

# SOBORNOST

**St. Thomas the Apostle  
Orthodox Church**

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*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

## SERVICES

**Wed: Reader Vespers 6:30 PM**

**Saturday: Confession 4:30 PM**

**Vespers 5 PM**

**Sunday: Matins 8:45 AM | Sunday School 9:30 AM**

**~ Divine Liturgy 10 AM ~**

**January 19, 2025 – 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost Cai  
Venerable Macarius the Great of Egypt**

By Protopresbyter Fr. George Papavarnavas

Saint Makarios the Egyptian lived in the fourth century. He spent most of his life in the desert with abstinence and prayer. His ascetic warfare is indeed miraculous and his teaching is the fruit of experience. That is, what he teaches is true theology, life-giving and salvific phrases, that come from a heart that is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is why they sweeten the mind and heart and create inspiration and the mood for prayer.

The more he sought silence and hesychasm the more fame chased him, which is why very many people ran to the desert to hear his wise teachings and to be fed spiritually. Then he, having understood that a crowd of people gathered outside his cell, left through an underground tunnel which he had dug in part with his hands, that led to a cave, where he continued his prayer and beloved hesychasm. He did this out of love for people and not indifference toward them, since he loved them truly, and felt that he benefited them more with his prayers than with his words.



His prayers had great power and through this God performed many wonders, many of which are recorded in detail by the historian Palladius, such as healing the sick and the demon possessed, as well as raising the dead.

One of the many miracles that God performed after having heard the prayer of His servant Makarios is the following:

One day a man was secretly murdered and soldiers without knowing who was guilty arrested an innocent man. He protested and shouted that he was innocent, but the soldiers did not listen so they led him to justice. However, he was able to escape and he fled to the cell of the venerable Makarios. Soldiers entered the cell, arrested him and tied him up, meanwhile he kept shouting that he was innocent. The Venerable One took pity on him and went with all of them to the grave of the man who was murdered. He knelt and prayed fervently and after asked the murdered man if the alleged perpetrator was the one who murdered him. Then a voice was heard from the grave saying this man was innocent and that "another man murdered me, honorable Father". The Venerable One thanked him and told him to rest in peace. Then the soldiers freed the innocent man and pleaded with the Venerable One to show the guilty man by asking once again the man who was murdered. The venerable Makarios told them that it was sufficient that they were assured that the innocent man should not be punished and that he himself was not a judge to punish the one who was guilty.

In the Synaxaria there are cases mentioned which are both instructive and impressive. One of them is the following:

At one time as he was walking he encountered two youths of different sexes walking and passionately embracing one another. Instead of the Venerable One condemning them, he spoke to himself saying: "You miserable one, do you have as much love for Christ as these two youth together?" In this way he humbled himself, and condemnation departed.

He reposed in peace at an old age of around 90. The sacred hymnographer, speaking of the venerable Makarios, says among other things the following:

"Striving for the blessedness that far surpasses the mind of man, O wondrous one, you reckoned strict abstinence as pleasure, poverty as riches, indigence as a secure possession and good glory as moderation. According to your purpose, therefore, you have found your desire on high, O Makarios, dwelling now in the bright mansions of the Saints." (Vespers Sticheron)

In other words, the Venerable One loved God above all things and did not covet the temporary and perishable, but rather the blessedness of His Kingdom. For this reason he considered abstinence a delight, poverty as true wealth, landlessness as a

secure possession and humility as true glory. This is why he managed to enjoy what he longed for and for which he struggled and now rejoices eternally in the heavenly mansions with the all the Saints.

The life and deeds of the venerable Makarios give us the opportunity to emphasize the following:

True wealth is that which does not wear away and thieves are unable to steal and remove it from the owner. Such is voluntary poverty obtained through charity, which in actuality is a deposit in the "treasury bank" of heaven. The wealth of a purified heart from the passions is a secure possession, because within this is treasured the uncreated Grace of God.

Anyone who hunts for temporary wealth and ephemeral glory in actuality divests themselves of freedom which was endowed by God, and they enslave themselves to people, who, in one way or another, helped him to obtain it, because they have them in the palm of their hand, as it is commonly called, and they can blackmail them whenever they want. Anyone who freely enslaves themselves to God and lives under His protection, according to His will, they, according to the venerable Makarios, accept "strength from on high and the heavenly love of the Spirit, and having received the heavenly fire of eternal life, they are loosed from every worldly and false love and are freed from every bond to evil". They remain truly free to love and do what is good and pleasing to God.

