

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: Vespers 5 PM

Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10 AM

July 23, 2023 – 7th Sunday After Pentecost

Martyrs Trophimus, Theophilus and Companions in Lycia

In the heavens Theophilus and Trophimus found nourishment and the friendship of God. Trophimus had thirteen men as companions; as fellow athletes they were beheaded at the same time.

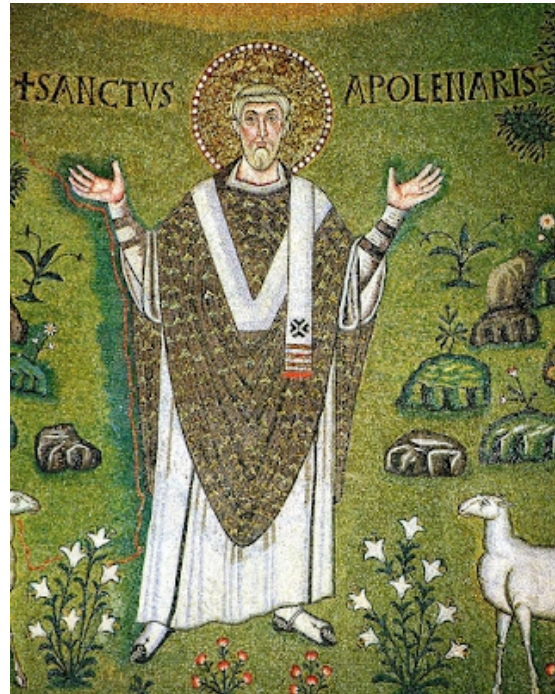
These saints contested during the reign of Diocletian in the year 308. Because they could not be persuaded to deny Christ, their bodies were lacerated and they were stoned. Then their legs were beaten, and they were cast into fire. Having been kept from harm, they were finally beheaded, and the renowned ones received crowns of martyrdom. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

Hieromartyr Apollinaris, Bishop of Ravenna

Apollinaris was cut down; Vitale hastened at once to arrive.

Saint Apollinaris was a disciple of the Apostle Peter, whom he followed from Antioch to Rome sometime during the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius (41-54). Saint Peter appointed Apollinaris as Bishop of Ravenna. Arriving in Ravenna as a stranger, Apollinaris asked shelter of a local inhabitant, the soldier Irenaeus, and during their conversation he revealed the purpose for which he had come.

Irenaeus had a blind son, whom Apollinaris healed, after he had prayed to the Lord. The soldier Irenaeus and his family were the first people in Ravenna to



believe in Christ. The Saint stayed at the house of Irenaeus and preached about Christ to everyone who wished to hear his words. One of the miracles that Saint Apollinaris performed was the healing of Thekla, the incurably sick wife of the tribune. Through the prayers of the Saint, she got up from her bed completely healthy. Not only did she believe in Christ, but so did her husband the tribune. In their house Apollinaris set up a small church, where he celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Saint Apollinaris ordained two presbyters, Aderetus and Calocyrus, and also two deacons for the newly-baptized people of Ravenna.

Saint Apollinaris labored with great zeal, preaching the gospel at Ravenna for twelve years, and the number of Christians steadily increased. Pagan priests complained about the Bishop to the governor Saturninus. The hierarch was brought to trial and subjected to grievous tortures. Thinking that he had died, the torturers took him out of the city to the seacoast and threw him into the water. The Saint, however, was still alive. A certain pious Christian widow helped him and gave him shelter in her home. Saint Apollinaris stayed with her for six months, and secretly continued to preach about Christ. The Saint's whereabouts became known when he restored the power of speech to an illustrious resident of the city named Boniface, whose wife had requested the Saint to help her husband.

After this miracle many pagans were converted to Christ, and once again Apollinaris was brought to trial and tortured. His bare feet were placed on red-hot coals. They expelled him from the city a second time, but the Lord again kept him alive. He did not cease preaching until he left the city. For a certain time Apollinaris found himself elsewhere in Italy, where he continued to preach the gospel as before. Returning to his flock in Ravenna, Apollinaris went on trial yet again and was sentenced to banishment.

