

# SOBORNOST

## St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE

## SERVICES

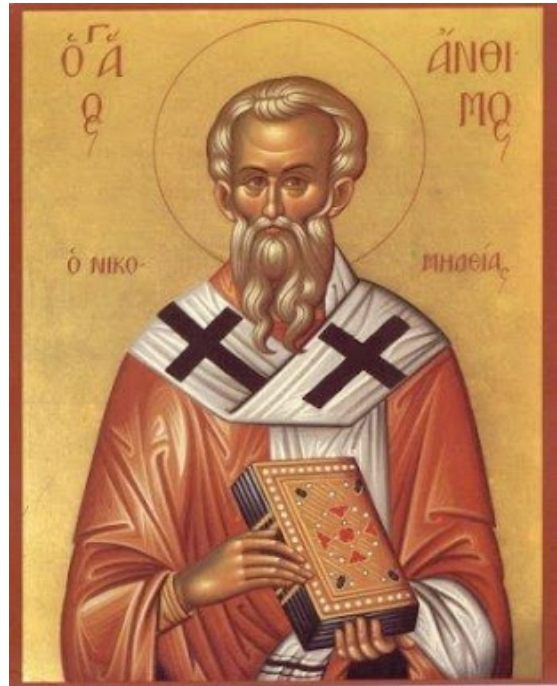
**Wednesday: Lay Vespers 6:30 PM**

**Saturday: Vespers 5 PM**

**Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM**

**Sunday School 9:30 AM**

**Divine Liturgy 10 AM**



## September 3, 2023 – 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost Hieromartyr Anthimos, Bishop of Nicomedia

*You were beheaded with the sword Martyr Anthimos, and though dead the hairs on your head blossom to the glory of God. On the third Anthimos was beheaded with a sharp sword.*

Saint Anthimos was Bishop of Nicomedia in Bithynia (Asia Minor) during the reign of Emperor Maximian (286-305),\* and in 304 at his command 20,000 Christians in Nicomedia perished in a fire while in church on Christmas day. Bishop Anthimos escaped their fate and hid himself in the village of Omana not far from Nicomedia at the request of his flock. From there he sent letters to the Christians, urging them to keep firmly the holy Faith and not to fear tortures.

One of his letters, that was sent with Deacon Theophilos, was intercepted and turned over to Emperor Maximian. Deacon Theophilos was cruelly questioned and died under torture, without revealing the whereabouts of Bishop Anthimos to his torturers. Maximian soon managed to learn the whereabouts of Bishop Anthimos. A detachment of soldiers was sent after him. Anthimos met them along the way, but the soldiers did not recognize him. The bishop invited them to join him for a meal that he provided. After the meal, Anthimos revealed that he was the one they sought. The surprised soldiers did not know what to do. They were ready to leave him and lie to the emperor that they had not found him. However, Anthimos was not one to tolerate a lie. So, he would not consent to their plan.

The soldiers came to believe in Christ and received holy Baptism. The bishop ordered them to carry out the emperor's instructions. After Anthimos was brought before the emperor, Maximian ordered that the instruments of execution be brought out and placed before him. "Do you think, emperor, to frighten me with these tools of execution?" asked Anthimos. "No indeed, you cannot frighten one who wishes to die for Christ! Execution is frightening only for the cowardly, for whom the present life is most precious." The emperor then directed that Anthimos be fiercely tortured by being beaten with rods, made to walk in red-hot bronze sandals and finally fixed to a wheel that broke his limbs, while the executioners burnt his body with flaming torches.

Through all this the Saint remained steadfast, and like gold refined in fire he shone more brightly in the midst of torments. After Anthimos prophesied to the emperor that his pagan empire would soon come to an end and Christianity would triumph, the emperor rent in two his purple cloak and ordered Anthimos beheaded. Bishop Anthimos joyfully glorified God with his last breath and received the crown of martyrdom.

It is said that after the death of Bishop Anthimos the hair on his head continued growing in a strange yet wondrous manner. His skull is kept today in the Athonite Monastery of Saint Panteleimon, and portions of his skin are in the Chapel of Saint Xenia the Fool for Christ in Mandra of Attica.

