

# 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**

**February 16, 2025 – Sunday of the Prodigal Son**

“How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” (from Psalm 137, sung at matins this Sunday and the two following – Ed.) How shall we, who have gone off into a far country, like the prodigal son, sing hymns and chant psalms with understanding and joy?

We have to constantly enlighten our minds with spiritual reading, patient meditation on psalms and Scripture, striving to fulfill the righteousness that is found in them by constant prayer; if we don’t, we easily become lost in a negligent way of life.

Negligence leads to an inattentive and distracted life, scattering the senses; scattered senses confuse the thinking; confusion leads to agitation and anxiety; anxiety leads to anguish and sorrow; sorrow to bitterness; bitterness to wrath; wrath to hatred; hatred to spiritual death; spiritual death imprisons a man in dark and wicked despair, causing loss of feeling, carelessness.

This numbness moves us to seek quick and easy pleasures that excite the flesh in an immediate and noticeable way: gourmandizing, drunkenness, lust, mindless



amusement, worldly talk, thoughtless babbling, materialism, laziness, aimless wandering of body and mind and earthly ambitions.

These passions cast out from our soul all fear of God and reverence for others; then, steadfast and living faith in God disappears, which brings coldness of heart; then this gives place to arrogance, ambitious striving against others, and pride; and demonic pride fills us with hard-heartedness, disdain, envy, stubbornness, self-will, harshness, slander, sharp reproach, condemnation and critical judgment of others; these things blind and harden a man completely; and this demonic state shuts out the glorious and most gentle light of the grace of God.

Cut off from the awareness of this divine light, we are cut off from the life which is in God, imprisoned within ourselves, cut off from others, made subject to the whims of the demons, and are torn apart in every which-way by countless painful passions.

All this comes to pass in us simply because we neglected the very small duties that are given to us for our spiritual nourishment and salvation. Neglecting them, we wander into a faraway and strange land, suffering from the famine that is there; “not a famine of bread, but a famine of the word of God.”

We are blessed with a second conscience which corrects our blind and insensitive consciences: many various books of Scripture and Patristic writings, and the Church’s wealth of psalms, hymns and prayers; that we might think on them, mentally chew on them, digest them, be filled and nourished by them, turning them into prayer; that we might grow into God.

St. Isaac says: “There is nothing so capable...of driving away those active memories which rebel in our flesh and which produce a turbulent flame, as to immerse oneself in the fervent love of instruction, and to search closely into the depth of the meanings of divine Scripture...if the mind swims on the surface of the waters, that is, of the sea of the divine Scriptures, and its perceptions cannot fathom the great depth so as to be able to grasp all the treasures in its deep, yet even this practice in itself, by the power of its fervent love, will suffice the mind firmly to pinion its thoughts by a single thought of wonder, and to prevent them from hastening toward the body’s nature...if the heart is not occupied with [this] study, it cannot endure the turbulence of the body’s assault.”

The Three Great Hierarchs, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, swam day and night in the word of God. They could recall and expound upon the most ambiguous proverbs...they could dive deeply into the ancient histories of God’s chosen people, and draw out the inner meaning of these histories in order to illumine us with active faith in God’s providence over our own spiritual lives; and they have given us the most penetrating insights into the Gospel

and the incarnate dispensation of Christ. Not only this; but they imbibed all these things so deeply that they themselves became eternal, living and active words of God for the whole Church to read by contemplation and imitation of their amazing, Christ-like lives.

On the other hand, there is a simple story about Abba Pambo: completely uneducated and illiterate, he went to one of the lettered fathers in order to learn Scripture. The first words he heard from him were the first verse of psalm 38: “I said: I will take heed to my ways, lest I sin with my tongue.” Upon hearing these words, he left, and tried to fulfill these words in practice. Six months later, his teacher met him and reproached him for not returning to him. But, Abba Pambo said that he had not yet learned to do what he was already taught. Later he was asked if he had fulfilled this verse; and he responded that after *19 whole years* of struggle, he had finally just barely fulfilled these words.

Elder Anatoly of Optina, in one of his letters to a nun who was downcast that she could not remember what she read, counseled her to focus on one commandment: particularly, love for neighbor. He told her to always try to fulfill this, and this would be of greater profit than knowing every word of Scripture and the Fathers without any struggle for the virtues they teach.