In heavy fetters, he was placed on a ship bound for Illyrica and the Danube River. Two soldiers were responsible for escorting him to his place of exile. Three of the clergy voluntarily followed their bishop into exile. Along the way the vessel was wrecked and everyone drowned, except for Apollinaris, his clergy and the two soldiers. The soldiers, listening to Apollinaris, believed in the Lord and were baptized. Not finding any shelter, the travelers came to Moisia in Thrace, where Saint Apollinaris healed a certain illustrious inhabitant from leprosy. Both he and his companions were given shelter at the man's home. In this land Apollinaris preached tirelessly about Christ and he converted many of the pagans to Christianity, for which he was subjected to persecution by the unbelievers. They beat the Saint mercilessly, then they sent him back to Italy aboard a ship.

After a three year absence, Apollinaris returned to Ravenna and was joyfully received by his flock. The pagans, however, entered the church where the Saint was serving the Divine Liturgy, scattered those at prayer, and dragged the Bishop

before the idolatrous priests at the pagan temple of Apollo. The idol fell and shattered to pieces just as the Bishop was brought in. The pagan priests brought Saint Apollinaris to Taurus, the new governor of the district for trial. Apollinaris performed a new miracle, healing the son of the governor, who had been blind from birth. In gratitude for the healing of his son, Taurus tried to protect Apollinaris from the angry crowd. He sent him to his own estate outside the city. Although Taurus's wife and son were baptized, he feared the anger of the emperor, and did not receive Baptism. However, he was filled with gratitude and love toward his benefactor.

Saint Apollinaris lived for five years at Taurus's estate and preached without hindrance. During this time pagan priests sent letters of denunciation to Emperor Vespasian requesting a sentence of death or exile for the Christian "sorcerer" Apollinaris. But the emperor told the pagan priests that the gods were sufficiently powerful to take revenge for themselves, if they felt insulted. All the wrath of the pagans fell upon Saint Apollinaris: they seized him and beat him fiercely as he was leaving the city for a nearby settlement. Christians found him barely alive and took him to the settlement, where he lived for seven days. During his final illness the Saint did not cease to teach his flock. He predicted that after the persecutions ended, Christians would enter upon better times when they could openly and freely confess their faith. After bestowing his archpastoral blessing upon those present, the hieromartyr Apollinaris fell asleep in the Lord. Saint Apollinaris was Bishop of Ravenna for twenty-eight years, and he reposed in the year 75.

Saint Peter Chrysologus, the most illustrious among his successors, has left us a sermon (128) in honor of our Saint, in which he often styles him a martyr; but adds, that though he frequently spilt portions of his blood for the faith, and ardently desired to lay down his life for Christ, yet God preserved him a long time to his church, and did not suffer the persecutors to take away his life. So he seems to have only been a martyr by the torments he endured for Christ, which he survived at least some days.

His body lay first at Classis, four miles from Ravenna, a kind of suburb to that city, and its seaport, till it was choked up by the sands. In the year 549 his relics were removed into a more secret vault in the same church, as an inscription still extant there testifies. Saint Fortunatus exhorted his friends to make pilgrimages to his tomb, and Saint Gregory the Great ordered parties in doubtful suits at law to be sworn before it. Pope Honorius built a church under his name in Rome about the year 630. He occurs in all Martyrologies, and the high veneration which the Church paid early to his memory is a sufficient testimony of his eminent sanctity and apostolic spirit. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

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

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

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

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

Homilies on the Divine Liturgy: The Readings

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

After the Small Entrance, during the Divine Liturgy, the Trisagion Hymn and the two readings are read, namely the Apostolic and the Gospel readings. The Apostle is read by the Reader, who has the special blessing from the Bishop to do this work, because in the Church everything is done in the appropriate and blessed way, and the Gospel reading is read by the Deacon from a special place, which is called the Pulpit, or by the Priest from the Beautiful Gate.

