

# SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church



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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE

## SERVICES

*Wednesday:*

Reader Vespers 6:30 PM

*Saturday:*

Confession 4:30 PM

Great Vespers 5:00 PM

*Sunday:*

Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

**February 15, 2026 – Sunday of the Last Judgment  
(Meatfare) | Holy Apostle Onesimus of the LXX**

*The Inner Unity of the Triodion*

*The Sunday of the Last Judgment*

The two past Sundays spoke to us of God's patience and limitless compassion, of His readiness to accept every sinner who returns to Him. On this third Sunday, we

are powerfully reminded of a complementary truth: no one is so patient and so merciful as God, but even He does not forgive those who do not repent. The God of love is also a God of righteousness, and when Christ comes again in glory, He will come *as our judge*. “Behold the goodness *and severity* of God” (Rom. 11:22). Such is the message of Lent to each of us: turn back while there is still time, repent before the End comes. In the words of the Great Canon:

The end draws near, my soul, the end draws near; yet you do not care or make ready. The time grows short, rise up; the Judge is at the door. The days of our life pass swiftly, as a dream, as a flower.

This Sunday sets before us the eschatological dimension of Lent: the Great Fast is a preparation for the Second Coming of the Savior, for the eternal Passover in the Age to come. This is a theme that will be taken up in the first three days of Holy Week. Nor is the judgment merely in the future. Here and now, each day and each hour, in hardening our hearts towards others and in failing to respond to the opportunities we are given of helping them, we are already passing judgment on ourselves.

#### *Saturday of Cheese Week*

On Saturday in the week before Lent, there is a general commemoration of all the ascetic saints of the Church, both men and women. As we set out on the journey of the Lenten fast, we are reminded that we do not travel alone but as members of a family, supported by the intercessions of many invisible helpers. (*from The Lenten Triodion, translated by Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2002*)

#### **Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 8:8-9:2 EOB**

Brethren, food will not commend us to God. If we do not eat, we are not worse; and if we do eat, we are not better! However, be careful that your freedom may never become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you who have knowledge sitting in an idol's temple, will not this person's conscience, if weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? And thus, through your knowledge, the weak one perishes, even the brethren for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ! Therefore, if food causes my brethren to stumble, I will never ever eat meat, so that I may not cause my brethren to stumble. Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus Christ, our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If to others, I am not an apostle, yet at least for you I am one! You are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

## **Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 25:31-46 EOB**

The Lord said, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then, the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, you blessed of my Father! Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world! For I was hungry and you gave me food to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in. I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you; or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you?' The King will answer them, 'Amen, I tell you: as much as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then, he will also say to those on his left hand, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not receive me; naked, and you did not clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me.' Then, they will answer: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not help you?' Then he will answer them, saying: 'Amen, I tell you: as much as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' These ones on the left will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'"

### **Homily on the Last Judgment**

By Archpriest Rodion Putyatin

"Then he will also say to those on the left side: Depart from Me, you cursed, into eternal fire" (Matt. 25:41). This is what Jesus Christ at His Last Judgment will say to the people standing on the left hand: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into eternal fire. For I was hungry, and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and you did not receive Me; I was naked, and you did not clothe Me; I was sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me." Then they will answer Him: "Lord! When did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and not serve you?" Then He will say to them in answer: "Truly I say to you, because you did not do this to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me." This is what Jesus Christ will say, and they will go into eternal torment (see Matt. 25:41-46).

Christian Listeners! Will people really go into eternal torment just for these sins, that they won't feed the hungry, they won't give water to the thirsty, they won't take a stranger into the house, they won't clothe the naked, they won't visit the sick and those in prison? There are many other sins, and grave, great sins? Why doesn't Jesus Christ remind sinners of these sins? There is no need to mention and speak of grave and great sins: they condemn sinners to eternal torment even without pronouncing the sentence of the Judge. Great and grave sinners at the Last Judgment will stand unanswered, they themselves, without saying a word, will go into eternal fire; they will have nothing to say in their apology, they will have nothing to justify themselves with.