\* Though Eusebius dates the martyrdom of Anthimos to 303 or 304, a fragmentary letter preserved in the *Chronicon Paschale*, written in prison by the Priest Lucian of Antioch, who was awaiting death, mentions Anthimos, bishop of Nicomedia, as having just suffered martyrdom. Schaff and Wace note that Lucian was imprisoned and put to death during the persecution of Emperor Maximinus Daia, in 311 or 312, and therefore conclude that, if the fragment is genuine, Anthimos suffered martyrdom not under Diocletian and Maximian but under Maximinus. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 16:13-24 EOB**

Brethren, watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all *that you do* be done with love. I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with *us*. I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men. The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The salutation with

my own hand—Paul’s. If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema. O Lord, come! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

### **Today’s Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 21:33-42 EOB**

The Lord said, “Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him*. “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”

### **Homily on the 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Matthew**

By Very Rev. Archimandrite Panteleimon Manoussakis, Ph.D.

Today’s passage of the Holy Gospel, my dear brothers and sisters, is a parable that illustrates Christ’s own mission and the spreading of His Gospel to the nations. The language of this parable is borrowed from the beginning of the fifth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah:

I will sing for the one I love, a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. “Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briars and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”

It is also the same prophet, namely Isaiah, who provides us with the key of interpreting the parable:

The vineyard of the Lord Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

Christ takes, then, this image of the book of Isaiah, an image with whose meaning His audience would have been familiar, and expands it: the landowner who planted the vineyard is God the Father and the vineyard is Israel, His chosen people. The hedge around it is His Law and the tower is His temple. “When the harvest time approached”—that is, when the fullness of the times came—He sent his prophets which the parable calls “his servants,” but the tenants of the vineyard “seized the servants, and they beat one, killed another, stone a third.” In that gruesome line is summarized the history of Israel with its prophets, of which in the Gospel of St Luke Christ reminds us that He holds Israel responsible:

Because of this, God in his wisdom said, “I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.” Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. (Luke 11:49-51)

God continues to send prophets to Israel, but each is abused as the one before. “Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.” (Mt. 21:37). Notice how the Son is sent “last of all” for there will be no more prophets after the Son Himself has come. And notice how the Son is clearly distinguished from the “servants”, for He is not one of them, He is not one of the prophets. Foretelling the death by which He will die, Christ relates to His audience what the tenants of the vineyard will do with Him: “But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.” (Mt. 21:38-39) They killed him “out of the vineyard” as He was crucified outside the walls of the city.

Thus, Israel is abandoned and the vineyard is given to “new tenants”—as the Lord continues, speaking now not in riddles but quite explicitly “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.” (Mt. 21:43) The Church saw Herself as this new people, as the new Israel to which the promise of salvation had been renewed and made certain.

However, the lesson of this parable remains as a stern warning for us too: the sons and daughters of adoption. For we too might commit the same grave mistake as those tenants of the parable: that is, we might begin to think that the vineyard is, after all, our possession; we may begin to see ourselves not as humble workers in the vineyard of the Lord but as its owners. Such a danger is closer and more real for us the clergy—bishops, priests, and deacons—who have been called to work at the vineyard of the Lord. It is the danger of forgetting that the vineyard of the Church is not our property, but His, who, in the time of the harvest, will demand of us “to bear fruit.” Such an insidious danger takes the form of ungratefulness: we are reminded again of the words that God speaks through the Prophet Isaiah: “What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it?” (5:4). Indeed, He planted it, He protected by building the wall around it, He adorned it with a watchtower and a winepress, and when all was ready, He called us to work and cultivate His spiritual grapes. Yet, He is the vine; we are the branches. If we remain in Him we will bear much fruit; for apart from Him we can do nothing” (Cf. John, 15:5).

Sometimes one hears here too, among our communities in America, people voicing a similar misconception, talking of the Church as if it was theirs, as it belonged to them, because they or their parents played some role in the edification of the building. My dear, if the Church is yours, then it is not the Lord’s, and if it is not the Lord’s then it is not the Church—what, then, are you boasting of?

My brothers and sisters, let us all of us, clergy and laity, avoid the ungratefulness of the old tenants, let us avoid the hardening of their hearts, let us instead repeat and proclaim with gratitude the last words of today’s Gospel: “*the Lord has done this*, and it is marvelous in our eyes” (Mt. 21:42). Amen.

