way becoming more glorious than the living, and there enjoying those unspeakable blessings.

God then is in no wise prompt to punish only, but also to confer benefits; and for this last more than for the first. But why hath He put the reward once only, the punishment twice? He knows that this would be more apt to correct us....

“He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.” (Mat. 37-38)

Do you see a teacher’s dignity? Do you see how He signifies himself a true Son of Him Who begot Him, commanding us to let go all things beneath, and to take in preference the love of Him? “And why speak do I speak,” He says, “of friends and kinsmen? Even if it is your own life which you prefer to my love, your place is far from my disciples.” What then? Are not these things contrary to the Old Testament? Far from it; rather, they are very much in harmony therewith. For there too He commands not only to hate the worshipers of idols, but even to stone them; and in Deuteronomy again, admiring these, He says, “Who said unto his father, and to his mother, I have not seen you; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and his own sons he disowned: he kept Your oracles.” And if Paul gives many directions touching parents, commanding us to obey them in all things, do not marvel; for he only directs us to obey those things which do not hinder godliness. For indeed it is a sacred duty to render them all other honors: but when they demand more than is due, one ought not to obey.

Then lest they should be indignant, or count it hard, see which way He makes His argument tend: in that having said, “Who does not his father and mother,” He adds, “and his own life.” For why do you speak to me of parents, He says, and brothers, and sisters, and wife? Nothing is nearer than the life to any man: yet if do not hate this also, you must bear in all things the opposite lot of him who loves me. And not even simply to hate it was His command, but so as to expose it to war, and to battles, and to slaughters, and blood. “For he does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” Thus He said not merely that we must stand against death, but also against a violent death; and not violent only, but ignominious too....

“Then Peter answered and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed You; what shall we have therefore?”

ALL which? O blessed Peter; the rod? the net? the boat? the craft? These things you tell me of, as all? Yes, he says, but not for display do I say these things, but in order that by this question I may bring in the multitude of the poor. For since the Lord had said, “If you will be perfect, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven;” lest any one of the poor should say, What then? if I have no possessions, can I not be perfect? Peter asks, that you, the poor man, may learn, that you are made in no respect inferior by this: Peter asks, that you may not learn from Peter and doubt (for indeed he was imperfect as yet, and void of the Spirit), but that, having received the declaration from Peter’s Master, you may be confident.

For like as we do (we make things our own often when speaking of the concerns of others), so did the apostle, when he put to Him this question in behalf of all the world. Since that at least he knew with certainty his own portion, is manifest from what had been said before; for he that had already received the keys of the Heavens, much more might feel confidence about the things hereafter.

But mark also how exactly his reply is according to Christ's demand. For He had required of the rich man these two things, to give that he had to the poor, and to follow Him. Wherefore he also expresses these two things, to forsake, and to follow. "For behold we have forsaken all," saith he, "and have followed You." For the forsaking was done for the sake of following, and the following was rendered easier by the forsaking, and made them feel confidence and joy touching the forsaking.

What then does He say? "Amen, I say to you, those who have followed me, that in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." What then, one may say, shall Judas sit there? By no means. How, then, does He say, "You shall sit on twelve thrones?" how shall the terms of the promise be fulfilled?

Hear how, and on what principle. There is a law ordained of God, recited by Jeremiah, the prophet to the Jews, and in these words: "At some time I shall speak a sentence concerning a nation and kingdom, to pluck up and destroy; if that nation turns from their evil deeds, I also will repent of the evils which I thought to do to them. And at some time I shall speak concerning a nation and kingdom to build and to plant it; and if they do evil in my sight, that they do not obey my voice, I also will repent of the good which I said I would do to them." For though I spake of building up, should they show themselves unworthy of the promise, I will no longer do it. This sort of thing was done with respect to man upon his creation, "For the dread of you," it is said, "and the fear of you shall be on the wild beasts," and it did not come to pass, for he proved himself unworthy of the sovereignty, even as did Judas also.

