

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

**November 26, 2023 – 25th Sunday
After Pentecost | St. Alypios the
Stylite**

Alypios remained upright on the pillar, seeking the heavens he departed, not tarrying. On the twenty-sixth Alypios departed to dwell where there is no pain.

Our holy Father Alypios was born in the city of Adrianople in the province of Paphlagonia during the reign of Heraclius (610-41). When he was only three his father died, and his mother placed him in the care of Bishop Theodore to study sacred literature and to be brought up for the service of the Church. The child's remarkable ability as well as his great piety commended him to the Bishop's successor, who made him steward of the church and ordained him deacon when he reached the canonical age. He fulfilled this double office admirably, but he longed to follow the eremitic life. As a result, he gave away his goods to the poor and told his pious mother of his intention to leave for the Holy Land and to embrace the monastic life.



Taking to the road in secret lest the Bishop and people of the city hold him back, he went as far as Euchaita, when the Bishop caught up with and insisted on his returning home. Forced back to the world, Alypios was consoled by a vision of the holy places of Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem and Golgotha where God would have him engage in the blessed contests of ascetic life. He began looking for a remote spot to live in, and he was brought by a vision to a place with a spring of water, on an arid mountain. Here he dedicated a chapel and built a cell. But the Bishop wanted Alypios to serve in the world to which he was a stranger, so he blocked up the spring to oblige him to come down to the plain where he would be more accessible.

Undaunted, the Saint fixed on a demon-haunted spot, full of old tombs and pagan sanctuaries that everyone kept well away from. His relatives tried in vain to dissuade him from climbing up one of the derelict monuments on which was a pillar surmounted by the statue of a fabulous animal, half bull, half lion. 'Here is my resting place!' he exclaimed, and went back to the town to fetch a Cross and a crowbar. He dislodged the statue and threw it to the ground, setting up the life-giving Cross in its place, determined henceforth to rout the demons in their own lair.

Having business that required his attending on the Emperor, the Bishop constrained Alypios to accompany him to court. When they reached Chalcedon, the Saint hid in the oratory of St. Bassa by the sea, and was asleep when the Bishop embarked for Constantinople. Saint Euphemia, the patroness of Chalcedon, appeared to him as he slept and she told him to go home, assuring him of her protection. On returning to his hermitage, Alypios built a chapel dedicated the Saint Euphemia at a place miraculously pointed out to him in a vision. As he possessed nothing himself, some of his friends provided everything necessary for building the chapel, and they all set about the work of construction. Despite his desire to settle on the pillar, Alypios followed the advice of the Elders with due regard for their discernment, and he withdrew to a narrow cell not far from the chapel in order to give himself ardently to the purification of his soul by fasting, vigil and prayer. He was thirty years old at the time, and spent two years in this cell waging relentless war against the demons. Their evil suggestions could not shake him, and he drove them off by the sign of the Cross and the fire-bearing words of Holy Scripture.

So fast did word spread of the servant of God that, much as he wished to persist in his holy work without distraction, he was under the necessity of welcoming many of the faithful who came to receive his blessing. Gentle, easy to speak to, attentive to all alike, young and old, rich and poor, he would have no one leave him except filled with spiritual joy. But becoming aware that such involvement was harmful to

his soul, and having by then sufficient skill in the ascetic art, he decided to make his abode on top of the pillar, protected from the weather by a small, rough, wooden roof. Since there was not room enough on the pillar to lie down or to sit, Alypius was always on his feet, like a living column, year in year out exposed to the elements, struggling against heat and cold, wind and rain. Whereas the sufferings of the Martyrs lasted for a little while, Saint Alypius offered himself to this daily martyrdom for fifty-three years, doing violence to nature each day in order to gain everlasting life. (This is why Saint Alypius is known as the "Kionite", since a *kion* in Greek means "column" or "pillar".)

He was ferociously attacked by demons jealous of his progress. When they began hurling stones at him, he asked his mother, who lived at the foot of the pillar, for an axe, intending to show them that soldiers of Christ rate their attacks no more than juvenile insults. Throwing the roof that sheltered him to the ground, he faced without protection the hail of stones, prepared to die like Stephen the first Martyr, if that were the will of God. Alarmed by his boldness and unshakeable faith in God, the demons took flight from the place, bewailing their discomfiture.