### **Homilies on the Divine Liturgy: Holy Communion**

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

All the Mysteries of the Church, my beloved brethren, are closely connected with the Divine Eucharist. We are baptized and chrismated with the Holy Myrrh so that as members of the Church we can take part in this Secret Supper and receive Christ in us. The Mystery of the Priesthood is made so that there may be Bishops who will perform the Divine Liturgy and who will ordain Presbyters to perform the Divine Eucharist on their behalf. The Mysteries of Confession and Anointing are made to prepare us to truly participate in the Divine Eucharist, but also the Mystery of Marriage is made so that the couple can participate in the Divine Eucharist, to feel united not only on a biological level, but as unity with Christ.

We can also then say that the Divine Eucharist is also performed in order to have the opportunity to commune of the Body and Blood of Christ. Of course, if

someone has visited their spiritual father and he does not allow them to temporarily commune, in order to prepare them for a good participation in Holy Communion, then the participation in the Divine Eucharist can help them with prayer.

The culmination of the Divine Liturgy, but also of all ecclesial life, is when man is found worthy to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is a great blessing when man who is made from dust is found worthy to taste the wood of life which is Christ. Adam in Paradise had communion with God, but he had not reached the point of communion with the Body of Christ, since the Second Person of the Holy Trinity had not incarnated. But we have the opportunity, with the incarnation of Christ, the sacrifice of Golgotha and His Resurrection, to partake of this blessed Body. Through this food all our energies, actions, but also all the events in our life take on a different meaning, acquire a different purpose.

When we commune we receive within ourselves the true Body of Christ in the outward form of bread and wine. That is, as our Holy Fathers explain, with the energy of the Holy Spirit, bread and wine are truly transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. But God has arranged things so that the sense and taste of bread and wine remain just because we would not feel good eating the flesh and blood of Christ. However, there were Saints who were found worthy to see the real Body on the diskos and to see the real Blood of Christ. There were also saints who saw on the Holy Table, at the time of the transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, a substantial light. And when they asked what this Light was, they heard a voice saying that it was the Holy Spirit.

Other senses are required in order to be able to penetrate into the "spirit" of the Divine Liturgy. It is not a matter of a logical understanding of what is said and done, but of an existential rebirth. It may seem paradoxical, but it is true that sometimes what is done in the Divine Liturgy, a small child may participate in more powerfully, who with their purity see angels, rather than the scientist, who has book knowledge and can explain and understands the words of the Divine Liturgy. Participation in the Divine Liturgy is an existential participation and not just a matter of rational understanding.

With Holy Communion we become one body and one blood with Jesus Christ. The whole body, if we have spiritual senses and live with repentance and ecclesiastical life, becomes the Body of Christ. Saint Symeon the New Theologian says that he moved his foot and his foot felt as the foot of Christ, he moved his hand and his hand felt as the hand of Christ. After Holy Communion everything must be changed, transformed, sanctified.

The saints, through the centuries, after this divine food, of the Body and Blood of Christ, overcame many temptations, faced persecutors, overcame death, since the

bread of life is the medicine of immortality, and faced difficult situations, such as the terrible pains of an illness. With Holy Communion they left this life and entered another way of being, without fear. Holy Communion is the medicine of immortality and every time we commune we receive a feeling of immortality, until we are healed and become immortal by grace, just as for example we take, from time to time, antibiotics to be healed and to gain health.

Because today's sermon is the last of this series let us pray our lives will be a Divine Eucharist, a Divine Liturgy and a Divine Communion and when the time comes to be released from this life, to say: "Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy and save us. Amen." (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

The person who [has turned from vice to virtue, conquered his passions through self-control, and united himself to God] stands as a kind of boundary between the changeable and the unchangeable nature and mediates, as it is appropriate, between the two poles. He offers supplications to God on behalf of those who have been converted from sin, and he transmits the mercy of the supreme power to those who need mercy. We may learn from this that the more one has removed himself from things that are inferior and earthly, the more is he associated with that nature which transcends every mind. He imitates the deity by beneficence, by doing that which is the distinctive characteristic of the divine nature. Now I mean that everything which needs kindness shows kindness, in so far as a need for beneficence exists.