First, we need to make a comment on the term "readings". The word "reading" means something that is read, and not chanted. Chanting is one thing while reading is another. Some pieces are chanted and others are recited, that is, read. But even this reading cannot be done in a secular way, that is, to read as one recites a poem and to put ones own emotional world into it. In the Divine Liturgy we do not try to

present our own feelings. That is why the reading of the Apostolic and Gospel readings is described as a "melodic reading". It is reading without being chanted, but it is melodic, that is, it is said in a way that resembles chanting. This means that we use a way of chanting, which moves on a specific note with minimal changes, so that there is neither reading nor chanting. That is why the Priest after the Apostolic reading says "peace to you the reader" and not "peace to you the chanter".

The Apostolic reading refers to the Acts of the Apostles during the period of the Pentecostarion, and throughout the rest of the year to the Epistles of the Apostles which they sent to various Churches. The Apostles are the ones who received the command from Christ to preach the gospel throughout creation. They themselves reached theosis and then their words describe this blessed state, but also the method they used. They were not some good people, some theologians who graduated from a University, but real theologians of the Church, who attained deification and sanctification. The apostolic texts are theological and not merely moral.

The Gospel reading is the word of Christ, it refers either to a miracle that Christ did, or to a parable that Christ said, or to a teaching that Christ said. They also describe what Christ suffered. When one reads carefully the words of Christ and has purified senses, then one can perceive the energy that comes from His words. Because the words of Christ are not just anthropocentric words, but they are words of life and salvation, they are the energy of God. That is why even before the Gospel, the priest reads a special prayer, through which he asks God to send His Grace and energy so that we can understand the evangelical words and then, of course, to give us the fear that after we trample on our carnal desires we will live the spiritual state.

The reading of the Apostolic and especially the Gospel passages must be done in order that they should change our lives, to prepare us for the participation in the great gifts. Because the word of God purifies our hearts to receive greater gifts, to be united with Christ.

And of course, we must say that the analysis of the words of Christ and the Apostles must be done through the spirit of the Church, as expressed by the Holy Fathers of the Church. Because it is a great sin when with the sermon the Clergyman alters this spiritual word and instead of raising the Christians to the level of theology, he lowers them to the level of his own passions.

Let us study Holy Scripture, let us listen carefully to the Apostolic and Gospel readings in order to be found worthy of communion with Christ. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Blessed Apollinaris, the first in the priesthood, alone decorated this Ravennese church with the domestic and renowned honor of martyrdom. Rightfully Apollinaris, for according to the mandate of his God he gave up his soul that he might find it in everlasting life. The blessed man who so completed the race guarded the faith, so that truly he might be found first of the believers in his location.

Neither let anyone believe him to be less of a confessor than a martyr in name, whom one saw daily and in many ways to be returned to the contest by the will of God. Hear Paul saying: *I die daily*. To die once is very little for him who is able to bring to his king glorious victory from enemies frequently. Not so much death, but rather faith and devotion makes a martyr. And as it is a thing of manliness [virtutis] in battle, in conflict, to suffer for love of the king, so it is a thing of perfect manliness to do and to complete struggles for a long time.

It did not so persecute the martyr, for it did not immediately bring death; but it proved the martyr, for it did not pull out faith; it injected the weapons which it was able to, and the crafty enemy examined all types of his weapons: he however was not able to move the mind of the most strong leader or to violate constancy.

It is the greatest thing, brethren, to condemn the present life, if necessary, for the Lord, but it is also glorious to despise and trample with life the world with its prince.

Christ made haste to the martyr; the martyr made haste to his king. We have well said he made haste, just as that [saying] of the prophet: *Rise up to meet me, and see*. [Psalm 58:6] But that the Holy Church might retain her champion for herself, she vehemently ran to meet Christ, that she might reserve a crown of justice to the conqueror and give to herself the present of her warrior in time. The confessor frequently shed his blood, and by his wounds, by the faith of his mind, he has testified the author. Receiving heaven, he despised flesh and earth. However he conquered, he held, and from his desire to be delayed, the still soft infancy of the Church obtained a martyr. I say infancy, brethren, which always obtains the whole, which always contends more with tears than with reasoning of force. For not so much the countenance and sweat of strong men as rather the tears of children are able, for there bodies, here hearts are shattered; there judgments of mind are scarcely moved, here total love descends inclined.