Our constant struggle, then, is to gather our scattered senses into the harbor of an attentive mind through reading, watchfulness, attentive service to others, the cutting off of evil thoughts and passions, constant repentance, and unceasing forceful prayer and seeking of God. *This* is the truest asceticism: the constant effort to enter into our heart.

But, the soul that has wandered into the strange and faraway land of the passions, and is left empty and in anguish, and realizes its great mistake of wandering there, cries out to the Lord: “My soul hath thirsted for Thee. How often hath my flesh longed after Thee, in a land barren and untrodden and unwatered...as with marrow and fatness let my soul be filled!”

When we finally wake up, and see ourselves stooped over like a wild, ravenous and unreasoning beast—taking our fill of fleshly pleasures, vain entertainments, mindless distractions, ambitious strivings against others and arrogant fits of inhuman malice—when we come to ourselves, and behold the evil stench that we are consuming and being consumed by...then we cry out to God with remorse and pain, heavy laden as we are by our guilt.

We are brought low to despair...but, nonetheless, deep down within us, a small spark of hope is still lit...and we cry out from our most inner depths to God—or rather, the Holy Spirit intercedes from within us, where He has been secretly planted since our Baptism or Chrismation, and He Himself cries out in our hearing

unto the Most High Father—“Men and beasts wilt Thou save, O Lord! O how Thou hast multiplied Thy mercy!”

St. John of Karpathos says: “Sin itself drives us towards God, once we repent (that is) and have become aware of its burden, foul stink and insanity. But, if we refuse to repent, sin does *not* drive us towards God. In itself it holds us fast with bonds that we cannot break, making the desires which drive us to our own destruction all the more vehement and fierce.”

What do we love instead of God? What do we covet, idolize and place above that priceless inner treasure: a peaceful soul, a mind illumined by the simple and gentle light of God’s grace, and glorious spiritual thoughts which ignite divine longing within us?

What do we value above that priceless stillness of heart, that blissful awe of silent gazing upon God’s incomprehensible glory, and that partaking of His eternal life, light and love which dwells within, and pours forth without measure upon all the world of angels and saints, from the Three Divine Persons, our One God?

What are we living for? What are we striving for? Why have we entered the Church? Why have we come to the Monastery? What do we breathe and live for? What are we truly seeking? What do we love?

Is God our treasure? Is the Holy Spirit our constant love Whom we covet above all else? Do we comprehend that Jesus mystically dwells within our hearts? Do we not know that our very bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit? Do we not know our own selves: that Jesus Christ is *in* us? Do we not understand that God is closer to us than we are to our own selves? Do we not seek to enter into ourselves, and from there into God? Do we not understand this most great mystery?

If we truly understood it, then we would constantly cast off all distractions and every hindrance, and try to regain custody of our selves, and strive to enter within ourselves, circumcising the foreskin of our hardened hearts grown coarse through earthly-mindedness by the sword of the Spirit, the All-Holy Name of Christ and the many, various words of God. Cutting through all this coarseness, which surrounds our hearts and keeps us from entering therein, we would hack our way through the veil of the passions and find that calm harbor, the Kingdom of God which is within us wherein Christ our King dwells in peace and great glory with His bright angels.

This mystery has been hidden within God’s mind and heart since before the ages; no angel knew of it; but now, the Church, this lowly race of Christian men and women, we have revealed it to the angels! The angels marvel; but we seek distraction. The whole world is in anguish and seeks the attainment of spiritual

peace which rests in God, this secret which the Church possesses, but it goes astray and does not find it; while we know where it lies but neglect it.

We are called to become higher than angels; the apostle calls out to us, beckoning us to not mind the things of this earth, but to set our gaze, all our thoughts and all our love and striving, upon the throne of God Who dwells above the whole universe, above all the heavens, above all the most glorious ranks of angelic beings...Christ has set us down upon this throne; He has graced us with unfathomable riches; the Holy Fathers proclaim His unutterable goodness: that, in Himself, Christ has made our lowly human nature equal to the Father, giving us all that is His!

This is the treasure of the Church! This is the great proclamation of the grace of God! These are the good tidings of the Gospel! This is the summit of the Bible's teaching, the height of human thought and effort, the meaning of life, the motivation for all our struggles. But we are still numb and sleepy.

What a grace we are given! We should fall down in this Church at this very moment, prostrate in fear, trembling, thanksgiving and compunction before the Almighty and Most-Good God, crying out to Him and worshipping Him with ineffable and unquenched longing, with unrestrained weeping! Yet, we lie prostrate in spiritual exhaustion; we are taken captive, and we dwell in a strange land, the land of forgetfulness and numbness.