We have taken this to be the meaning of Psalm 89, whose inscription is, 'a prayer by Moses, a man of God.' For because humanity was ruled by the evil of sin and, having been severed from union with the good, was involved in the opposite passions and stood in need of intercession to the one capable of recalling it from destruction, the man of God becomes an intercessor, making a defense, on the one hand, for the fall of his kinsmen, and on the other hand, entreating God to have compassion on the lost. For he immediately pleads, so to speak, with the One who hears, and says that that which is steadfast, immovable and always the same in every good belongs to God alone. Human nature, on the other hand, he asserts, exists in turning and change, and never remains the same, no matter if it should draw near to that which is superior, or fall away from participation in the superior. For this reason he thinks it worthy that the Unchangeable one become a refuge for the straying humanity in every generation.

— St. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Inscriptions of the Psalms*

## Saint Phoebe the Deaconess

Saint Phoebe did not belong to any official calendars of the Greek Churches until after 1956, when the *Small Euchologion* put out by Apostoliki Diakonia mentions her without any further information. Her inclusion on this day, however, in the Slavic Churches may be due to Roman Catholic influence, which commemorates her on this day (Sept. 3).

As for who this Saint Phoebe is, we read about in the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans (16:1-2), where he writes: "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well."

From this passage we can ascertain the following: Phoebe was a notable woman in the church of Cenchreae, near Corinth, and she was entrusted by Paul to deliver his letter to the Romans. In writing from the church that almost surely met in her home, Paul refers to her both as a deacon (Gk. *diakonon* masc.) and as a helper or patron of many (Gk. *prostatis*). This is the only place in the New Testament where a woman is specifically referred to with these two distinctions. Paul introduces Phoebe as his emissary to the church in Rome and, because they are not acquainted with her, Paul provides them with her credentials.

Phoebe's exceptional character, noted by her status as a deacon and patron may be the reason Paul sent her to Rome where she delivered the letter to Rome. By referring to Phoebe as a patron, Paul solicits the attention and respect of the leaders in Rome's church, which also included other women, namely Priscilla [Rom. 16:3], Mary [Rom. 16:6], Junia [Rom. 16:7], and Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis [16:12].

*Diakonos*: The Apostle Paul used the Greek *diakonos* (διάκονος) to designate Phoebe as a deacon, a transliteration of the original Greek, it is the same word as used elsewhere by Paul to refer to deacons. The word *deacon* in Paul's writings sometimes refers to a Christian designated to serve with the overseers of the church, while it more often refers to "servants" in a general sense. In the letter to the Romans, apart from the debated case of Phoebe, it always refers to "servants" in the generic sense, as opposed to a church office.

*Prostatis*: The Apostle Paul used the Greek *prostatis* (προστάτις) – translated as "benefactor" in the NIV. The *NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon* translates it: a female guardian, protectress, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources.

Both the Greek term *diakonos* (possible meaning "servant" in a generic sense) and the Greek term *prostatis* (possible meaning "patroness" in the sense of being



someone who provides financial resources or legal support) may refer to activities which are not connected to church ministry at all. Translation therefore must be based on context. It has been suggested, that Paul quite unlikely would have referred to somebody as his spiritual leader, since he was leading the mission to the Gentiles. Certain passages in epistles attributed to Paul seem to forbid women's leadership in the church (e.g. 1 Tim 2:10-14, 1 Cor 14:34-36).

### **"Likewise the Women"**

While some scholars believe Paul restricted the office of deacon to men, others dispute that assertion. For example, when describing the qualities that the office holders called "deacons" must possess, Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 3:11 that the *gynaikas* (Greek for "women") *hosautos* (Greek for "likewise"), translated "likewise the women," are to be "worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything." The "likewise" indicated that the women deacons were to have similar qualifications to the men deacons (see also the Apostle Paul's use of the term "likewise" in Romans 1:27, 1 Cor. 7:3,4,22, and Titus 2:3,6).

Nothing else is known of Saint Phoebe outside her New Testament reference.

### **Troparion in the Third Tone:**

Enlightened by grace and taught the faith by the chosen vessel of Christ, you were found worthy of the diaconate and brought Paul's words to Rome. O Deaconess Phoebe, pray to Christ our God, that His Spirit may enlighten our souls.