And what more, brethren? Holy mother the Church acted, acted, so that nowhere she might be separated from her bishop. Behold he lives, behold as a good shepherd he stands in the middle of his flock. Not at any time is the spirit

separated, which by body preceded to the time; I say preceded with respect to disposition [habitu], the other rests among us in that habitation of his body.

The devil is extinguished, the persecutor lies dead. Behold he lives and reigns, who for his king desired to be killed, who lives and reigns with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost God, through all ages of ages.

– St. Peter Chrysologus, *Homily 128*

Saint Anna of Leukadio

Saint Anna (Susanna) of Leukadio (or Leukati) was born in Constantinople in 840 during the reign of Emperor Theophilos the iconoclast (829-842), and was the daughter of a wealthy and distinguished family. She had many physical and spiritual gifts because she was raised “in the discipline and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

After the death of her parents, she inherited her father’s estate, which she shared with the poor. This beautiful young woman was loved by a certain Hagarene¹ who lived in Constantinople and asked her to marry him, and he obtained the consent of Emperor Basil I the Macedonian. Anna turned down the proposal, since she did not wish to marry him. The Hagarene tormented her and declared that he would have her as his wife, even if she did not wish it. The Saint tearfully entreated God to deliver her from this temptation. Indeed, the compassionate and righteous God heard her prayers. Punished for his impudence, the Hagarene was struck down by divine judgment and he died.

Around 896 Anna went to a certain church dedicated to the Mother of God in Constantinople. There she devoted herself to fasting, vigil, and prayer. For fifty years she lived in this angelic way. After a slight illness, she delivered her blessed soul to God. Years after her burial, her relics were found to be whole, incorrupt, and emitting a divine fragrance. By her grace-filled relics, demons were cast out, the blind received their sight, and the lame walked. So, in this manner, God glorifies those who glorify Him.

¹ The Moslems were regarded as descendants of Hagar, Abraham's concubine (see Genesis, chapter 16). (from *oca.org*)

Also Commemorated Today

["Pochaev"](#) (1675) Icon of the Mother of God.

["Joy of All That Sorrow"](#) Icon of the Mother of God

Martyr [Vitale](#) of Ravenna (before 317)

New Hieromartyr Michael priest and Martyr [Andrew](#) (1938).

Righteous Anna (Hannah), mother of the Prophet Samuel.

Translation of the Relics of St. Herman (Germanus), Archbishop of Kazan.
250 [martyrs](#) killed by Bulgarians (802-811) (*Greek*).
Seven [Martyrs](#) of Carthage (*Greek*).
New Hieromartyr Nectarius (Trezvinsky), bishop of Yaransk.
++Repose of St. John Cassian the Roman, abbot, of Marseilles (435).
St. Theodore of Sanaskar (Glorification 2001)
Righteous [Theodore](#) (Ushakov), Admiral of the Russian Navy (1817)
St. [Conan](#) of Cornwall, companion of St. Petroc (6th c.)
+-St. [Thyrsos](#), Bishop of Karpasia in Cyprus
+-Ven. [Pelagia](#) of Tinos (1834)
Martyrs [Apollonius](#) and Eugene of Rome (unk)
St. [Liborius](#), Bishop of Le Mans (390)
Hermit-martyrs [Rasyphus](#) and Ravennus of Macé (France) (5th c.)
Ven. [Romula](#), [Redempta](#) and [Herundo](#) of Rome (c. 580)
Ven. [Valerian](#) of Lérins, bishop of Cimeiz (France)(c. 460)
St. [Vitalian](#), Pope of Rome (672)

Social Team for July 30

Team 2 – Dewey, Carrie LaMere, Larry Connell. Thank you!

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri & Mt. Kenya, Bennett family, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Roberta Corson, Jon Church, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, Helen P. Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Helen, Brian, Luke and Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, 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.)