Let us come to ourselves like the prodigal; let us, like him, speak firm words of resolve to our own souls: "I *will* arise and go to my Father"; and the Gracious God will perfect our small intention. He knows that we do not know the way to Him, or the manner in which to traverse it; but, hearing us say: "Ready is my heart, O God, ready is my heart", and seeing us begin our journey towards Him, He will then *rush out* to us, falling on us, and kissing our neck: He will send His All-Accomplishing Holy Spirit upon us, and guide us into all truth, not only in our understanding, but in all our deeds, all our life.

The Holy Spirit Himself will clothe us in Christ, in that glorious and royal robe of all the God-like virtues; He will place the ring upon our finger, that is, He will wed our soul unto God; and the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, together with all the angels and saints will make merry with us who have turned from our vain pursuits and evil sins.

God will sacrifice the fatted calf, nourishing us with the fullness of His inexhaustible cup of grace, the Body and Blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, granting our souls eternal, divine communion with Himself, a union which will never cease to flourish, but will grow and grow unto the ages of ages! Forgive me.  
(From *holycross.org*)

## **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 6:12-20 EOB**

Brethren, You say: "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial." "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be brought under the power of anything. "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," but God will bring to nothing both of these. However, the body is not for sexual immorality, it is for the Lord; and the Lord is made for the body. Now, God raised up the Lord, and he will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! Or do you not know that whoever is joined to a prostitute is one body? For God says, "The two will become one flesh." But whoever who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Flee sexual immorality! "Every sin that a person can do is outside the body," but whoever commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit which dwells in you, and which you have from God? You are not your own! You were bought with a price! Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which belong to God.

## **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 15:11-32 EOB**

The Lord said this parable, "A certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that will come to me.' So the father divided his livelihood between them. A few days later, the younger son gathered all that he had and traveled to a far country. There, he squandered his property, living immorally. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place in that country, and he began to be in need. He went and hired himself to one of the citizens of that country who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. He wanted to feed himself with the husks that the pigs ate, but no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough to spare, and I am dying with hunger! I will get up, go to my father, and tell him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you! I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants."' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still at a distance, his father saw him and was moved with compassion. He ran, and embraced his son, and kissed him. Then the son said, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you! I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the first robe and put it on him! Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet! Bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this, my son, was dead, and he is alive again! He was lost and [now he] is found!' And they began to celebrate.

Now, his elder son was in the field. As he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing. Calling one of the servants, he asked what was going on. The

servant replied, ‘Your brother has returned! Your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and healthy.’ However, the elder son became angry and he would not go in. Therefore, his father came out and begged him. But he answered his father, ‘Look, for so many years I have served you, and I have never disobeyed a commandment of yours. Yet, you never gave me a goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this, your son, arrived, he who has devoured your living with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’ The father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours! But it was fitting to celebrate and to rejoice, for this, your brother, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost and is found!’”

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

“I will break away and return to my father.” The prodigal who spoke these words was lying prostrate on the ground. He has pondered his fall, taken stock of his ruin, found himself mired in sin, and so he exclaims: “I will break away and return to my father.” What is the basis for such hope, such assurance, and such confidence on his part? The very fact that it is his father to whom he will return. “I have forfeited my sonship,” he tells himself, “but he has not forfeited his fatherhood. There is no need for a stranger to intercede with a father: it is the father’s own affection which intervenes and supplicates in the depths of his heart. His paternal instinct yearns to beget his child anew through forgiveness. Therefore, guilty though I am, I will return to my father.” And the father, on sighting his son, immediately covers over his sin. He prefers his role as father to his role as judge. At once, he transforms the sentence into pardon, for he desires his son’s return, not his ruin. He “threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him.” This is how the father judges and corrects: he gives a kiss in place of a beating. The power of love takes no account of sin; that is why the Father pardons his child’s guilt with a kiss and covers it over with an embrace. The father does not reveal his child’s sin, neither does he stigmatize his son; he nurses his wounds in such a way that they leave no scar or dishonor whatever. “Happy is the one whose fault is taken away.”