Set in the sight of all like a lamp on its stand, the Saint gave light to all by his virtues (Matt. 5:14-16). He had overcome self-love and self conceit and offered himself like the Apostles as a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men for love of Christ (1 Cor. 4:9). Crowds of people made haste to the pillar, asking for the Stylite's intercession. The first of these was Euphemia, who was soon joined by another woman Eubula, who became abbess of the convent, which was established at one side of the pillar. Some time later, Alypius founded a monastery on the other side of the pillar for the men who wanted to stay by him. It was wonderful to hear the choir of virgins and that of the monks chanting the praises of God responsively seven times a day, and to behold the Saint, that earthly angel and heavenly man standing between the two, joining his voice to theirs and raising his hands to the Triune God in intercession for the salvation of the world.

The Saint received the gift of prophecy; he healed the sick, reconciled enemies, gave instruction in the mysteries of divine wisdom, either directly or in letters; he became all things to all men that he might by all means save some for Christ (1 Cor. 9:22). One day, having thrown down his tunic to a poor man in need, he remained shivering on the pillar until a recluse of the men's monastery saw his state and came to his assistance.

After fifty-three years of such ascetic contest, paralysis seized half his body, and his feet gave out. He could now only lie on one side, all but immobile, for the remaining fourteen years of his earthly life. Afflicted at the same time with a painful ulcer, he blessed the name of the Lord like righteous Job (Job 1:21). When

he gave up his soul to God at last, aged ninety-nine, the people hastened to venerate his body and a possessed man was healed in its presence. St. Alypius reposed in the year 640. The body of the venerable stylite was buried in the church he founded in honor of the holy Martyr Euphemia. His head is preserved in the Monastery of Koutloumousiou on Mount Athos. The feast day of Saint Alypius is celebrated on November 26. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:1-6 EOB

Brethren, this is why I, being a prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called. Walk with complete lowliness and humility, with patience, bearing with one another in love; being eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 13:10-17 EOB

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day. Behold, there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten herself up. When Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity!" He laid his hands on her and immediately, she stood up straight and glorified God. However, the ruler of the synagogue was indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. He said to the crowd, "There are six days in which people should work! Therefore, come on those days and be healed, not on the Sabbath day!" Then, the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each one of you free his ox or his donkey from the stall on the Sabbath, and lead it out to water? Should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham who was bound by Satan for eighteen years, be freed from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame and all the people rejoiced over all the glorious things that were done by him.

Homily on the Beatitudes 5

By Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos and Agiou Vlasiou

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

As we have repeatedly said in our analysis of the Beatitudes, there is a sequence and succession between them. Therefore, whoever is humble, has repented and is meek, and whoever hungers and thirsts for righteousness, will also be merciful. This is an ongoing evolution towards virtue, a constant journey to a life in God, a continuous ascent up Mount Sinai and Mount Tabor.

Thus, mercy is closely related with righteousness, as well as righteousness with mercy. One may have great zeal for the prevalence of justice between people, but this can be done without mercy, without love and without philanthropy. According to the Fathers of the Church righteousness is closely associated with love and sometimes they are identified with each other. The incarnation of Christ took place to restore the injustices of fallen humanity, and this restoration was done with the love and philanthropy of God.

If you read carefully the events that led to the fall of the First-formed, then you will find that the devil used God's commandment to not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and he misrepresented it to portray God as unjust. Thus, the devil committed the great injustice to capture man who belonged to God, since he was created by God, and thus he acquired something that he did not create nor belonged to him. This was an injustice. Christ by His incarnation restored this injustice with love, philanthropy as well as righteousness. He received voluntarily a mortal and suffering body, in which the hook of divinity was placed, and in this way He misled the devil, restoring the injustice, and thus liberating humanity from the dominion of the devil, death and sin. This was done with love and righteousness.

Therefore, it is not enough to only be just, but we must be merciful, to have love for others. Nor is it enough to have love and philanthropy, if we are not just. This means that righteousness is closely associated with mercy, with philanthropy.

However, the mercy which is praised and blessed by Christ is diverse, and not only the offering of some material goods and food. There are mainly three ways in which mercy is expressed.

The first way mercy is expressed is with money and material things in general. There are people who lack many material things, and even necessary things, in a time when they may be unemployed and lack income. In such situations we must locate their needs and help to the degree we can.

The second way mercy is produced is by offering to people good words. Many people are not deprived of material goods, but they lack love and lack a good word. Today wickedness among people is widespread, and they hear harsh words, thus their souls are deeply wounded and they need a word to heal. Many of us are ready to give material things to others, but we are completely unable to offer them a word of consolation, hope and life.