For in order that neither at the denunciations of punishment any men should despair and become more hardened, nor by the promises of good things be rendered causelessly more remiss, He remedies both these evils, by that which I have before mentioned, saying in this way: Though I should threaten, do not despair; for you are able to repent, and to reverse the denunciation, like the Ninevites. Though I should promise any good thing, do not grow remiss because of the promise. For should you appear unworthy, the fact of my having promised will not advantage you, but will rather bring punishment. For I promise you being worthy.

Therefore even then in His discourse with His disciples He did not promise to them simply, for neither did He say, “you,” only, but added, “who have followed me,” that He might both cast out Judas, and draw towards Him those that should come afterwards. For neither to them only was it said, nor to Judas any more, when he had become unworthy.

Now to the disciples He promised things to come, saying, “you shall sit on twelve thrones,” for they were now of a higher stamp, and sought after none of the things of the present world, but to the rest He promises also what are here.

For “every one,” He says, “who has forsaken brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, or house, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold in this world, and shall inherit eternal life.”

For lest any after having heard the word “you,” should suppose this a thing peculiar to the disciples (I mean now the enjoying the greatest and first honors in the things to come), He extended the word, and spread the promise over the whole earth, and from the things present establishes the things to come also. And to the disciples also at the beginning, when they were in a more imperfect state, He reasoned from the things present. For when He drew them from the sea, and took them from their trade, and commanded them to forsake the ships, He did not make mention of Heaven, nor of thrones, but of the things here, saying, “I will make you fishers of men;” but when He had wrought them to be of higher views, then after that He discourses of the things to come also.

2. But what is, “Judging the twelve tribes of Israel?” This is, “condemning them.” For they are not surely to sit as judges, but like as He said the Queen of the South should condemn that generation, and the Ninevites shall condemn them; so now these also. Therefore He did not say the nations, and the world, but the tribes of Israel. For since both the Jews alike and the apostles had been brought up under the same laws, and customs, and polity; when the Jews said, that for this cause they could not believe in Christ, because the law forbade to receive His commandments, by bringing forward these men, who had received the same law, and yet had believed, He condemns all those; like as even already He had said, “therefore they shall be your judges.”

And what great thing does He promise them, it may be said, if what the Ninevites have and the Queen of the South, this these are to have also? In the first place He had promised them many other things before this, and after this promises them, and this alone is not their reward.

And besides even in this He intimated by the way something more than these things. For of those He simply said, The men of Nineveh shall rise up and condemn this generation,” and, “The Queen of the South shall condemn it;” but

concerning these, not merely thus, but how? “When the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, then shall you also sit upon twelve thrones,” He says, declaring that they also shall reign with Him and partake of that glory. “For if we suffer,” it is said, “we shall also reign with Him.” For neither do the thrones signify a sitting (in judgment), for He alone is the One Who shall sit and judge, but He intimated honor and glory unspeakable by the thrones.

To these then He spoke of these things, but to all the rest of eternal life and an hundredfold here. But if to the rest, much more to these too, both these things, and the things in this life. And this surely came to pass; for when they had left a fishing rod and a net, they possessed with authority the substances of all, the prices of the houses and the lands, and the very bodies of the believers. For often did they choose even to be slain for their sake, as Paul also bears witness to many, when he saith, “If it had been possible you would have plucked out your eyes, and given them to me.” But when He says, “Everyone who has forsaken wife,” He does not this, for marriages to be broken asunder for nought, but as He says concerning one’s life, “He who loses his life for my sake shall find it,” not that we should destroy ourselves, neither that while yet here we should part it from the body, but that we should prefer godliness to all things; this too He says with respect to wife and brethren. But He seems to me here to intimate also the persecutions. For since there were many instances both of fathers urging their sons to ungodliness, and wives their husbands; when they command these things, He says, let them be neither wives nor parents, even as Paul likewise said, “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart.”

When He had then raised the spirit of all, and had persuaded them to feel confidence both with respect to themselves and to all the world, He added, that “Many who were first shall be last, and last first.” But although this be spoken without distinction concerning many others likewise, it is spoken also concerning these men and concerning the Pharisees who did not believe, even as before also He had said, “Many shall come from east and west and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out.”

– St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew*

The Third Ecumenical Synod (431 A.D.)

