

# 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 30, 2023 – 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**

**Holy Apostles Silas, Silouan, Epainetos, Crescens  
and Andronikos of the LXX**

By His Eminence Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos  
and Agiou Vlasίου

Last Sunday, beloved brethren, we celebrated the Prophet Ezekiel, and today we celebrate some Apostles of the Seventy, namely Silas, Silouan, Epainetos, Crescens and Andronikos.

Christ, apart from the narrow circle of His disciples, also had a wider circle, the Seventy, who He prepared for missionary work. Luke the Evangelist writes: "After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go" (Lk. 10:1). And further on he writes: "The seventy returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name' (Lk. 10:17).

Among these Seventy Apostles were the Holy Apostles we celebrate today. According to St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite,



Saint Silas was associated with the Apostle Paul and became the Bishop of Corinth, Saint Silouan became Bishop of Thessaloniki, Epainetos became Bishop of Carthage, and Saint Crescens became Bishop of Cartagena, which is the Cartagena of Spain. All four of these apostolic men struggled to spread the Christian faith and establish the Church, reposing venerably and led to their desired Lord. [St. Andronikos was bishop in Pannonia (modern Hungary) – Ed.]

The sacred hymnographer in the troparia he prepared mentions that these apostolic men were all-wise, having been illuminated by the lightning of the Spirit, and travelling throughout the entire earth, they illumined believers. Also, he uses the image of clouds, because these Saints were spiritual clouds who went to all the ends of the earth, dropping heavenly rain that soaked the souls of the faithful with Divine Grace, eliminating the weeds of atheism and making their souls fruitful.

These Holy Apostles proved to be "physicians of souls and saviors of the body", using the spiritual medicine of Divine Grace which heals also the illnesses of the body, and for those who are healthy in body, it is for the illnesses according to their soul.

Our Church is called Apostolic, as we confess in the Symbol of Faith, because it is based on the teaching and work of the Apostles, who were sent by Christ to the whole world to preach and to baptize. Successors of the Apostles were the Fathers, and successors of the Fathers were the Bishops throughout the ages, until today, who carry over to people the true faith, teaching and life of revealed truth. The Church is Apostolic because it is Patristic, for without the Fathers, who are the successors of the Holy Apostles, the apostolicity of the Church would not have survived. One reason the Orthodox Church is the eminent Apostolic Church, which preserves the truth, is because it is Patristic. And, of course, the Fathers are not confined to the first eight centuries of Christianity, as some claim, but they extend to all ages. Fathers of the Church are the sacred Photios, Saint Symeon the New Theologian, Saint Gregory Palamas, Saint Mark the Evgenikos, Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite, etc. Every age of ecclesiastical life is a patristic age.

In America there are many "churches" that all claim authenticity, and there are people looking to find the historic Church; the Church, that is, which preserves this revealed truth of faith and life. And many of them confess that this historic Church they found in the Orthodox Church, which is the Church of the Prophets, the Apostles, the Fathers, the Ecumenical Synods, the Venerable Ones and the Martyrs. That is, there is an uninterrupted succession of faith, ordination and life.

We should consider it an honor to belong to this Church and we can have communion with the Twelve and Seventy Apostles, as well as their successors.  
*(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

## **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 1:10-18 EOB**

Brethren, I beg you through the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you. Instead, may you be perfected together in the same mind and opinion. As it is, those who are from Chloe's household have informed me concerning you my brethren, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this: that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," "I follow Apollos," "I follow Kephas," or, "I follow Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one should say that I baptized you into my own name. (I also baptized the household of Stephanas; besides them, I do not know whether I baptized any other.) Indeed, Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Good News - not in wisdom of words, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are dying, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

## **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 14:14-22 EOB**

At that time, Jesus went out and saw that there was a great crowd. He had compassion on them and healed their sick. When evening came, his disciples came to him and said, "This place is deserted, and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." They replied, "We only have here five loaves and two fish!" Jesus said, "Bring them to me." Having instructed the crowds to sit down on the grass, he took the five loaves and the two fish. Looking up to heaven, a he blessed, broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples distributed it to the multitudes. And so, everyone ate and was satisfied. His disciples gathered up twelve baskets full of what remained left over from the broken pieces. Those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately after this, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and told them to go ahead of him to the other side, while he would send the crowds away.

## **Homilies on the Divine Liturgy: Catechumens & the Faithful**

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

The Divine Liturgy, which we are interpreting in these sermons, my beloved brethren, is divided into two basic parts. The first is the Liturgy of the Catechumens and the second is the Liturgy of the Faithful. From the beginning of the Divine Liturgy until the Gospel and the prayers that follow, the catechumens could also be present, that is, those who are preparing to be baptized, but when the deacon says, "As many of you as are catechumens depart; catechumens depart. As

many of you as are catechumens depart: let there be no catechumen. As many as are faithful, again and again, in peace let us entreat the Lord," then the catechumens leave and there remains until the end in the Divine Liturgy those who were baptized and therefore are Orthodox Christians.