And therefore the sentence of Jesus Christ, which He will pronounce at the Last Judgment, has the following meaning: you sinners did not want to fulfill My commandments; you acted according to your will, but did not obey Me; you only lived for yourself, but did nothing for Me; you did not even want to do such an easy thing for Me; you did not feed the hungry for Me, you did not give drink to the thirsty, you did not take a stranger into the house, you did not clothe the naked, you did not visit the sick and in prison, you did not want to do the easiest thing; it means that you have no mercy for people at all, therefore you also have no mercy from Me: Depart from Me, you cursed, into eternal fire. I am merciful, but only to those who themselves are merciful to others.

So, Christian listeners, what should we sinners do now, how can we be saved in our sins from the eternal torment that awaits sinners after death? Let us quickly take up the deeds of philanthropy, let us do more acts of mercy to our neighbors, and God will show us His mercy, that is, give us time to repent of our sins, give us the means to make amends for our crimes and, thus, forgive all sins and crimes and no longer remember them at His Last Judgment.

But let us not forget, listeners, that God forgives sins here on earth, and therefore we will give alms not so that God will forgive us our sins at the Last Judgment, but so that we can be forgiven here. At the Last Judgment He will not remember our sins if we repent of them here, if we receive forgiveness here. Then He will remember only our alms that we will do, then He will tell us: you were merciful, and for this I will show you mercy - come and inherit the Kingdom of Heaven prepared for you.

But if we don't want to repent of sins here, if we don't receive forgiveness for them, we will appear at the Last Judgment with sins, then we will no longer have any mercy, the Lord will already reward us for our sins. He will not even remember if we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, or do other works of charity. I repeat again: the Lord at the Last Judgment remembers almsgiving and for it shows mercy only to those sinners who repented here and received

forgiveness of their sins. So, listeners, try to make the Lord remember our alms at the Last Judgment, but be afraid, be afraid that He will remember your sins then, and He will certainly remember everything if we forget to repent of them. Amen.  
(from [johnsanidopoulos.com](http://johnsanidopoulos.com))

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

We now come again to the stadium of Holy Lent; let prayer increase; let reading increase; let virtue increase. Every night be more vigilant in prayer. Let words cease; let chatter be absent, for with silence you will accomplish everything. Holy Lent is a period of practicing virtue. This season renews nature. We see all the trees renewing themselves; they put forth new leaves and flowers and are preparing to bear fruit. This is to make up for the damage of other years.

Man must do the same. Every year he must acquire new life, new enthusiasm, new courage, new divine eros, in order to sprout new fruits of virtue and offer them to his benefactor, God. And just as the time for the fruiting of trees is this season, spring, so the time of virtues is Holy Lent when we will work to make up for the debts and losses of the past years.

We are not, like plants, to be dug up, watered, manured and in such ways cared for, so that we may bear fruit. Man alone will show willingness, courage, good thoughts, spiritual actions, to render to his Lord, our Christ, the good works in return for the benefits that He gives him, even though these are still His own.

We will not pour manure, but instead we will receive humility. We will not pour water, but tears; for with tears, virtue is watered. Instead of pruning, we will cut off our will and instead of all the other things we offer to the plant for nourishment, we will take the patience with which the soul is nourished, the obedience with which the soul is refreshed, the humble-mindedness that brightens the soul and covers it with a golden covering, so that it may be protected from many things. And it refreshes it and does not burn, and it warms it and does not cool, and it covers it and makes it endure and not shake. In the house of humility, the limited soul receives the grace of the Holy Spirit and dwells with God and is moved only by Jesus Christ and shines and rests.

Fasting should be accompanied by silence and obedience and self-reproach. Fasting is good and beneficial for both the soul and the body; but fasting must be accompanied by silence and prayer; fasting must be accompanied by obedience; fasting must be accompanied by humility. If fasting is not accompanied by the cutting off of the will, it is useless; it neither bears fruit nor flowers. For the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love. I mean unfeigned love, according to God, not the devilish one.