Above all, people today need a theological word, which moves beyond the social, psychological and humanist word. Many miracles take place today with the theological word. There are saints who do not work miracles, that is, they do not heal the physical illnesses of humanity, but they theologize, and they offer

Orthodox theology, and this theological word heals the traumas of the souls of people. Modern man has greater need of this.

Whoever is merciful will accept the love of others, because the spiritual law is enforced, by which there is returned to a person what they do for others, and at the same time they will receive mercy from God after their repose and at the Second Coming of Christ. Whoever offers mercy and love to others, will richly receive mercy and love from God. God is not unjust and operates more with those who love, forgive and bring benefit. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

A Word From the Holy Fathers

You have heard the words of the Apostle, in which he addresses the Thessalonians, prescribing rules of conduct for every kind of person. His teaching, to be sure, was directed towards particular audiences; but the benefit to be derived therefrom is relevant to every generation of mankind. Rejoice evermore, he says; Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks (I Thessalonians 5:16-18). Now, we shall explain a little later on, as far as we are able, what it means to rejoice, what benefit we receive from it, and how it is possible to achieve unceasing prayer and give thanks to God in all things.

However, it is necessary to anticipate the objections that we encounter from our adversaries, who criticize the Apostle's injunctions as unattainable. For what is the virtue, they say, in passing one's life in gladness of soul, in joy and good cheer night and day? And how is it possible to achieve this, when we are beset by countless unexpected evils, which create unavoidable dejection in the soul, on account of which it is no more feasible for us to rejoice and be of good cheer than for one who is being roasted on a gridiron not to feel agony or for one who is being goaded not to suffer pain?

And perhaps there is someone among those who are standing among us here who is ailing with this sickness of the mind and makes excuses in sins (Psalm 140:4, *LXX*), and who, through his own negligence in observing the commandments, attempts to transfer the blame to the law-giver for laying down things that are unattainable. How is it possible for me always to rejoice, he may ask, when I have no grounds for being joyous? For the factors that cause rejoicing are external and do not reside within us: the arrival of a friend, long-term contact with parents, finding money, honors bestowed on us by other people, restoration to health after a serious illness, and everything else that makes for a prosperous life: a house replete with goods of all kinds, an abundant table, close friends to share one's gladness, pleasant sounds and sights, the good health of our nearest and dearest, and whatever else gives them happiness in life. For it is not only the pains that befall us

which cause us distress, but also those that afflict our friends and relatives. It is from all of these sources, therefore, that we must garner joy and cheerfulness of soul.

In addition to these things, when we have occasion to see the downfall of our enemies, wounds inflicted on those who plot against us, recompense for our benefactors, and, in general, if no unpleasant circumstance whatsoever that would disturb our life is either at hand or expected, only then is it possible for joy to exist in our souls. How is it, therefore, that a commandment has been given to us that cannot be accomplished by our own choice, but depends on other antecedent factors? How am I to pray without ceasing, when the needs of the body necessarily attract the attention of the soul to themselves, given that the mind cannot attend to two concerns at the same time?

And yet, I have been commanded to give thanks in everything. Am I to give thanks when I am strapped to a rack, tortured, stretched out on a wheel, and having my eyes gouged out? Am I to give thanks when I am beaten with humiliating blows by one who hates me? When I am stiff from the cold, perishing from hunger, tied to a tree, suddenly bereft of my children, or deprived even of my very wife? If I lose my wealth as a result of a sudden shipwreck? If I run into pirates on the sea, or brigands on the mainland? If I am wounded, slandered, wander around, or dwell in a dungeon?

Raising these objections, and more besides, our adversaries find fault with the lawgiver, thinking that, by slandering the precepts that we have been given as impossible to fulfill, they furnish themselves with a defense for their own sins. What, therefore, shall we say in response to them?

That, while the Apostle is looking elsewhere and attempting to elevate our souls from the earth to the heights and to transport us to a heavenly way of life, they, unable to attain to the loftiness of the lawgiver's mind, and preoccupied with the earth and the flesh, crawl around in the passions of the body like worms in a swamp and demand that the Apostle issue precepts which are capable of being fulfilled. For his part, the Apostle summons not just anyone, but one who is as he was to rejoice always, no longer living in the flesh, but having Christ living in himself, since union with the highest good does not in any way allow sympathy for the demands of the flesh (*cf.* Gal. 2:20). And even if an incision is made in the flesh, the disintegration occasioned by its continued presence remains in the part of the body that suffers it, since the pain is unable to spread to the noetic part of the soul. For, if, in accordance with the Apostle's precept, we have mortified our members which are upon the earth (Col. 3:5) and we bear in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 4:10), necessarily the injury suffered by the mortified body