Catechumens in the ancient Church were a class of people who were preparing for Holy Baptism and who not only were taught about God, but at the same time, with appropriate education, tried to purify their hearts from the passions, that is, to heal the passive soul. That is, they learned what sin is and how they can be freed from sin and united with Christ. The Catechumens, who were about to be baptized, were called illumined, because after a while they would receive the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the illumination of God.

The faithful were those who had been baptized, those who had been illumined, that is, those whose passive souls were cleansed of their passions and whose nous had received the energy of the Holy Spirit, and for this they had noetic-heart prayer. They had the preconditions to remain until the end of the Divine Liturgy and of course to commune of the immaculate mysteries, the Body and the Blood of Christ.

But even if some of the faithful had fallen into some sin, which meant that they lost the Grace of the Holy Spirit and ceased noetic prayer in the heart, or denied Christ, a sign that they had lost the Holy Spirit, they were expelled from the ranks of the faithful and they stood among the penitents, which means they left the Holy Temple after the reading of the Gospel together with the catechumens.

This distinction between the Catechumens and the Faithful, made in the liturgical texts, shows two truths.

One is that being a Christian is not a given with Holy Baptism, but one needs to live the truths of the faith. That is, the revealed truth must be assimilated by the spiritual organism of man and become blood and food. Faith is not a theoretical acceptance of the truths of the faith.

The second truth is that to participate in the Divine Liturgy is a serious matter, since it has to do with the inner life of man. The more inner purity one has, the better one participates in the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is not only what is said and chanted, but also what is done internally. In the Divine Liturgy the Triune God acts, the angels and the saints and the Panagia Mother of Christ are present, that is, it is a gathering of the heavenly and earthly, angels and people, living and reposed. How can one get a sense of this reality if one does not have a pure heart?

The bad thing is that we live in a time when there is confusion between the Catechumens and the Faithful. The so-called Faithful today in the ancient Church would be Catechumens, which is why some people cannot understand why we do

not pray with heretics. The faithful pray in the Divine Liturgy for the catechumens to be illumined and for the erring to return to the true faith, but they cannot pray with them with the same words and ask for the same requests, since they are in a different spiritual state. Let us strive to be truly faithful with our works and words. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

Bodily ailments found their way [into the world] as a result of sin. The first one to become physically sick was Cain (cf. Gen. 4:14 LXX), whose body was in a constant state of agitated movement all his life. It was through sin that he developed this chronic malady. Trembling, called convulsions by doctors, is an involuntary movement in these parts of the body, which are intended to unite the limbs and keep them together.... Cain completely misused his natural tie with his brother, distorting love into hatred born of envy, and eventually became a murderer. So the deterioration caused by envy conspired with the passion of hatred, and he was chastised by an appropriate and incurable disease, a blow to the nerves and muscles holding his body together.

It is obvious now that not just death but bodily illness and infirmity originated from sin? The Lord demonstrated this in the gospel. When He was about to heal the paralyzed man whom for people had lowered down in front of Him, He said, "Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 2:5), so as to start by drawing out the sting and removing the cause of the illness before proceeding to the cure. As for the paralyzed man lying by the pool near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem, the Lord told him after He had healed him, "Behold, you are made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (John 5:14). Paul too was aware that most sicknesses were caused by sin, and said of those who approach the holy altar unworthily that they eat and drink damnation to themselves. Then he went on to say, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. 11:29-30). the defects of our mortal nature, which give rise to all kinds of illnesses, clearly came originally from sin. Those who suffer to God's glory, like the man born blind, whom the Lord healed, are few (cf. John 9:3)....

[Our God-bearing Fathers teach us that anyone who falls ill should resort] to God, to the intercession of His saints, and to the petitions, entreaties, and prayers on our behalf of those who have consecrated and dedicated their whole life to Him.... Anyone who runs to God and His saints in need and sickness is relieved of his bodily pains and delivered from his infirmities, if this would be beneficial for him, and always finds healing for his soul and forgiveness of his sins. As James, Christ's apostle and brother, says, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the

elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:14-15). But you must cooperate with the prayers made on your behalf by changing your way of life, making confession, giving alms, and other works of repentance. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

Delivered from all afflictions of soul and body and living sober lives, may we all pass easily through the period of this present life, and having done so, in due course share in that eternal, blessed, inviolate life, which is completely free from suffering and hurt, in Christ Himself the Physician and God of our souls and bodies, to whom be glory together with the Father and the Holy Spirit unto the ages of ages. Amen.