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

Since the first two Ecumenical Synods were convened, beloved brethren, and drafted the Symbol of Faith and normally the issues should have ended, but various philosophical theologians raised various theological issues and therefore this Synod took place in Ephesus in 431 AD by decision of Emperor Theodosius the Younger, with Saint Cyril of Alexandria as President of the Synod.

This Synod dealt with the heresy of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who argued that the Panagia should not be called Theotokos, but Christotokos, considering that the term Theotokos, like the phrase "Mother of God", have pagan origins. Therefore he would say that the Virgin Mary gave birth to the human Christ, while God "came forth from", "passed through" or "went through" her, but He was not born from her as God. Nestorius said that it is wrong to say the Panagia is Theotokos, because she is not a goddess who gave birth to God.

This heretical view of the Panagia came from his heretical view of Christ. Nestorius, following other earlier heretics, was unable to accept that Christ is God and man, while being Himself one. He considered that the union of the two essences-hypostases is "relative" and not real, as two planks are joined together and separated, or, as it happens according with the example of two spouses or two friends. Thus, he considered that the Son of God was one person, and the son of the Virgin was another. This had serious Christological consequences, for thus Christ is merely a godly man, as the Prophets were, and not God. Therefore it was a man who suffered and ascended and is worshiped and glorified with God the Word, among other things. Saint Cyril of Alexandria recognized this heretical deviation from the revealed truth, realized the terrible consequences of such a point of view and resisted with force, refuting these points of view. The Third Ecumenical Synod condemned these views as heretical, and also condemned Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who was absent from the Synod because he refused to appear, despite the fact that he had been summoned three times.

Two years later, and specifically in 433 AD, an orthodox teaching on these matters was agreed between Saint Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch. It is the so-called "Ekthesis of Reconciliation", in which the dogmatic decision on this issue was set, so that an agreement could be reached. Through the "Ekthesis" it was confessed that the One Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is perfect God and perfect man, was born of the Father before all the ages according to His Divinity, and in the latter days was born of the Virgin Mary for our salvation according to His humanity; is homoousios with the Father according to the Deity and homoousios with us according to humanity. We confess one Christ, one God, one Lord, in whom a union of two natures took place, and in the sense of the unmixed union we confess the Holy Virgin Theotokos.

The important thing is that with this decision the confession in the God-man Christ and the Most Holy Theotokos was ensured, who as Virgin did not give birth to a simple man, but to the Word of God, and therefore Christ is the God-man, who saves mankind. This is what the Fathers said, because they relied on the revelation of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels, but also on the experience of the Prophets and Apostles. The Disciples of Christ sometimes were found worthy to see the

glory of the Deity of Christ, which protruded from His body; they saw the risen and ascended to heaven Christ; the Protomartyr Stephen saw the glory of God and "Jesus standing at His right hand", he saw Christ standing in the glory of His Divinity; the Apostle Paul saw Christ in the Light, which he considered brighter than the created light of the Sun, and he knew this truth empirically.

This was stated in the decisions of the Third Ecumenical Synod and in the so-called "Ekthesis" between Saint Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch. This is the faith of the Orthodox Church. This can be seen in the doctrine, but mainly in the experience of the glory of the Deity of Christ. From then on, the teaching of the Church regarding the Most Holy Theotokos began to develop further. What the Church lived was formulated in an orthodox manner and all the Feasts of the Mother of God were successively determined. This truth is the glory of the Church and our salvation. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

Also Commemorated Today: Apostle Barnabas of the LXX

Holy Apostle Barnabas of the Seventy was born on the island of Cyprus into the family of the tribe of Levi, and he was named Joseph. He received his education at Jerusalem, being raised with his friend and fellow student Saul (the future Apostle Paul) under the renowned teacher of the Law, Gamaliel. Joseph was pious, he frequented the Temple, he strictly observed the fasts and avoided youthful distractions. During this time period our Lord Jesus Christ began His public ministry. Seeing the Lord and hearing His Divine Words, Joseph believed in Him as the Messiah. Filled with ardent love for the Savior, he followed Him. The Lord chose him to be one of His Seventy Apostles. The other Apostles called him Barnabas, which means "son of consolation." After the Ascension of the Lord to Heaven, Barnabas sold land belonging to him near Jerusalem and he brought the money to the feet of the Apostles, leaving nothing for himself (Acts 4:36-37).