will not reach the soul which has been freed from contact with the body. Dishonor, losses, and deaths of our nearest and dearest will not rise up to the mind, nor will they incline the sublimity of the mind to sympathy with things below. For, if those who fall into difficulties have the same attitude as the virtuous man, they will not cause annoyance to anyone, seeing that not even they themselves endure sorrowfully what befalls them; but if they live according to the flesh (Rom. 8:13), not even in this way will they annoy anyone, but will be reckoned pitiable, not so much because of their circumstances, as because they do not choose to react properly.

In short, a soul which has once and for all been held fast by the desire for its Creator and is accustomed to delighting in the beauties of the heavenly realm will not alter its great joy and cheerfulness under the influence of carnal feelings, which are varying and unstable; but things which distress other people it will regard as increasing its own gladness. Such was the Apostle, who took pleasure in infirmities, in afflictions, in persecutions, and in necessities, counting his needs an occasion for glorying (2 Cor. 12:9-10); in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in persecutions and distresses (2 Cor. 12:10; 11:27), conditions in which others endure only with difficulty, bidding farewell to life: in these he rejoiced. Therefore, those who are ignorant of what the Apostle has in mind, and do not understand that he is calling us to the evangelical way of life, dare to accuse St. Paul of laying down things that are impossible for us. Well then, let them learn how many legitimate occasions for rejoicing are made available to us through God's munificence. We were brought from non-being into being; we were made in the image of the Creator (Gen. 1:27); we have the mind and reason to perfect our nature, and through them we have knowledge of God. And perceiving the beauties of nature carefully, we thereby recognize, as if through letters, God's great providence and wisdom concerning all things. We are capable of discerning good and evil; we are taught by nature itself to choose what is beneficial and to avoid what is harmful. Having been estranged from God through sin, we have been called back to kinship with Him, being released from ignominious slavery by the blood of His Only-begotten Son. We have the hope of resurrection, the enjoyment of Angelic goods, the Kingdom of Heaven, and promised goods, which transcend the grasp of mind and reason.

How is it not proper to think that these things are sufficient reasons for unending joy and unceasing gladness? How is it proper to suppose that one who is a glutton, who delights in hearing flute-playing, and who lies on a soft bed and snores, is living a life worthy of joy? I would say that such people are worthy of lamentation on the part of those who are endowed with intelligence, whereas we should call blessed those who endure the present life in the hope of the age to come and who

exchange present joys for eternal joys. Whether they stand amid flames, as did the three Youths in Babylon, who were united with God (Dan. 3:21), or are shut up with lions (Dan. 6:16-23), or swallowed by a whale (Jonah 2:1), we should call them blessed, and they should pass their lives in joy, not being distressed over present sufferings, but rejoicing in the hope of what is in store for us in the next life. For, in my opinion, a good athlete, once he has stripped down for the arena of piety, should valiantly endure the blows of his adversaries in hope of the glory that comes from crowns of victory. Indeed, in gymnastic contests, those who have become inured to pain in wrestling schools are not depressed at the prospect of suffering pain from blows, but advance to close quarters with their foes, disdain momentary pains in their desire to be publicly proclaimed victors. Thus, even if some misfortune befalls a virtuous man, it will not cast a shadow over his joy. For tribulation works patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope; and hope makes not ashamed (Rom. 5:3-5). Hence, in another place, Saint Paul enjoins us to be patient in tribulation and to rejoice in hope (Rom. 12:12). It is hope, therefore, that makes joy to dwell within the soul of a virtuous man. But the same Apostle bids us weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15); and, writing to the Galatians, he wept over the enemies of the Cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18). And what need have I to speak of the tears of Jeremiah (Lamentations), of Ezekiel writing lamentations over the rulers of Israel, at God's command (Ez. 2:9), or of many other Saints who mourned? "Alas, my mother, that you have borne me" (Jer. 15:10); "Woe is me, for the godly man has perished from the earth, and there is none among men who orders his way aright" (Micah 7:2); "Woe is me, for I am become as one gathering straw in the harvest" (Micah 7:1).