– St. Gregory Palamas, *Homily 31.14-18*

### **The Dormition Fast**

The Dormition fast was established as preceding the great feasts of the Transfiguration of the Lord and of the Dormition of the Mother of God. It lasts two weeks — from August 1–August 14. The Dormition fast comes down to us from the early days of Christianity.

We find a clear reference to the Dormition fast in a conversation of Leo the Great from around the year 450 A.D.: “The Church fasts are situated in the year in such a way that a special abstinence is prescribed for each time. Thus, for spring there is the spring fast — the Forty Days Great Lent; for summer there is the summer fast [the Apostles’ fast]; for autumn there is the autumn fast, in the seventh month [Dormition fast]; for winter there is the winter fast [Nativity fast].”

St. Symeon of Thessalonica writes that, “The fast in August [Dormition fast] was established in honor of the Mother of God the Word; Who, foreknowing Her repose, ascetically labored and fasted for us as always, although She was holy and immaculate, and had no need for fasting. Thus, She especially prayed for us in preparation for being transported from this life to the future life, when Her blessed soul would be united through the Divine Spirit with Her Son. Therefore, we also should fast and praise Her, emulating Her life, urging Her thereby to pray for us. Some, by the way, say that this fast was instituted on the occasion of two feasts — the Transfiguration and the Dormition. I also consider it necessary to remember these two feasts — one which gives us light, and the other which is merciful to us and intercedes for us.”

The Dormition fast is not as strict as the Great Fast, but it is stricter than the Apostle’s and Nativity fasts.

On Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays of the Dormition fast, the Church rubrics prescribe xerophagy, that is, the strictest fast of uncooked food (without oil); on Tuesdays and Thursdays, “with cooked food, but with no oil”; on Saturdays and Sundays wine and oil are allowed.

Until the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, when grapes and apples are blessed in the churches, the Church requires that we abstain from these fruits. According to the tradition of the Holy Fathers, “If one of the brethren should eat the grapes before the feast, then let him be forbidden for obedience’s sake to taste of the grapes during the entire month of August.”

On the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, the Church rubrics allow fish. After that day, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the fruits of the new harvest would always be included in the meals.

The spiritual fast is closely united with the bodily, just as our soul is united with the body, penetrates it, enlivens it, and makes one united whole with it, as the soul and body make one living human being. Therefore, in fasting bodily we must at the same time fast spiritually: “Brothers, in fasting bodily let us also fast spiritually, severing all union with unrighteousness,” the Holy Church enjoins us.

The main thing in fasting bodily is restraint from abundant, tasty and sweet foods; the main thing in fasting spiritually is restraint from passionate, sinful movements that indulge our sensual inclinations and vices. The former is renunciation of the more nourishing foods for fasting food, which is less nourishing; the latter is the renunciation of our favorite sins for exercise in the virtues which oppose them.

The essence of the fast is expressed in the following Church hymn: “If you fast from food, my soul, but are not purified of the passions, in vain do we comfort ourselves by not eating. For if the fast does not bring correction, then it will be hateful to God as false, and you will be like unto the evil demons, who never eat.”

The Great Fast and the Dormition Fast are particularly strict with regard to entertainment — in Imperial Russia even civil law forbade public masquerades and shows during these fasts. (*from pravoslavie.ru*)

### **Venerable Angelina of Serbia**

Saint Angelina was the daughter of Prince George Skenderbeg of Albania. Her mother’s name is not known, but she raised her daughter in Christian piety and taught her to love God.

Saint Stephen Brancovich (October 9 and December 10), the ruler of Serbia, had come to Albania to escape those who wished to kill him. Some time before he arrived in Albania, Saint Stephen was unjustly blinded by the Turkish Sultan for some perceived offense. Since he was innocent, he bore his affliction with courage.

Saint Stephen was not only Prince George's guest, but he was also treated as a member of his family. Not surprisingly, Stephen and Angelina eventually fell in love. With her parents' blessing, they were married in church. After a few years, they were blessed with two sons: George and John.

When the boys were grown, Saint Stephen and his family were forced to flee to Italy for their safety. At that time the Turks invaded Albania and began to slaughter men, women, and even children.

Saint Stephen died in 1468, leaving Angelina a widow. In her distress, she turned to the ruler of Hungary for help. He gave them the town of Kupinovo in Sirmie. Saint Angelina left Italy with her sons in 1486, stopping in Serbia to bury Saint Stephen's incorrupt body in his native land.

The children of these pious parents also became saints. George gave up his claim to the throne in favor of his brother John, then entered a monastery and received the name Maximus. John was married, but had no sons. He died in 1503 at a young age, and many miracles took place before his holy relics.