Fasting, when it is done and does not have obedience with it, is like the wind, which blows and gathers the leaves of the tree; it twists them, twists them and then piles them in a corner. So is he who does not have obedience. Obedience is a pillar of fire, which illuminates and guides him who labors for it. We have said it many times and you know it; but lest God judge me and condemn me like that wicked servant who hid the talent, for this reason I also fight for the one that was given to me; and although I am unworthy, rustic, incapable, unteachable, I want to become the professor.

He who does not obey is completely in darkness. He who obeys has a pillar of fire, which starts from heaven and reaches down to the earth and shines on him and he is not afraid that he will stumble anywhere. The good submissive and subordinate in the Holy Spirit will not be judged by God.

If you see bad things about me, is it ever possible for you to want to submit to such a person? But if you submit for God's sake and do not see my works, but only hear my words, which are in the interest of your soul to perform, it is the same for you as if I were also holy. Do not see my works, believe only in my words; and if you submit with faith, with love, with humility, you will not be deprived of the Kingdom of Heaven. Make perfect obedience, put on faith and love, you will see a pillar of fire, by which you will be led, warmed, illuminated and go forward.

We must submit with all our will, with closed eyes, and not see who it is to whom we submit. Perhaps you see something in me that forces you to judge and condemn me; have you not seen any good at some time? Take the good, do not see the bad. If you see the good, that good will cover your eyes so that you will never see any evil, but you will only see those things that lead you to your salvation. It is not possible for a man not to err; neither can I nor you; but he who has perfect obedience and love for his spiritual father is never lost.

– St. Anthimos of Chios, *Homily for the Nuns at Panagia Voithia Monastery*

## **Homilies on the Commonwealth of the Church – The Reader**

by Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos

Among the Lower Clergy, though they are not Clergy as we know them in modern reality, along with the Chanter is the Reader. Various readings from the Old Testament and the New Testament have been included in the worship of the Church and there needed to be some Christians who... recited these texts during the Sacred Services. Thus, the Reader reads, apart from the texts of the Old Testament, the Psalms, the Prophecies, and the Apostolic Readings at the Divine Liturgy or at other services, such as for example during the Great Hours.... The selection of a Christian in the order of Readers is an ancient ecclesiastical custom,

which was adopted from the Old Testament. That is why the "Apostolic Constitutions", an ancient text, establishes the prayer that is read by the Bishop during the laying on of hands of the Reader. Among other things, the Bishop prays for God to send His Grace to this particular person, so that he can read His Holy Scriptures to the people and give him "a Holy Spirit, a Prophetic Spirit", as He gave wisdom to Ezra to read His laws to the people.

Because nothing happens in the Church without the prayer and blessing of the Bishop, that is why even today there is a special order for the laying on of hands of the Reader, according to which the Bishop tonsures the hairs of his head in a cross pattern in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Then he reads the "consecration prayer", in which, among other things, he asks God to sanctify His servant and to give him the strength to interpret the texts "with all wisdom and prudence" and to protect him "in a blameless state". Immediately after, the Reader reads an apostolic passage.

The Reader may not wish to become a Clergyman, but if a Christian wishes to become a Clergyman and was not previously ordained as a Reader, then before his ordination as a Deacon he receives the laying on of hands of a Reader.

In the past, it was widespread to have the laying on of hands of a Reader, because the Bishop-Metropolitan in his tours of the parishes usually made young people Readers with the laying on of hands, which was, as I stated earlier, an ornament in the life of worship, because they read the texts of the Old Testament and the Apostolic Reading with their children's voice. That is why various surnames prevailed among the Christians, such as Anagnostis, Anagnostos, Anagnostopoulos (that is, son of the Reader), Anagnostidis, Anagnostakis, etc.