If the past behavior of this youngster has filled us with disgust and if the prodigal’s escapade has shocked us, we must ourselves be careful not to become estranged from such a Father. The sight alone of the Father suffices to put sin to flight, to keep transgression away, and to repel every kind of evil and temptation. But if we have drifted away from the Father, if we have squandered all his goods by a dissolute life, if we have happened to commit some sin or misdeed, if we have fallen into the bottomless pit of impiety and into absolute ruin, we must finally arise and return to such a Father, encouraged by such an example.

“His father caught sight of him and was deeply moved. He ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him.” Now I ask what place there is here for despair, what occasion for an excuse or for any kind of fear. Unless perhaps we dread meeting the Father and his kiss makes us afraid; unless perhaps we believe that it is only to get hold of him and take revenge rather than to welcome and forgive him that the Father comes and takes his son by the hand, that he presses him to his heart and embraces him.

But this life-destroying thought, this enemy of our salvation, is completely disarmed by the words that follow: ‘The father said to his servants: ‘Quick! bring out the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. Take the fatted calf and kill it. Let us eat and celebrate because this son of mine was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and is found.’ ” After hearing this, can we still put off our own return to the Father?

– St. Peter Chrysologus, from Sermons 2-3

## **Holy Martyr Pamphilos of Caesarea in Palestine**

Archpriest Grigory Dyachenko

Holy Hieromartyr Pamphilos (On the Need for a Christian to Care About the Salvation of his Neighbor's Soul)

I. Holy Hieromartyr Pamphilos, whose memory is celebrated today, lived at the beginning of the 4th century, was born in Berytus, in Caesarea of Palestine, where he later served as a priest. Having received an excellent education in Alexandria, he studied the Holy Scriptures: he compared the texts of the New Testament, corrected places corrupted by copyists, copied manuscripts himself and distributed them to all who wanted them. He worked long and hard on this matter and collected a large library of sacred books in Caesarea. At the same time, distinguished by his piety, he distributed his wealth to the poor and devoted himself to the spread of the true faith and Christian education.

These exploits of his did not go in vain: during the time of Diocletian, he was summoned to trial and after torture was thrown into prison, where he spent two years, together with two Christians - Deacon Valentinus and Paul. At that time, the persecution of Christians was terribly intensifying, and unfortunate Christians, exhausted by torture, crippled - with gouged out eyes and with cut tendons in their legs, were driven to hard labor in the mines. After two years of imprisonment, Pamphilos was led to execution together with his companions. The torture of the martyrs and the steadfastness with which they endured suffering, openly confessing Christ, attracted many followers from the people, who voluntarily



declared themselves Christians and accepted execution. Saint Pamphils, together with twelve other martyrs, was executed in 308.

II. The life of the Holy Hieromartyr Pamphilos, who cared about the correction of books of the Holy Scriptures corrupted by copyists, about the distribution of copies of the word of God to the poor, about the spread of the Christian faith and enlightenment, and in general about the salvation of the souls of his neighbors, teaches us, beloved brothers, to care for the souls of our neighbors.

We must be ready to serve our neighbor by imparting our knowledge without envy, especially by teaching in religion and good life. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another" (Col. 3:16).

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16)

In particular, one can imagine in this form a plan for saving the soul of one's neighbor.

a) Pray earnestly, both in general for the salvation of all, and in particular for the salvation of those whom you know more and who, in your opinion, are in special need. Pray, desiring for the brethren a certain gift of understanding, or zeal, or prayer, etc., and asking for yourself the strength and ability to act for their salvation, or better yet, giving yourself up as a divine instrument for this work. Especially prayerfully ask for untempting action before others, and by prayer cleanse yourself from past unintentional and accidental incidents that can be tempting. Do not be tempted by the thoughts and words of others, as if such prayer were of no use; for, besides the fact that he who has sanctified himself by it is always more capable, more disposed to act for the salvation of others, there is a secret communion of souls, by which one, it is incomprehensible how, can inseminate another, or predispose it to insemination through itself or through others. An example is the mother of blessed Augustine, who with her prayers converted her almost lost son to God and a good Christian life, and the holy martyrs, who often converted their tormentors to Christ God with the power of their prayers. If we all mutually turn our spirits to others in prayer, then as many warming rays will come to each one as there are people. Consequently, everyone would be warmed by a measure of warmth equal to all of Christianity. Then no force could overcome a single Christian.

b) Be a living example of faith and piety. When you go out and appear in the circle of Christians, let everyone see living Christianity in you, see that you understand it, honor it, and practice it. This is the same as building up your brother in everything: by word, and look, and movements, and deeds, and not upsetting him or tempting him with any of this. Remember: "woe to that man by whom the offense comes"

