

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

November 5, 2023 – 22nd Sunday After Pentecost

Holy Martyrs Galaktion and Episteme of Emesa

The unpaired couple are beheaded by a sword, having a coupling of their souls by love. On the fifth Episteme and Galaktion were beheaded.

Both Galaktion and Episteme were born in the city of Edessa, in Phoenicia. Galaktion's mother was barren until she was baptized. After her baptism, she converted her husband, Cleitophon, to the true Faith, baptized her son Galaktion, and raised him in the Christian Faith [they had been catechized by a monk named Onouphrios]. When Galaktion was old enough to marry, his good mother, Leukippa, entered into rest, and his father betrothed him to a pagan-born maiden named Episteme. By no means did Galaktion want to enter into marriage, and convinced Episteme to be baptized, then to be tonsured a nun at the same time that he became a monk.

Both of them withdrew to Mount Publion (near Mount Sinai) - Galaktion to a monastery and Episteme to a convent. They proved to be shining lights in their monasteries. They were first in labor, first in prayer, first in humility and obedience, and first in love. They neither left their monasteries nor did they see one another until just before their death. A fierce persecution began and both of them were brought before the tribunal [in Alexandria under the governor Ursus]. When the pagans mercilessly whipped Galaktion, Episteme wept. Then they



whipped her. After that, they cut off their hands, their feet and then their heads. Their friend Eutolmios took their bodies and honorably buried them. Eutolmios had been a slave of Episteme's parents, and then a monk with Galaktion. He also wrote the life of these wonderful Martyrs of Christ who suffered and received their wreaths in heaven in the year 253. [Galaktion was 30 years old at his martyrdom, while Episteme was 16 years old].

The Spiritual Love of the Saints

Physical love, in comparison to spiritual love, is less than a shadow is to solid substance. Brotherhood and sisterhood of the blood and body is nothing compared to the brotherhood and sisterhood of the spirit. Galaktion's father betrothed him to the maiden Episteme. Galaktion baptized Episteme and, after that, both received the monastic tonsure. Their physical love was replaced by spiritual love, a love as strong as death. So great was Galaktion's spiritual love for Episteme that he never desired to see her with his physical eyes. Neither physical contact nor closeness are necessary for spiritual love. So great was Episteme's spiritual love for Galaktion that when she heard that he had been taken for torture she ran after him, begging him not to reject her, but to receive her as a fellow sufferer, as he was her spiritual father and brother. When the merciless torturers flogged holy Galaktion's naked body, holy Episteme wept. However, when the torturers cut off their hands and feet for Christ, both rejoiced and glorified God. So great was the power of their love for our Lord Jesus Christ, and so great was the spiritual love with which they loved each other. Truly, physical love is like a colorful butterfly that quickly passes, but spiritual love is enduring. *(from the Prologue of Ohrid by St. Nikolai Velimirovich)*

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18 EOB

Brethren, see with what large letters I write to you with my own hand! It is those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh who are trying to compel you to be circumcised; and it only so that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. Even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. As for me, I shall find glory in nothing, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. In Christ Jesus, circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; only a new creation is significant. To those who live by this rule, may there be peace and mercy upon them, and on the Israel of God. From now on, let no one cause me any trouble, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus branded on my body. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 8:41-56 EOB

At that time, behold, a man named Jairus came, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. He fell down at Jesus' feet and begged him to come to his house because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying. But as Jesus went, the crowd pressed against him. There was a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years and who had spent all she had on physicians, but she could not be healed by any. She came behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak. Immediately, the flow of her blood stopped. Jesus said, "Who touched me?" As everyone was denying it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you, and you ask, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus said, "Someone has touched me, for I perceived that power has gone out from me." When the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came forth trembling. Falling down before Jesus, in the presence of all the people, she confessed to him why she had touched him, and how she had immediately been healed. He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer! Your faith has made you well. Go in peace." While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." But when Jesus heard it, he answered, "Do not be afraid! Only believe, and she will be healed." When Jesus arrived at the house, he did not allow anyone to enter in, except Peter, John, James, as well as the father of the child and her mother. All were weeping and mourning the girl, but Jesus said, "Do not weep! She is not dead, but sleeping." But they mocked him, knowing that she was dead. Jesus put them all outside, and taking the girl by the hand, he called, "Child, arise!" Her spirit returned, and she immediately got up. He ordered that something to eat should be given to her. Her parents were amazed, but he commanded them to tell no one what had been done.