So, in a word, scrutinize the sayings of the righteous, and when anywhere you find one of them emitting a rather doleful expression, you will be convinced that all who are of this world bemoan the misery of the life that is led therein. "Woe is me, for my sojourning is prolonged" (Psalm 119:5, LXX). For the Apostle has a desire to depart, and to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23). He is, therefore, vexed at the prolongation of this earthly sojourn as an impediment to his joy. David, too, bequeathed to us a lamentation in song for his friend Jonathan, in which he also mourned for his enemy: "I am grieved for you, my brother Jonathan" (2 Kings 1:26); and: "O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul" (II Kings 1:24). He mourns for Saul, as one who died in sin, but for Jonathan, as one who shared his life in every respect. Why should I speak of the other examples? And yet, the Lord wept over Lazarus (John 11:35) and He wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), and He calls blessed those who mourn (Mat. 5:4) and likewise those who weep (Luke 6:21).

But how, you say, are these things to be reconciled with the words: Rejoice always? For weeping and joy do not derive from the same source. Weeping, for

example, is naturally engendered as a result of some blow, in which the involuntary impact strikes and constricts the soul, while the spirit surrounding the heart is depressed; but joy is like a leap of the soul, as it were, which rejoices at things that are under its control. Hence, the physical symptoms are different. For, in the case of those who are distressed, their bodies are sallow, livid, and cold, whereas in the case of those who feel joyous, the condition of their bodies is efflorescent and reddish, while their souls all but leap outwards, propelled by delight.

To this we will say that the Saints lamented and wept on account of their love for God. And so, ever beholding Him Whom they loved and increasing the gladness that they themselves derived from Him, they provided for the needs of their fellow-servants, mourning for those who sinned and correcting them through their tears. Just as people who stand on the shore and feel sympathy for those who are drowning in the sea do not jettison their own security in their concern for those in peril, so also, those who are distressed at the sins of their neighbors do not efface their own gladness; on the contrary, they increase it, being vouchsafed the joy of the Lord by virtue of the tears that they shed for their brothers. This is why those who weep and those who mourn are blessed, for they themselves will be comforted and they themselves will laugh. By laughter, one means not the sound which is emitted through the cheeks when the blood boils, but the cheerfulness which is pure and unmixed with any sadness. Therefore, the Apostle allows us to weep with those who weep, because tears of this kind are like the seed and pledge of eternal joy. Ascend with me in mind, please, and behold the Angelic estate and consider whether any other condition befits them than that of rejoicing and gladness; for they are vouchsafed to stand before God and enjoy the ineffable beauty of the glory of Him Who created us. And so, it is to that life that the Apostle urges us on, bidding us always to rejoice.

Now, as for the fact that the Lord wept over Lazarus and the city, we have this to say: He ate and drank, not because He needed these things Himself, but so as to leave you with measures and limits by which to control the unavoidable emotions of the soul. Thus, He wept in order to correct the propensity to excessive emotion and dejection among those given to mourning and lamentation. For if there is anything that needs to be moderated by reason, it is weeping: that is, over what things, to what extent, when, and how it is proper to weep. For that the Lord's weeping was not emotional, but didactic, is clear from this verse: "Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep" (John 11:11). Who among us mourns for a sleeping friend, whom he expects to awake after a short while? "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43). And the dead man was brought back to life; he who was bound walked. This is a miracle within a miracle: that his feet

were bound with grave-clothes and yet were not prevented from moving. That which strengthened him was greater than that which impeded him.

Why, therefore, did the Lord, Who was about to accomplish such things, judge the incident worthy of tears? Is it not clear that, disregarding our infirmity in every way, He contained the necessary emotions within certain measures and limits, avoiding a lack of sympathy, on the one hand, as something appropriate to wild beasts, and, on the other hand, refusing to give way to excessive grief and lamentation as something ignoble? Hence, in weeping over His friend, He both displayed that He Himself shared in our human nature, and freed us from either kind of extreme, allowing us neither to indulge our emotions nor to be unfeeling in the face of sorrows.

Therefore, just as the Lord accepted hunger, after digesting solid food, submitted to thirst, after the moisture in His body was consumed, and felt weary, when His muscles and nerves were strained from traveling—although it was not that His Divinity succumbed to weariness, but that His body accepted its natural attributes; so also, He accepted weeping, permitting a natural property of the flesh to supervene.... Hence, those who grieve feel a certain pleasure when they lament, because the burden that weighs on them is secretly evacuated through weeping. Experience of events proves the truth of this account. For we know many people who, in desperate straits, forcibly restrain themselves from weeping; then, in some cases, they fall into incurable sufferings, either apoplexy or paralysis, while in other cases, they completely faint, their strength having been broken down, like a weak support, by the weight of sorrow. For, what is observable in the case of fire, that it is stifled by its own smoke if it does not escape, but rolls around it—this, it is said, occurs also in the case of the faculty that governs a living creature; that is, it wastes away and is extinguished if there is no way for it to exhale.