(Matt. 18:7). In being an example, both good and evil have a very strong effect, which is why, as much as the one is obligatory, the other is condemnable.

c) But this is not enough: one must also desire, and carefully strive to assist, and contribute by deed in the work of the salvation of others, for what is the use of saying only "warm yourself" and not giving what is needed? He who truly loves will do everything for the beloved. Love does not look at inconveniences and does not see them. But if there are any, she is ready to lay down her life for her friends, - to sacrifice everything, even her life, for their salvation. Coldness in this reveals coldness both about one's own salvation and about God's glory, as well as lack of conviction in faith, and self-love, and resolute carelessness. Therefore, we must attentively watch all cases in relation to our brethren and seek among them, whether there is not someone to whom we can, according to our strength, put something into the soul, savingly assisting him in salvation.

Having noticed something that is especially dangerous for him in another, take every effort to calm him down and bring him to his senses, as best you can. Act directly yourself, find people who can influence him, watch for an opportunity, enter into close relations and dispose him to yourself, etc. But under no circumstances give a sign of pleasure or consent to those things, either by word or by deed... If all those around the faulty one showed him signs of disfavor, then, it seems, he should now come to his senses, for where would he go then? One of the best ways of admonishment is to bring another to reason himself: let him find it himself, you only arrange the matter so that he finds it.

III. Therefore, "let each one build up his neighbor" (1 Thess. 4:11), concluding our teaching with the words of the Holy Apostle Paul. Amen. (*Translated by John Sanidopoulos*)

## **Venerable Mary the New of Byzia**

On this the 16th of February we celebrate the memory of the blessed Mary the New of Byzia in Thrace. Saint Mary was the younger daughter of an Armenian nobleman who had settled in Constantinople during the reign of Basil the Macedonian, that is from 857 to 886. After her father's death, she was joined in matrimony to her brother-in-law's friend Nicephoros and was the very model of wifely virtue and chastity. Gentle, merciful, and pious, she would hasten as often as she could to the churches in order to offer up prayers, watered with tears, and to give alms to the needy. She was so well clothed in the armor of piety that when her five-year-old son died, she bore the loss with dignity and the righteousness of Job, giving thanks to God for all things.

On the outbreak of war with the Bulgarian king Simeon, Nicephoros was appointed to a military command at Byzia in Thrace. Mary followed him there without

relinquishing her labors of love. She treated her servants and the poor whom she assisted as though they were her kinsfolk. She welcomed strangers to the house with joy, especially the clergy and monks, whom she honored like angels of God. Whenever her duties allowed, she would withdraw to her room in order to pray. God put her once more to the test when he took her second son, but she mourned him with the same constancy as she had with her firstborn. In recompense, she was granted the joy of giving birth to twin sons, one of whom eventually became a general and the other a monk, in accordance with her prophecy.

But soon after their birth, she had to face even more a more dreadful trial. Her husband's brother and sister maliciously accused her of squandering the family fortune in almsgiving and of adulterous liaison with one of her manservants. Neither her tears nor the testimony of her maidservants could assuage the anger of Nicephoros, who was maddened by jealousy. His wrath reached such a pitch that after yet another lying allegation he stormed into her bed chamber and struck her with his hands, and taking her by the hair, rained blows upon her until her maids managed to shield her. Two days later, overcome by her wounds and grief, she gave back her soul to God, having once more protested her innocence. This occurred on February 16, 903.

As they were preparing her body for burial, a wonderful scent pervaded the air in witness of her innocence and of God's favor. When her cupboards and boxes were gone through later, they found that all her fine clothes and jewels had been sold to feed the poor, to ransom captives and to adorn the churches of God.

Several days after her burial, a man was freed of an unclean spirit at her tomb, and from then on a host of sick people recovered their health by anointing themselves with oil from the vigil lamp or by kissing her incorrupt body. One day, a demoniac tried to snatch the veil covering the saint's face, whereupon fresh blood flowed as though she had just died. Many miracles took place at the church built by the contrite Nicephoros, where her precious relics were enshrined.