When Saul arrived in Jerusalem after his conversion and sought to join the followers of Christ, everyone there was afraid of him since he had persecuted the Church only a short while before. Barnabas, however, came with him to the Apostles and reported how the Lord had appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:26-28).

Saint Barnabas went to Antioch to encourage the believers, "Having come and having seen the grace of God, he rejoiced and he urged all to cleave to the Lord with sincerity of heart" (Acts 11:23). Then he went to Tarsus, and brought the Apostle Paul to Antioch, where for about a year they taught the people. It was here that the disciples first began to be called Christians (Acts 11:26). With the onset of famine, and taking along generous alms, Paul and Barnabas returned to Jerusalem. When King Herod killed Saint James the son of Zebedee, and had the Apostle

Peter put under guard in prison to please the Jews, Saints Barnabas and Paul and Peter were led out of the prison by an angel of the Lord.

They hid out at the house of Barnabas' aunt Maria. Later, when the persecution had quieted down, they returned to Antioch, taking with them Maria's son John, surnamed Mark. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the prophets and teachers there imposed hands upon Barnabas and Paul, and sent them off to do the work to which the Lord had called them (Acts 13:2-3). Arriving in Seleucia, they sailed off to Cyprus and in the city of Salamis they preached the Word of God in the Jewish synagogues.

On Paphos they came across a sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was close with the proconsul Sergius. Wishing to hear the Word of God, the proconsul invited the saints to come to him. The sorcerer attempted to sway the proconsul from the Faith, but the Apostle Paul denounced the sorcerer, who through his words suddenly fell blind. The proconsul believed in Christ (Acts 13:6-12).

From Paphos Barnabas and Paul set sail for Pergamum of Pamphylia, and then they preached to the Jews and the Gentiles at Pisidian Antioch and throughout all that region. The Jews rioted and expelled Paul and Barnabas. The saints arrived in Iconium, but learning that the Jews wanted to stone them, they withdrew to Lystra and Derben. There the Apostle Paul healed a man, crippled in the legs from birth. The people assumed them to be the gods Zeus and Hermes and wanted to offer them sacrifice. The saints just barely persuaded them not to do this (Acts 14:8-18).

When the question arose whether those converted from the Gentiles should accept circumcision, Barnabas and Paul went to Jerusalem. There they were warmly received by the Apostles and elders. The preachers related "what God had wrought with them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27).

After long deliberations the Apostles collectively resolved not to impose any sort of burden upon Gentile Christians except what was necessary: to refrain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood (Acts 15:19-20). Letters were sent with Barnabas and Paul, and they again preached at Antioch, and after a certain while they decided to visit the other cities where they had visited earlier. Saint Barnabas wanted to take Mark along with him, but Saint Paul did not want to, since earlier he had left them. A quarrel arose, and they separated. Paul took Silas with him and went to Syria and Cilicia, while Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus (Acts 15:36-41).

Having multiplied the number of believers, Saint Barnabas traveled to Rome, where he was perhaps the first to preach Christ.

Saint Barnabas founded the episcopal see at Mediolanum (now Milan), and upon his return to Cyprus he continued to preach about Christ the Savior. Then the enraged Jews incited the pagans against Barnabas, and they led him out beyond the city and stoned him, and then built a fire to burn the body. Later on, having come upon this spot, Mark took up the unharmed body of Saint Barnabas and buried it in a cave, placing upon the saint's bosom, in accord with his final wishes, the Gospel of Matthew which he had copied in his own hand.

Saint Barnabas died in about the year 62, at age seventy-six. In time, the burial spot was forgotten, but numerous signs took place at this spot. In the year 448, during the time of the emperor Zeno, Saint Barnabas appeared three times in a dream to Archbishop Anthimus of Cyprus and indicated the place where his relics were buried. Starting to dig at the indicated spot, Christians found the incorrupt body of the saint, and upon his chest was the Holy Gospel.