Therefore, let those who are given to mourning not adduce the Lord's tears in support of their own weakness. For, just as the food which the Lord ate is not an occasion of pleasure for us, but, on the contrary, the highest criterion of restraint and sufficiency, so also, His weeping is not an ordinance prescribing lamentation, but is a most fitting measure and an exact standard whereby we may, with proper dignity and decorum, endure sorrows while remaining within the limits of our nature. Thus, neither women nor men are permitted to indulge in mourning and excessive weeping, but only to the extent that it is fitting to grieve over sorrows; they are permitted to shed a few tears, but this must be done calmly, without bellowing or wailing, without rending one's tunic or sprinkling oneself with dust, or committing any of the other improprieties that are typical of those who are ignorant of heavenly things. For one who has been purified by Divine doctrine must be fenced around by right reason, as by a strong wall, and must manfully and

strenuously ward off the onslaughts of such emotions; he must not accept any crowd of emotions that flows in, as it were, to some low-lying place, with a submissive and compliant soul.

It is the mark of a craven soul, and one that is lacking in the vigor that comes from hope in God, that it utterly collapses and succumbs to adversities. For, just as worms are particularly inclined to breed on more tender pieces of wood, so also sorrows grow in men of lesser moral fiber. Was not Job adamant in heart? Were his inward parts not made of stone? His ten children fell dead in one brief moment of time, overwhelmed by a calamity in the house of their gladness at a time of enjoyment, when the Devil brought down their dwelling upon them. He saw the table drenched with blood; he saw his children, who had been born at different times, but who had ended their lives together. He did not wail aloud; he did not pluck his hair out; he did not let out a degenerate cry; but he uttered that thanksgiving which is renowned and acclaimed by all: "the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; as it seemed good to the Lord, so has it come to pass; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21). Was this man not lacking in sympathy? How could this be so? For about himself, at any rate, he says: "I wept over every man who was afflicted" (Job 30:25). But was he not lying when he said this? But here, too, the truth bears witness to him that, in addition to his other virtues, he was also truthful: "...That man was blameless, righteous, godly, and truthful" (Job 1:1).

Yet many of you keep on wailing in dirges that are designed to express dejection, and you deliberately waste away your soul with mournful melodies; and, just like the make-believe and paraphernalia with which they adorn theaters to typify tragedies, so, also, you suppose that the proper outfit for a mourner consists of black clothing, squalid hair, dirt, and dust, complete with a darkened house and lugubrious chanting, which preserves the wound of grief ever fresh in the soul. Let those who have no hope do these things. You, however, have been taught, concerning those who repose in Christ, that it [the body] is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Why, then, do you weep for one who has gone to change his vesture? Neither mourn for yourself, as one who has been deprived of a helper in this life; for it is better to trust in the Lord than to trust in man (Psalm 117:8-9, LXX). Nor lament for this helper, as one who has suffered a terrible calamity. For, a little later, the trumpet sounding from Heaven will awaken him, and you will see him standing before the judgment-seat of Christ. So, dismiss these dejected and ignorant cries: Alas, these unexpected woes! Who would have thought that this would happen? Could I have ever anticipated that I would cover this dearest friend of mine with earth? If we should hear someone else saying such things, it behooves

us to blush, since we have been taught from both past memories and present experience that these natural occurrences are inevitable.

Therefore, neither untimely deaths nor other misfortunes that unexpectedly befall us will ever cause consternation in us who have been educated by the doctrine of piety. For example, let us say that I had a son who was a young man—the sole heir of my estate, the comfort of my old age, the adornment of his family, the flower of his peers, the support of his household, and at that time of life which is most charming—, this lad having been carried off by death, he becoming earth and dust who, a short while ago, uttered sweet sounds and was a most pleasing sight in the eyes of his father. What, then, am I to do? Shall I rend my clothing? Shall I consent to roll around on the ground, scream in vexation, and act in front of those present like a child crying out in pain and having convulsions? Rather, paying heed to the inevitability of events, that the law of death is inexorable and affects every age-group alike, dissolving all compound things in order, surely I should not be surprised at what has happened. Surely I should not be upset in my mind, as if I had been devastated by some unexpected blow, since I have been taught beforehand that, being mortal, I had a mortal son, that there is no constancy in human affairs, and that nothing wholly abides for those who possess it.