Someone who is truly free does not do what the passions, vices and weaknesses dictate, so that they sin, hate, tear down and destroy, but it is one who loves selflessly and respects, and who offers and is a benefactor in every way to his fellow man. (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Colossians 3:12-16 EOB**

Brethren, as God's elect, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, humility, and perseverance. Bear with one another, and forgive each other! If anyone has a complaint against anyone else, forgive, even as Christ forgave you.

Above all, walk in love, which is the bond of perfection. Let the peace of God (to which also you were called in one body) rule in your hearts, and be thankful! Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. In all wisdom, teach and admonish each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord.

### **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 18:35-43 EOB**

At that time, as Jesus was approaching Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the road, begging. Hearing a crowd going by, he asked what this meant. People told him

that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. He began to cry out, "Jesus, you son of David, have mercy on me!" Then, those who led the way rebuked him, ordering him to be quiet. But the blind man cried out all the more, "You son of David, have mercy on me!" Standing still, Jesus commanded that the blind man be brought to him. When the man had come near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do?" The man replied, "Lord, that I may see again!" Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight. Your faith has healed you." Immediately, the man received his sight and began to follow Jesus, glorifying God. When all the people saw this, they praised God.

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

[If] an earthly, loving participation of spouses can separate the pair from their fathers, brothers, mothers, and all other things become for them rather extrinsic in their way because of their deep conjugal love for each other—for it is said: "For this reason, let a man leave his father and mother and adhere to his wife and they will be two in one flesh" (Gn 2:24)—if, therefore, I say, earthly love can detach one from all other loves, how much more in the case of those who have been made worthy to enter into a true fellowship with that Holy Spirit, the heavenly and loving Spirit? They shall be freed from all worldly love. All other things will seem indifferent to them since they have been conquered by a heavenly yearning and have become totally one in that surrendered state.

Therefore, O beloved brethren, since such good things have been offered to us and such wonderful promises have been made to us by the Lord, let us get rid of all obstacles. Let us renounce all love for the world and devote ourselves to that one good by a thorough seeking and yearning so that we may become sharers in that ineffable love of the Spirit about which St. Paul urged us to hasten after: "Seek after charity," he says (1 Cor 14:1), so that we may be considered worthy to be converted from our hardness by the right hand of the Most High and reach that spiritual sweetness and rest, having been wounded by the love of the Divine Spirit.

The Lord, indeed, is the Lover of mankind, so full of tender compassion whenever we turn completely toward him and are freed from all things contrary. Even though we, in our supreme ignorance, childishness, and tendency toward evil, turn away from true life and place many impediments along our path because we really do not like to repent, nevertheless, he has great mercy on us. He patiently waits for us until we will be converted and return to him and be enlightened in our inner selves that our faces may not be ashamed in the day of judgment.

If that seems difficult and troublesome to us because practicing virtue is hard, but, more so, because of the insidious suggesting of the adversary, still he is very full of compassion, long-suffering and patient as he waits for our conversion. And when

we do sin, he is ready to lift us up for he desires our repentance. And when we fall, he is not ashamed to take us back, as the Prophet said: "When men fall, do they not rise again? Or if one turns away, does he not return?" (Jer 8:4). We only have to have a sincere heart and live in vigilance and be converted immediately after seeking his help and he himself is most ready to save us. For he looks for our ardent will, as best we can, to turn toward him. When we show good faith and promptness glowing from our desiring, then he works in us a true conversion.

Let us then, O beloved, show, as children of God, diligence and be prompt to follow him, by casting aside all preoccupation, carelessness, and laziness. Let us not postpone day after day this work of preventing evil from controlling us. For we do not know the hour when we will have to leave this life. Great and ineffable are the promises held out to Christians, so great, indeed, that all the glory and beauty of heaven and - 57- earth and all the other attractions in such variety, the riches and comeliness, the delights of visible scenes, cannot measure up to the faith and riches of a single soul.

How is it possible that in the face of so many exhortations and promises, we still refuse to accept totally to go to him and surrender ourselves completely to him? How can we refuse, as the Gospel says, to deny all other things, even our own soul (Lk 14:26), and to seek him alone with our love and give it to nothing else? But, look, all these things and such glory given! Look at all the loving dispositions of God manifested in the times of the fathers and the prophets! What promises! And 45 what exhortations! What great mercy of the Lord has been shown us from the very beginning!

Finally, in his own coming on this earth he has shown to us an ineffable kindness through his crucifixion in order to convert us and bring us into life. And yet, we do not will to give up our love for the world nor our evil tendencies and habits. In this way we show ourselves persons of little or absolutely no good faith. And in spite of all this, he still shows himself kind to us. He protects and cherishes us invisibly, not turning us over (according to our sinful deserts) to the deceits of evil and the world. He, in his great compassion and long- suffering, watches from above, waiting for the time we shall return to him.