When Byzia fell to the Bulgarians, this church alone was spared, because a flame of fire had darted from the saint's tomb when an attempt was made to open it. *(adapted from Youtube video series "Lives of the Saints with Fr. Jonathan")*

### **Also Commemorated Today**

Martyrs [Pamphilus](#) presbyter, Valens deacon, Paul, Seleucus, Porphyrius, Julian, Theodulus, Elias, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Samuel, & Daniel at Caesarea in Palestine (307-309).  
St. [Macarius](#), metropolitan of Moscow, apostle to the Altai (1926).  
New Hieromartyrs Priests [Elias](#) Chetverukhin (1934) of Moscow Peter Lagov (1931).  
New Hieromartyr Paul priest (1938).

Venerable [Marutha](#), bishop of Sophene and Martyropolis, and others with him in Mesopotamia (422).

St. [Flavian](#), Archbishop of Antioch (381-404). (also Sept 27)

New Monk-martyr [Romanus](#) of Carpenision, who suffered at Constantinople (1694)

St. Basil Gryaznov of Pavlovo-Posadsky (1869).

St. Guevroc of Saint-Pol-de-Leon, hermit (Guivrok, Guirec, Kirecq), disciple of St. Tugdual, w/w (585)

St. Faustinus of Brescia, bishop (381) (Italy)

Hieromartyr Honestus of Pampeluna, priest, apostle to Navarre (270) (Spain)

St. Tanco of Werden, Bishop Martyr (Tancho, Tatta, Tatto, Tanton) (800)

## Memory Eternal!

Dear Faithful of St. Thomas: Helen Pavlik Janowiak fell asleep in the Lord on January 19th. She was almost 98 years old. Helen and her family will be remembered at St. Thomas for donating the altar, two major icons (St. Nicholas/Divine Humility) as well as the icon of St. Gorazd (a relative). Her son John greatly appreciates your prayers, but please don't call for the time being. You may however email him at [janow1234@yahoo.com](mailto:janow1234@yahoo.com). May God make Helen's memory eternal.

## Social Team for February 23

Team 8 is up next week – Olga Dewey. Thank you!

### Letter from the ACRY (American Carpatho-Russian Youth)

Dear ACRY Members, Spiritual Advisors, Chapter Presidents, and Members of our God-saved Diocese,

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

*“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”* (Matthew 5:16)

The National Senior ACRY is continuing its annual Stewardship Campaign, the *sixth* iteration. I am grateful for the continued efforts and contributions from those throughout the diocese. Our efforts continue as we strive to reach this year's goal of \$10,000!

For anyone unfamiliar with this effort, the Stewardship Campaign was created during the 2018 National ACRY Convention. At that time, our members voted to replace the individual chapter donations for the scholarship, publication, campership, and other funds with one large fund drive campaign to take place during the Advent season.

Much like last year, the campaign will make an impact on the furtherance of spiritual growth and scholastic opportunity for our diocesan youth. We are proud to provide scholarships for the young adults of our Diocese, host Lenten retreats, support Camp Nazareth, and much more. I am fortunate enough to have both experienced and observed the impact that the stewardship campaign can make. It excites me to know that others will experience the support that I did while in college, as well as being able to see the impact that can be noticed at Camp.

I encourage you all to spread the word of the ACRY to friends and family who may benefit from it's events and efforts. The National ACRY is truly the philanthropic arm of our Diocese, and this campaign is a shining example of the good that can come from all of us working together to make a difference.

Once again, thank you for your continued efforts. I look forward to seeing you all at the upcoming Memorial Day Weekend event in Johnstown. For more details on the Stewardship Campaign, feel free to reach out via email, [joesami98@gmail.com](mailto:joesami98@gmail.com).

Yours in Christ,

Josef Samilenko

National Vice President & National ACRY Stewardship Campaign Committee

## How To Donate:

### Donate by check:

- Made payable to National A.C.R.Y., with "Stewardship Campaign" in the memo line.

### Mail To:

Danielle Bartko  
A.C.R.Y. Financial Secretary  
600 Fourth Avenue  
Bridgeville, PA 15017



### Donate with Zelle:

- Log into your bank, select "Zelle," and scan the QR code.
- Include your email address and "A.C.R.Y. Stewardship Fund" in the memo section.
- Questions about Zelle? Email Financial Secretary [danielle\\_helen@yahoo.com](mailto:danielle_helen@yahoo.com)

### Questions about the A.C.R.Y. Stewardship Campaign?

- Contact National A.C.R.Y. Vice President Joe Samilenko at [acryoffice@gmail.com](mailto:acryoffice@gmail.com)

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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, Marlene Doukas, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, 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, the newly reposed handmaiden of God Helen P. Janowiak, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)