Why, even great cities, which were renowned for the elegance of their buildings and the abilities of their inhabitants, and conspicuous for their prosperity both in the countryside and in the marketplace, now display tokens of their erstwhile dignity only in ruins. A ship which has frequently been preserved from the sea, and which has made countless speedy voyages and conveyed innumerable amounts of merchandise for traders, vanishes with a single gust of wind. Armies which have many times defeated their foes in battle have, on suffering a reversal of fortune, become a pitiful sight and one pitiful to relate. Entire nations and islands, which have attained great power, and have raised many trophies both by land and by sea, and have gathered much wealth from booty, have either been consumed by the passage of time or been taken captive and exchanged their liberty for enslavement. Indeed, in short, whatever great and unbearable evil you care to mention, life already has prior examples of it.

Therefore, just as we determine weights by a turn of the scale and assay gold by rubbing it with a touchstone, so also, if we were to remember the limits revealed to us by the Lord, we would never exceed the bounds of prudence. Whenever, therefore, any involuntary adversity befalls you, by virtue of being mentally prepared, you will avoid confusion, and you will make light of present afflictions by your hope for the future. For, just as those whose eyes are weak divert their gaze from things that are excessively bright and give them rest by looking at flowers and grass, so, also, the soul must not constantly behold that which causes

grief or be fixated on present sorrows, but must direct its gaze towards what is truly good. In this way will it be feasible for you always to rejoice, if your life always looks towards God and if hope of recompense alleviates life's sorrows.

Have you been dishonored? Then have regard for the glory which is laid up in Heaven through patient endurance. Have you suffered a loss? Then contemplate the heavenly wealth and treasure which you have laid up for yourself through your good deeds. Have you been expelled from your homeland? Then you have Jerusalem as your heavenly homeland. Have you lost a child? Then you have Angels, with whom you will dance around the Throne of God, rejoicing eternally. By thus opposing anticipated good things to present sorrows, you will keep your soul in the cheerfulness and tranquility to which the Apostle's precept summons us. Neither let the joys of human affairs create immoderate and excessive gladness in your soul, nor let sorrows diminish its exultation and sublimity by feelings of dejection and abasement. Unless you have previously trained yourself in this way regarding the eventualities of life, you will never have a calm and tranquil life. But you will easily achieve this if you have dwelling within you the commandment which advises you always to rejoice, dismissing the vexations of the flesh and gathering that which gladdens the soul, transcending the sensation of present realities and extending your mind to the hope of eternal realities, the mere thought of which is sufficient to fill the soul with rejoicing and to make Angelic exultation reside in our hearts; in Christ Jesus our Lord, to Whom be the glory and the dominion, unto the ages. Amen.

— St. Basil the Great, *Homily on Thanksgiving*

St. Magnentia, Virgin of Auxerre

Saint Magnentia (it: Magnenzia; fr: Magnence, Magnance) lived in the fourth century in Italy. She came from a distinguished family of some importance, and like four other virgins of similar background, she became a consecrated virgin. Their names were Porcaria, Palladia, Camilla and Maxima. They turned their backs on this world and vowed to live a holy life in eternal virginity. Some of them, possibly all, may have been carnal sisters.

In his old age, the holy bishop Germanus of Auxerre (c. 378-448) went to the imperial city of Ravenna in Italy to intercede with the emperor Valentinian III (425-55) and his mother Galla Placidia for the people of Armorica (now Brittany), who was in conflict with the Imperial Viceroy of Gaul. The rumor of his preaching caused the five virgins to go to Ravenna and become his disciples. But there the bishop fell ill and died on 31 July 448, nursed to the last by the five virgins. Just before his death he expressed a wish that his body would be brought back to

Auxerre, and his popularity in Ravenna was so great that this wish was immediately granted.

In his pamphlet on the miracles of Germanus, Hericus (Ericio), a monk of Auxerre in the 8th century, wrote that the body of the holy bishop was accompanied from Ravenna to France by a large group of believers, and among these were the five virgins, who are the only companions whose names we have been handed down. The procession proceeded very slowly, as the casket was carried on the shoulders of alternate men, and this enabled a multitude of pious persons to follow it from all the towns on the way, and follow it for some distance. Along the entire route from Ravenna to Auxerre, pilgrims take turns rehabilitating roads and bridges to ease the journey. But the road from Ravenna to Auxerre is long and the journey tiring, so three of the maidens died on the journey, Magnentia, Palladia and Camilla.