Saint Angelina survived her husband and both of her sons. Mindful of her soul's salvation, she entered a women's monastery. She departed to the Lord in peace, and her body was buried in the same tomb as her sons in the monastery of Krushedol in Frushka Gora. Saint Angelina is also commemorated on December 10 with her husband Saint Stephen and her son Saint John. (*from oca.org*)

### **St. Peter Chrysologus, Archbishop of Ravenna**

Saint Peter was born in Imola, where Cornelius, bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Imola, baptized him, educated him, and ordained him a deacon. He was made an archdeacon through the influence of Emperor Valentinian III. Pope Sixtus III appointed Peter as Bishop of Ravenna circa 433, apparently rejecting the candidate whom the people of the city of Ravenna elected. At that time Ravenna was the capital of the West, and there are indications that Ravenna held the rank of metropolitan before this time.

The traditional account, as recorded in the Roman Breviary, is that Sixtus had a vision of Pope Saint Peter the Apostle and Saint Apollinaris of Ravenna, the first bishop of that see, who showed Peter, a young man, the next Bishop of Ravenna. When a group from Ravenna arrived, including Cornelius and his archdeacon Peter from Imola, Sixtus recognized Peter as the young man in his vision and consecrated him as a bishop.

People knew Saint Peter Chrysologus, *the Doctor of Homilies*, for his very simple and short but inspired sermons, for he was afraid of fatiguing the attention of his hearers. His piety and zeal won universal admiration. After hearing oratory of his



first homily as bishop, Roman Empress Galla Placidia supposedly gave him the surname *Chrysologus*, meaning "golden-worded." His sermons are historically significant in that they reveal Christian life in fifth-century Ravenna. The Emperor's mother, Galla Placidia, patronized many projects of Bishop Peter.

In his extant homilies, Bishop Peter explained Biblical texts briefly and concisely. He also condemned Arianism and Monophysitism as heresies and explained the Apostles' Creed, the mystery of the Incarnation, and other topics in simple and clear language. He dedicated a series of homilies to Saint John the Baptist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Peter advocated daily reception of Eucharist. He urged his listeners to confide in the forgiveness offered through Christ. His surviving works attest to the Church's traditional beliefs about Mary's perpetual virginity, the penitential value of Lent, Christ's Eucharistic presence, and the primacy of St. Peter and his successors. He shared the confidence of Saint Pope Leo I the Great (440-461), another doctor of the Church.

A synod held in Constantinople in 448 condemned Eutyches for Monophysitism; Eutyches then appealed to Peter Chrysologus but failed in his endeavour to win the support of the Bishop. The *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon* (451) preserves the text of letter of Saint Peter Chrysologus in response to Eutyches; Peter admonishes Eutyches to accept the ruling of the synod and to give obedience to the Bishop of Rome as the successor of Saint Peter.

Archbishop Felix of Ravenna in the early eighth century collected and preserved 176 of his homilies. Various authors edited and translated these works into numerous languages.

St Peter died circa or after 450 during a visit to Imola, the town of his birth. A contemporary portrait of Saint Peter Chrysologus, found in the mosaics of the Church of San Giovanni Evangelista in Ravenna, depicts him among the members of the eastern and western imperial family, showing his extraordinary influence. *(from santosepulcro.co.il)*

### **Also Commemorated Today**

St. [Tatwin](#) (Tatuini, Tadwinus), [Archbishop](#) of Canterbury (734)

[Hieromartyr Valentine](#), [bishop](#) of Interamna, Italy, with martyrs Proculus, Ephebus and Apollonius (273)

Martyr [John](#) the Warrior of at Constantinople (4th c)

Hieromartyrs [Polychronius](#), [Bishop](#) of Babylon, Presbyters: Parmenius, Helimenas and Chrysotelus, Deacons: Luke and Mucius and Martyrs Abdon, Sennen, Olympia and Maximus (251)

New Hiero-confessor [Anatole](#) II ([Potapov](#), the "Younger") of Optina (1922).

New Hieromartyr John deacon (1918).

Uncovering of the relics (1484) of Venerable [Herman](#) ([Germanus](#)) of Solovki (1479).

St. Stephen (Vladislav) of Serbia (1243) (Serbia).

Prince [Tsothne](#) Dadiani, the Confessor of Mingrelia (13th c.) (Georgia).

St. [Ermengytha](#), [Virgin](#) of Minster-in-Thamet, Kent, Sister of Saint Ermenburga (c. 680)

St. [Rufinus](#), first bishop of Assisi (unk)

[Synaxis of the Saints of Aegina](#)

Virgin-martyrs [Maxima](#), Donatilla and Secunda of Tebourba (N. Africa) (304)

Martyr-king [Olav](#) of Sweden (c. 950)

St. [Ursus](#), bishop of Auxerre (508)

St. [Genevé](#), archbishop of Dol-de-Bretagne (7<sup>th</sup> c.)

## Social Team for August 6

Team 3 – Edgington, Victor Barzykin, R&C Wright. 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.)