Homily on the Beatitudes 2

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4).

After the sense of spiritual poverty, which comes to us by the Grace of God, as stated in the first beatitude of Christ, there follows the second beatitude, which refers to mourning, repentance, tears and weeping. Indeed, anyone who understands their spiritual condition, that they have fallen from the spiritual life, will begin to mourn.

People usually praise and bless those who rejoice, who have plenty of material assets and enjoy being honored and having a reputation from people. Christ, however, praised those who mourn. This will truly sound strange to modern ears. We know that mourning is the great pain and suffering our soul feels for the death

of our loved ones. Indeed, mourning lasts for a period of time, depending on the mental and spiritual condition of a person and it is expressed in various ways. Usually, those who mourn express some sort of anti-social behavior, distancing themselves from people, closing within themselves, constantly thinking of the one they love, moanfully weeping, among other things.

But Christ does not bless this worldly mourning, but a mourning that is of a particular feature and has a different effect. Christ did not just praise those who mourn, but those who mourn for their sins, especially when they realize they are deprived of God and His life, having lost Paradise. Also, the sad are not blessed here, but those who mourn. Sadness is a psychological condition. Mourning, however, is expressed with the entire human organism, and is not simply an emotional state, but a spiritual state of life of a person who understands that they are far away from God.

The Apostle Paul distinguishes between a worldly and a godly sorrow. He writes: "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death" (2 Cor. 7:10). Worldly sorrow is a psychological condition, derived from the loss of material goods, the break in relations with a person, the failure in several areas of life. But godly sorrow comes from the Grace of God, since, when it illuminates people, then they understand their condition and immediately ask God for His help to return to their original condition.

Godly mourning is stronger than sadness and comes from a sense of a threefold poverty, according to Saint Gregory Palamas. When the Saint speaks of a threefold poverty of the spirit, he means the humility of the spirit, the suffering of the body and landlessness in life. Spiritual mourning comes from such poverty, bearing tears and healing the soul, and as a result the entire person is healed. Hence, spiritual mourning does not create sadness, anxiety, hopelessness and despair, because it comes from the Grace of God, which brings spiritual health and healing to humanity.

This is reflected in the prayer that comes from spiritual mourning. Christ said: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." When one mourns for the loss of some person, or material goods, or social position, it is difficult to be comforted. But when we mourn for our spiritual condition and seek help from God, then we assume God will comfort us. In a blessed way, whoever mourns for their sins, whoever senses their spiritual condition and repents and confesses, such a person rejoices spiritually. This comfort, that comes from God, gladdens the soul of a person in this life, and even more so in the next.

It is to be understood that mourning is spiritual, joy is spiritual, and the world is ignorant of both. People connect happiness with bliss, with external feigned joy, a

joy that comes from the senses and is associated with a secular life. But such joy is temporary, it is like giving a cancer patient an aspirin or a painkiller. God's people, however, who mourn for their sins, are freed from all their dependencies, they move towards God, and are therefore comforted. In this case God is a Comforter, who unites our broken existence, simplifies our entire life, and makes us authentic people, the people of God. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

A Word From the Holy Fathers

God could give no greater gift to men than to make His Word, through whom He created all things, their head and to join them to Him as His members, so that the Word might be both Son of God and son of man, one God with the Father, and one man with all men. The result is that when we speak with God in prayer we do not separate the Son from Him, and when the body of the Son prays it does not separate its head from itself; it is the one Savior of His body, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who prays for us and in us and is Himself the object of our prayers.

He prays for us as our priest; He prays in us as our head; He is the object of our prayer. Let us then recognize both our voice in His, and His voice in ours. When something is said, especially in prophecy, about the Lord Jesus Christ that seems to belong to a condition of lowliness unworthy of God, we must not hesitate to ascribe this condition to one who did not hesitate to unite Himself with us. Every creature is His servant, for it was through Him that every creature came to be.

We contemplate His glory and divinity when we listen to these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made" (John 1:1-3). Here we gaze on the divinity of the Son of God, something supremely great and surpassing all the greatness of His creatures. Yet in other parts of Scripture we hear Him as one sighing, praying, giving praise and thanks.