They were solemnly buried along the road where they died, and soon churches were built over their graves and dedicated to them. Many miracles happened there, and people soon revered them as saints. Magnentia was the most vulnerable of the girls, and after crossing the Alps, she fell ill, only a few days' walk from her destination. The disease proved fatal, and she died by the roadside near Avallon, having asked her friends to bury her in the ground then and there and continue her journey to Auxerre. Closer to the goal, Palladia and Camilla also died, but Porcaria and Maxima followed Germanus' body to Auxerre, where he was given a glorious burial.

After that, Magnentia was not heard of again for a century and a half, and the place where she was buried, outside the village of Saint-Pierre-sous-Cordois, remained unknown. Legend has it that in the 6th century a pilgrim in search of a place to sleep came to the place where Magnentia was buried. As a pillow he used the head of a horse skeleton. During the night he had a dream that a snake emerged from the horse's head and tried to break into his mouth. He woke up, panicked, and then had a vision of two girls who introduced themselves as Magnentia and Palladia and reassured him that the snake had escaped and that they had woken him up to save his life.

The next day the man went to the nearby village of Saint-Pierre-sous-Cordois and told his story. What had happened was believed to be a miracle, and after digging at the place indicated by the pilgrim, a skeleton of a woman was discovered and transported to the village. It then became known as Sainte-Magnance (89420) in the department of Yonne in the region of Burgundy. In the 14th century, a tomb was built for Magnentia. On it was a depiction of the Blessed Virgin dying in a bed surrounded by other virgins. This tomb was long preserved, but has now been lost. *(adapted from katolsk.no)*

Also Commemorated Today

Repose of St. [Innocent](#), first bishop of Irkutsk (1731).

New Hieromartyrs [Nicholas](#), [John](#), [Gregory](#) and [Nazarius](#), [Basil](#), [Basil](#), [Ilia](#), [Basil](#), [Daniel](#), [Michael](#), Nicholas priests, New Hieromartyr [Tikhon](#) (1937).

New Hieromartyr Piter (after 1937).

Venerable [James](#) the Solitary of Syria (457).

Venerable [Nicon](#) Metanoeite ("[Preacher](#) of Repentance") of Armenia (998).

New Martyr [George](#) of Chios (1807) (Greek) ([service in Greek](#)).

Venerables [Athanasius](#) and Theodosius of Cherepovets (1382), disciples of St. Sergius of Radonezh.

Venerable [Stylian](#) of Paphlagonia, monk (Greek).

St. [Sophianos](#), Bishop of Dryinoupolis (1711)(Greek)

St. [Silas](#), bishop of Persidos (Greek).

St. [Peter](#), patriarch of Jerusalem (552).

St. [Acacius](#) of Mt. Latros (6th c.) (Greek).

St. [Amator](#), first bishop of Autun (Burgundy)(270)

St. [Basolus](#) ([Basle](#)), hermit-monk near Reims (France)(620)

St. [Conrad](#), bishop of [Constance](#) (Germany)(975)

St. [Egelwine](#) of Athelney, Prince of Wessex (7th c.)

St. [Martin](#), priest-monk of [Arades](#) (France)(726)

St. [Siricius](#), pope of Rome (399)

St. [Vacz](#), hermit in Visegrád (Hungary)(11th c.)

Social Team for December 3

Team 2 – Dewey, Carrie LaMere. Thank you!

Distinguished Diocesan Donors Program

Dear Diocesan Clergy, Faithful and Friends,

Glory to Jesus Christ!

On this day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God for his many blessings upon us as a Diocese, Parish and faithful, we invite you to offer thanks to God by supporting the vital ministries of our Diocese, most notably our Diocesan Youth Camp, Camp Nazareth and our Information Technology Ministries.

For many years, our Diocese has asked its faithful to provide direct tangible support through our Distinguished Diocesan Donors Program. Thanks to your support we have been able to do great things to minister to the people of God, and especially our Youth through our amazing, state of the art, Youth camp, Camp Nazareth.

We are asking you, on this day for your continued support and if you have not already done so to make a sacrificial donation to the DDD Program for 2023. There are so many needs yet to be fulfilled that with your support can become a reality. You can do so by designating a portion of your church offering, or right now online by clicking here to donate through our secure donation portal, <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/distinguisheddiocesandonors> .

Again, thank you for your past support and for your anticipated positive response to this request.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

The Diocesan Chancery Staff.

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

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

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

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/acrodnews>

You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

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. Nectaros & 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.)