It was during this time that the Church of Cyprus began to be regarded as Apostolic in origin, and received the right of choosing its head. Thus Saint Barnabas defended Cyprus against the pretensions of the opponent of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, the heretic surnamed Knapheios, who had usurped the patriarchal throne at Antioch and tried to gain dominion over the Church of Cyprus. *(from oca.org)*

Hieromartyr Metrophanes of Beijing

On the great and saving day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, as Christ had promised (John 16:7-15). The unlearned fishermen were made wise by divine grace, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ and teaching with authority. Most of them (except for Saint John the Theologian) sealed their labors with their own blood. This was the beginning of the Church's mission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18), which continues even to the present day.

In 1685, the Russian Orthodox Church established an Orthodox mission in Peking (now Beijing). For more than two hundred years, some of the Chinese converted to Christianity, and married Russian spouses.

Because of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, against the foreign powers occupying China, these Chinese Christians were given the choice of renouncing Christianity, or being tortured and killed. Two hundred and twenty-two members of the Peking Mission, led by their priest, Father Metrophanes Chang (Chang Tzi-tzung) refused to deny Christ, and received incorruptible crowns of glory.

Among these Holy New Martyrs are Saint Metrophanes, his wife Tatiana, his sons John and Isaiah, Isaiah's fiancée Maria; the church school teachers Paul Wang and Ia Wen; and many others. *(from oca.org)*

Also Commemorated Today

Holy Apostle [Bartholomew](#) (1st c.).

Venerable [Barnabas](#), abbot of Vetluga (1445).

Uncovering of the relics (1572) of Ven. [Ephraim](#), abbot of New Torzhok (1053).

Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos "[It is Truly Meet](#)" ("Axion Estin") (10th c.).

Translation of the relics of Ven. [Arcadius](#), monk of Vyazma & New Torzhok (1077).

St. Niphont patriarch of Constantinople (*Romania*).

St. [Barnabus](#) of Basa near Limasol in Cyprus (*Greek*).

Commemoration of the appearance of the Archangel [Gabriel](#) (10th c.) to a monk on Mt. Athos, and the revelation of the hymn "It Is Truly Meet" (Axion Estin).

Martyr [Theopemptus](#) and four others (*Greek*).

St. [Luke](#) the Blessed Surgeon, Archbishop of Simferopol and Crimea (1961)

St. [Blitharius](#) of Champagne (7th c.)

New Martyr [Zafeirios](#) of Halkidiki (c. 1821)

Martyrs Felix and Fortunatus of Aquileia (c. 296)

St. Herebald, hermit of Bretagne (8th c)

St. Tochumbra, virgin of Kilmore (Ireland) (unk)

St. Tochumra, virgin of Tuam (Killfenora) (Ireland)(unk)

Fast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (June 20-28)

The Podvig of the Apostles' Fast is less strict than during Great Lent: We abstain from eating meat and dairy products throughout the Fast. The Church *ustav* also provides that, on **Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays** during the Apostles' Fast, we **abstain from consuming fish, wine and oil**; on the other days of the week, **Tuesday and Thursday**, we **abstain from eating fish**. Eating **fish is permitted on Saturdays and Sundays**, on days commemorating certain great Saints, and **on the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (24 June)**. The monastic originators (hence the extension of strict fasting to Mondays) of these rules also prescribed 100 prostrations on weekdays during the Fast.

Teachings of St. Seraphim of Sarov on Fasting

Fasting consists not just of eating rarely, but also of eating little. And not just in eating only one meal, but in not eating much. Foolish is the faster who waits for a specific time [to eat a meal], but then at the time of the meal is completely consumed, body and mind, with insatiable eating.

In proportion to how the body of the faster becomes thin and light, so the spiritual life attains perfection and reveals itself in wonderful ways. Then the soul acts as if in an incorporeal body. Carnal feelings are shut off, and the spirit,

released from the world, ascends to heaven and completely immerses itself in contemplation of the spiritual world.

Every day one should partake of just enough food to permit the body, being fortified, to be a friend and helper to the soul in performing the virtues. Otherwise, with the body exhausted, the soul may also weaken. (*adapted from stjohndc.org*)

Social Team for June 18

Team 2 – Dewey, Carrie LaMere, Heather Shear, Ezra Dotson, Connell. Thank you!

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

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

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

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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 & Marlana 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, 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.)