– Ven. Macarius the Egyptian, *Spiritual Homily 4.15-18*

## **Virgin-Martyr Euphrasia of Nicomedia**

*Through a wise falsehood you fled wanton violence against the flesh, and truly you contested by the sword Euphrasia.*

This Saint was from the city of Nicomedia, and lived during the reign of Emperor Maximian (285-305). She was from a notable family, and was of a sensible and

pious mind. After being betrayed as a Christian, and being unpersuaded to offer sacrifice to the demons, she was harshly lashed. Remaining steadfast in her confession of the Christian faith, for this reason she was handed over to a barbaric man in order to be dishonored. However the Saint fooled him in this wise manner.

The Saint promised that barbarian, that if he did not touch her, she would give him medicine that would protect him from every sword and arrow of the enemy. Saying this, she also promised saying, "If you want to find out what I tell you is true, try it on my neck," and immediately she laid bare her neck. The barbarian, thinking that she was speaking words of truth, struck with strength at her neck with his sword, and he cut off her holy head.

In this way she remained undefiled, and the blessed one received the unfading crown of martyrdom. *(from Johnsandidopoulos.com)*

### **Also Commemorated Today**

St. Mark, archbishop of Ephesus (1444).

Blessed Theodore of Novgorod, fool-for-Christ (1392).

Venerable Macarius the Roman of Novgorod (1550).

New Hieromartyr Peter priest (1918).

New Hieromartyr Nicholas priest (1930).

Martyr Theodore (1940).

Venerable Macarius of the Kiev Caves (12th c.).

Venerable Macarius, deacon of the Kiev Caves (13th-14th c.).

Opening of the relics of Venerable Sabbas of Storozhev or Zvenigorod (1652).

Venerable [Macarius](#) of Alexandria (394).

Venerable Anton the Stylite of Martqophi, Georgia (6th c.) (Georgia).

St. Arsenius, archbishop of Kerkyra (Corfu) (953).

St. Branwalader (Breward, Brevalaer) of Cornwall and the Channel Islands, Bishop of Jersey (6th c.) (Celtic & British).

Venerable Meletius, confessor of Mt. Galesion, monk (1286) (Greek).

Translation of the relics (950) of St. Gregory the Theologian (389).

Martyr Anthony Rawah the Qpraisite (8th c.).

St. Blaithmaic of Iona, Martyr (Blaithmac, Blathmac, Blaithmale) (823)

St. Laumer (Lhomer, Lomer, Laudomarus), bishop of Chartres (593) (France)

St. Nathalan, bishop of Tullicht (c. 678)

Hieromartyr Arcontius, bishop of Viviers (8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> c.) (Gaul)

St. Bassian, bishop of Lodi (413) (Italy)

St. Catellus, bishop of Castellamare (9<sup>th</sup> c.) (Italy)

St. Contestus, bishop of Bayeux (c. 510) (Gaul)

St. Firminus, third bishop of Babales (Gévaudan) (unk) (Gaul)

Martyrs Marius (Maris), his wife Martha & sons Audifax and Abachum, of Persia (c. 270)  
St. Messalina, virgin-martyr of Foligno (251) (Italy)  
Martyrs Paul, Gerontius, Januarius, Saturninus, Successus, Julius, Catus, Pia, and Germana of Numidia (2<sup>nd</sup> c. ?) (N. Africa)  
Martyr Pontian of Spoleto (169) (Italy)  
St. Remigius, bishop of Rouen (c. 772) (Gaul)  
St. Wulstan, bishop of Worcester (1095) (last English bishop appointed by a Saxon king, St. Edward)  
St. [Makarios](#) Kalogeras, Founder of the Patmias School of Patmos (1737) (Greek)  
Commemoration of the [miracle](#) of St. Basil the Great against the Arians (4<sup>th</sup> c.)

## **Social Team for January 26**

Team 4 is up next week – Carol V., Joseph Frey, Jacob Blankenbaker. Thank you!

## **Save the Date!**

Even with the overturn of Roe v. Wade, the hard work of creating a pro-life culture has a long way to go. So, the annual March for Life in Washington, DC will continue to gather hundreds of thousands of people from all over the country to pray together and stand for life. As usual, parishioners from St. Thomas will meet behind the Orthodox Christians for Life banner on the Mall on January 24. See <https://www.oclife.org/march> for further details.

### **Follow Our Diocese On-Line**

**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, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, Helen P. Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Johnson family, 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 & the Holy Land, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)