### **Kontakion in the Second Tone**

Paul proclaimed you a protector of many, and you became his helper. Hearken to those who approach you with faith, and who cry out to you with love: Rejoice, glory of Corinth and pride of Achaia; rejoice, lamp of Cenchreae; rejoice, O Deaconess Phoebe. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

## **Also Commemorated Today**

Venerable [Theoctistus](#) (451), fellow-faster with St. Euthymius the Great.

Blessed [John](#) "the Hairy," fool-for-Christ at Rostov (1580).

New Hieromartyr [Pimen](#) (Belolikov) bishop of Vernensk and Semirechensk, [Sergius](#), [Basil](#), [Philip](#), [Vladimir](#) priests, monk-martyr [Meletius](#) (1918).

New Hieromartyrs [Basil and Parthenius](#) priests (1919).

New Hieromartyrs [Andrew](#) and [Theophan](#) priests (1920).

New Hieromartyrs [Vladimir](#) and [Michael](#) priests (1921).

New Hieromartyr [Nicholas](#) priest (1923).

New Hieromartyr [Euthymius](#) priest with 4 martyrs (1924).

New Hieromartyr [Romanus](#) priest (1929).

New Hieromartyr [Alexis](#) and [Elias](#) priests (1937).  
 New Hieromartyr Peter Deacon (1953).  
 Martyr [Basilissa](#) of Nicomedia (309).  
 Hieromartyr [Aristion](#), bishop of Alexandria, in Syria (3rd c.).  
 St. [Ioannicius](#) II, first patriarch of Serbia (1349).  
 New Martyr [Polydorus](#) of Cyprus (1794) (Greek).  
 Emperor [Constantine](#) the New (Greek)(641).  
 Martyrs [Chariton](#) and [Archontinus](#) (Greek).  
 St. [Remaclus](#), bishop of Maastricht (677) (Neth.).  
 Monk-martyrs [Aigulphus](#), Abbot of Lerins, [Frugentius](#) and 3 companions (675) (Gaul).  
 St. Edward, martyr and king of England (978) ([Translation](#) of his relics to the Church of St. Edward).  
 St. [Gregory](#) the Dialogist, Pope of Rome (also commemorated March 12)  
 St. [MacNisse](#), Bishop of Connor, Dalriada (Macnisius, Aengus McNisse, Macanisius) (6<sup>th</sup> c.)  
 St. [Balin](#) of Techsaxon (Ballon, Balanus) monk, 7<sup>th</sup> c.  
 St. [Cuthburga](#) of Wimborne, Widow and Abbess (725) – check Aug 31  
 St. [Quenburga](#) of Wimborne, Queen of Deira (Coenburga), then monastic (735)  
 Martyr [Zenon](#)  
[Translation](#) of the Relics of St. [Nectarios](#) of Aegina (1953)  
[Translation](#) of the Relics of St. [Anthimos](#) of Chios (1965)  
 St. [Ambrose](#), bishop of Sens (France)(c. 455)  
 St. [Auxanus](#) ([Ansano](#)), bishop of Milan (568)  
 Virgin-martyrs [Euphemia](#), [Dorothy](#), Thecla and Erasma of Aquileia (Italy)(1st c.)  
 Ven. [Hereswith](#) ([Hereswitha](#)), princess of Northumbria and nun at Chelles (France) (c. 690)  
 St. [Manseutus](#) (Mansuy), bishop of Toul (France)(c. 350)  
 St. [Maurilius](#), bishop of Cahors (France)(580)  
 St. [Natalis](#), priest in Casale in Piedmont (6<sup>th</sup> c.)  
 St. [Regulus](#) (Reol), Archbishop of Rheims (698)  
 Martyr [Sandila](#) (Sandalus, Sandolus, Sandulf) of Cordoba (c. 855)

### **Man of God Screening and Panel Discussion**

There will be a screening of the film “Man of God” (based on the life of St. Nectarios of Aegina) at the Museum of the Bible on September 21 at 6:00 PM followed by a panel discussion including the film's director, Yelena Popovic. Admission is free, but you must register in advance. See <https://www.museumofthebible.org/events/man-of-god> for more details.

## Social Team for September 10

Team 2 – Dewey, Carrie LaMere. Thank you!

### Follow Our Diocese On-Line

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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.)