This beautiful ecclesiastical and liturgical act also had a catechetical character. Because, usually, the Readers were young children, who were students of Elementary School, Middle School and High School, and who showed a special zeal to approach the two lecterns of the chanters of the Sacred Temple or to serve the Priests in the Sacred Sanctuary for the performance of the Sacred Services, therefore from a young age they learned to read clearly the texts of the Old Testament and the Apostolic Readings.

Thus, they not only learned to read these ancient texts, but also to understand this language, so this whole work became like a "Catechism School", like an initiation of the children into the worship of the Church. In fact, from this order, they evolved into Sacred Chanters, Deacons, Presbyters, Bishops and Patriarchs, but at the same time also into educated people of that time, some even became scientists of the various sciences.

We do not forget, of course, that in earlier times when there were not many schools, the Readers and the Chanters were the most literate and educated people in the countryside, the villages, but also in the cities.

This was also a great experiential offering of the Church to the children, who did not learn the liturgical life of the Church simply as a lesson, but as experience and life. Many of us Clergy and Bishops were raised and grew up in the Sacred Sanctuary, as sacred children (altar boys), who are usually called "papadakia", as Readers and as members of the choirs of the Sacred Temples. Thus, ecclesiastical and worship life is in our entire existence, in our breathing and in our childhood experiences, that is why we love the Church and ecclesiastical life.

What we have said so far shows what Holy Scripture is, how it is read in worship gatherings and how it is interpreted. Both the reading of Holy Scripture during the Sacred Services and Divine Liturgies as well as its interpretation is a sacred work of the Church and not an autonomous work and independent of the ecclesiastical life.

This can be seen from the fact that the Readers, who receive the laying on of hands by the Bishop for this purpose, read the Psalms of David and the Apostolic Readings, the Deacons read the Gospel Readings and the Bishops or Preachers and Priests interpret with the sermon that follows these holy writings. Everything is done according to order in the Church, during the Sacred Assemblies, and the churchgoers, the people of God, hear and are taught what God's will is.

Thus, the Church wrote these texts and the Church interprets them. Everything is done in the best ecclesiastical way and within the worship gatherings. When we say that this happens in the Church, we mean that God enlightens His friends, i.e. the Prophets and the Apostles, to write His will to the people and God Himself enlightens the holy Fathers to interpret this divine word, and in fact this is done in an official way during ecclesiastical gatherings.

This also shows what inspiration is and how it manifests itself in ecclesiastical life. The texts of Holy Scripture are inspired by God, according to the words of the Apostle Paul: "All scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16), because they were written down by divinely inspired Prophets and Apostles and are interpreted by divinely inspired Fathers. Thus, we have the certainty of our salvation.

And because in today's sermon I referred to the Readers, who usually are young people that receive the laying on of hands to do this important work in liturgical gatherings, that is why what the Apostle Paul writes to his disciple Timothy, Bishop of Ephesus, is important: "From infancy you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in

Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). When a person learns "the sacred writings" from his parents "from infancy" and reads them from a young age in worship gatherings, then from his young years he receives a solid, serious and responsible ecclesiastical education. (*Translated by John Sanidopoulos*)

## **The True Nature of Fasting**

[*This material is taken from the introduction to The Lenten Triodion published by St. Tikhon's Seminary Press – ed.*]

It is no coincidence that on the very threshold of the Great Fast, at Vespers on the Sunday of Forgiveness, there is a special ceremony of mutual reconciliation: for without love toward others there can be no genuine fast. And this love for others should not be limited to formal gestures or to sentimental feelings, but should issue in specific acts of almsgiving. Such was the firm conviction of the early Church. But almsgiving means more than this. It is to give not only our money but our time, not only what we *have* but what we *are*; it is to give a part of ourselves. When we hear the Triodion speak of almsgiving, the word should almost always be taken in this deeper sense. For the mere giving of money can often be a substitute and an evasion, a way of protecting ourselves from closer personal involvement with those in distress. On the other hand, to do nothing more than offer reassuring words of advice to someone crushed by urgent material anxieties is equally an evasion of our responsibilities (James 2:16). Bearing in mind the unity already emphasized between man's body and his soul, we seek to offer help on both the material and the spiritual levels at once. 'When you see the naked, cover him; and do not hide yourself from your own flesh.' The liturgical tradition treats Isaiah 58:3-8 as a basic Lenten text. So we read in the Triodion:

While fasting with the body, brethren, let us also fast in spirit. / Let us loose every bond of iniquity; / Let us undo the knots of every contract made by violence; / let us tear up all unjust agreements; / let us give bread to the hungry / and welcome to our house the poor who have no roof to cover them, / that we may receive great mercy from Christ our God (*Vespers for Wednesday of the first week*).

Always in our acts of abstinence we should keep in mind St. Paul's admonition not to condemn others who fast less strictly: 'Let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats' (Rom 14:3). Equally, we remember Christ's condemnation of outward display in prayer, fasting or almsgiving (Matt. 6:1-18). Both these Scriptural passages are often recalled in the Triodion:

Consider well, my soul: do you fast? Then do not despise your neighbor. / Do you abstain from food? Do not condemn your brother. (*Matins for the Sunday of the Last Judgment*)

Come, let us cleanse ourselves by almsgiving and acts of mercy to the poor, / Not sounding a trumpet or making a show of our charity. / Let not our left hand know what our right hand is doing; / Let not vainglory scatter the fruit of our almsgiving; / But in secret let us call on Him that knows all secrets: / Father, forgive us our trespasses, for You love mankind. (*Vespers for Sunday evening – Sunday of Orthodoxy*).

## **Holy Apostle Onesimus as a Model for our Lives**

By Protopresbyter Fr. George Papavarnavas

The Apostle Onesimus was originally a servant of the Apostle Philemon, who was a man of love and treated his servants with kindness. It turned out, however, that he was a useless servant, because he abused the kindness of his master, stealing from him and fleeing secretly to Colossae. In Rome, where he fled, he was catechized by the Apostle Paul in the "faith of Christ", he was baptized and he became "wonderful in virtue". From a useless servant he became an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and he became truly useful and truly free.

The Apostle Paul, who was imprisoned in Rome "for the sake of the Gospel", wanted to keep Onesimus near him in order to serve him, but he did not want to do this without the consent of the Apostle Philemon, so he sent Onesimus to give the letter. This is the Epistle to Philemon by the Apostle Paul, contained in the New Testament, which is a wonderful text worth studying daily. This letter informs Philemon of the spiritual rebirth of his servant and begs him to no longer receive him as a servant, but as a beloved brother. He continues: "If, therefore, you consider me a friend, receive him as you would receive me. And if he did you any wrong or if he owes you anything, charge it to me."

After the martyric end of the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Onesimus was arrested and he also "for the sake of the Gospel" suffered horrific torture. Finally, they shattered his legs and in this manner he left this temporal life and transferred to eternity.

The life and deeds of the Apostle Onesimus gives us the opportunity to highlight the following:

First, the passions enslave man and make him useless. He can conquer them and be rid of their tyranny with sincere repentance, which is the foundation of the spiritual life and, according to Saint John of Sinai, it "is the renewal of baptism and an agreement with God for a new life", together with the entire experience offered by the Church. It should be noted that with the passage of time the powers of man begin to gradually leave him and then the passions, if not conquered by then, dominate his will with the result that he is vilified and humiliated. Indeed, sometimes one happens to fall so low to the point that they are a sad sight and they

invite pain and sadness or even scandal, if this person, due to his position, should have been a role model in society.

Freedom is primarily an inner state that a person experiences regardless of exterior conditions. In prison the Apostle Paul was truly free, while Onesimus after his escape, though he had money and exterior freedom, in reality he was a slave, because he lived under the burden of guilt which sin creates, and it was thus impossible to have inner peace and true joy.