We hesitate to attribute these words to Him because our minds are slow to come down to His humble level when we have just been contemplating Him in His divinity. It is as though we were doing Him an injustice in acknowledging in a man the words of One with Whom we spoke when we prayed to God; we are usually at a loss and try to change the meaning. Yet our minds find nothing in Scripture that does not go back to Him, nothing that will allow us to stray from Him.

Our thoughts must then be awakened to keep their vigil of faith. We must realize that the one whom we were contemplating a short time before in His nature as God

took to Himself the nature of a servant; He was made in the likeness of men and found to be a man like others; He humbled himself by being obedient even in accepting death; as He hung on the Cross He made the psalmist's words His own: "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Ps. 21:1 LXX)

We pray to Him as God; He prays for us as a servant. In the first case He is the Creator; in the second a creature. Himself unchanged, He took to Himself our created nature in order to change it, and made us one man with Himself, head and body. We pray then to Him, through Him, in Him, and we speak along with Him and He along with us.

— St. Augustine of Hippo, *Commentary on the Psalms*

Also Commemorated Today

Repose of St. [Jonah](#), archbishop of Novgorod (1470).

New [Hieromartyr Gabriel](#) priest (1937).

St. [Tikhon](#), Patriarch of Moscow (election to the Patriarchal throne 1917)

Apostles [Patrobus](#), Hermas, Linus, Gaius, and Philologus of the Seventy (1st c.).

St. [Gregory](#), archbishop of Alexandria (9th c.).

Martyrs [Dominus](#), Timothy, Theophilus, Theotimus, Dorotheus, Euppsychius, Carterius, Pamphilius, [Agathangelus](#), and Castorus of Palestine (307).

Hieromartyr Silvanus, bishop of Gaza.

St. [Kea](#), bishop of Devon and Cornwall. (6th c.)

Venerable Odrada, virgin of Balen (8th c.) (Neth.).

St. Gregory of Cassano, Calabria (1002).

St. [Kanten](#) (Cannen) of Wales (8th c. Founder of Llanganten Abbey)

St. [Bertila](#) (Bertilla) Abbess of Chelles, Virgin (705)

Sts. [Augustine](#) and Paulinus, founders of Terracina in Latina (Italy)(6th c.)

St. [Dominator](#), bishop of Brescia (Italy)(c. 495)

Martyrs [Felix](#) and Eusebius of Terracina (Italy) (1st c.)

St. [Fibitius](#), bishop of Trier (c. 500)

St. [Hermenegild](#), monk in Galatia (Spain)(586)

St. [Laetus](#) (Lié, Lyé) of Orléans, monk (c. 533)

St. [Magnus](#), archbishop of Milan (525)

St. [Spinulus](#) (Spinula, Spin) of Moyennoutier, monk (France)(707 or 720)

St. [Dominus](#), first bishop of Grenoble (France)(4th c.)

St. [Wethnoc](#) (Wethenoc, Guethnoc, Gwethnoc) of Plouhinec (Brittany)(6th c.)

Social Team for November 12

Team 5 – Cooper, Mary V., Steven Watts. Thank you!

Pray for our priests!

Prayer is powerful, and we need more priests in our Diocese. So, this year, Metropolitan Gregory is asking that each one of us pray daily that we have more vocations to the priesthood. He also wants us to pray by name for our clergy and seminarians--they aren't sick! The clergy that we are to pray for are: Fr. Kevin Greenwood, Fr. Andrew Gromm, and Deacon Donald Koch. The seminarians are: Deacon Peter Sodini, Nicholas Woroby, Seamus Murray, Samuel Lopusky, Timothy Paproski, Nicolas Laliberte and Ignatios Leonardo. We started this two years ago, and we already have more seminarians! I can't wait to see what happens next!

Prayer for vocations

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

Prayer for the priesthood

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our Metropolitan Gregory, and our spiritual father Joseph, who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Remember also, O Lord, our priests Fr. Kevin Greenwood, Fr. Andrew Gromm, and Deacon Donald Koch, and seminarians Deacon Peter Sodini, Nicholas Woroby, Seamus Murray, Samuel Lopusky, Timothy Paproski, Nicolas Laliberte and Ignatios Leonardo. Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God who loves us, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

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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, 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, Jacob, 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.)