When a person is not purified of the passions or at least not struggling to be purified of them, then it is impossible to be free and truly be glad in life because, among other things, there is a chance they could undergo any kind of blackmail. And, of course, when under pressure and found in a climate of blackmail and intimidation, then it is impossible to truly act free. They become unfortunate, a pawn of all who took advantage of their passions and wrongs and they are "in their hands", as it is commonly phrased, in the blackmail. On the outside they may seem free and comfortable, but in reality they are a prisoner and slave.

Second, sickly phenomena and ill situations, such as theft, abuse, interlaces, etc., are encountered in every age, and even ours, of course, cannot be the exception, since we live in a fallen society. In reality, the healthy members of society are the Saints, as well as all those who struggle to achieve their own sanctification. The Saints with their spiritual struggles conquered their passions, arrived at their illumination and theosis and experienced the pre-fallen state. They acquired perfect love, which is the treatment for selfishness, the operative cause of avarice, sensuality, vanity and all the other passions.

Because nowadays we hear and read about many things, it must be stressed that the Church is not a club of "purified" people, but it is the Divine-Human body of Christ. Christ Himself is the head and the members are all those, clergy and laity, who received baptism and struggled, in one way or another, to live according to the will of God. Also, that the Church, as His Eminence our Metropolitan Hierotheos stresses, is a spiritual hospital, and therefore it is natural for it to have sick members that it tries to heal, without ever violating their freedom. Moreover, with their weakness, passions and wrongs each person bears personal responsibility and are accountable before God and men.

The Church does not need purification, because it is pure, holy and immaculate. We need purification and spiritual rebirth.

Let us pray that God shows us true spiritual fathers even in our days, who can help people be reborn, so as to acquire perfect love, and from useless servants to become useful and free. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

## **Holy Virgin-Martyr Agape of Termi**

Saint Agape was a disciple of Hieromartyr Valentine, priest at Termi in Italy. St. Valentine placed her in charge of the community of women he founded. She was beheaded c. 273 in Termi, where a church was dedicated to her until the 12<sup>th</sup> century. (*adapted from drjohnhutchisonhall.com*)

## **Venerable Anthimos of Chios**

St. Anthimos, who in the world was known as Argyrios K. Vagianos, was born on July 1, 1869 to devout peasants, Konstantinos and Argyra, in Chios, in the region of Agios Loukas Leivadion. He left elementary school early to become a shoe mender. At the age of nineteen he visited the Skete of the Holy Fathers founded by the monk Pachomios, who had been the spiritual counselor of St. Nektarios. With the blessing of the elder, Anthimos returned home and built himself a small hut and dwelt in it. His only help in his spiritual contests was an icon of the Mother of God given to him by his mother later known as Panagia Voithia (the Helper), which soon began to work miracles, drawing many to his hermitage. He had returned home to relieve the suffering of his parents and help the poor of his village as well. After a time he retired to the Skete of the Holy Fathers, and it was here that he became a Small Schema monk and took the name Anthimos given by Elder Pachomios. After this he was put in charge of building the Convent of Saint Constantine. However, he soon fell ill and his abbot sent him home to his parents for the sake of his health. At home, despite the fact that he was caring for his aged parents and practicing his shoe mender's trade, he continued to live as a monk, spending nights on end in prayer and sometimes living only on bread and water for extended periods every two days. "Not even for a minute," he said later, did he give himself rest, and even spent nineteen nights awake in prayer. He took his inspiration reading about the lives of the great ascetics, and in this way he was able to conquer every assault of the devil. At the end of his feat, he was rapt in ecstasy and his spirit was carried up into paradise amid the angelic choirs, while he repeated without ceasing: "Lord have mercy."

Increasing numbers of visitors came to his hermitage and wonderworking icon of the Theotokos, and in 1909, at the age of forty, he received the Great Schema by the successor of Pachomios, Hieromonk Andronikos. The people of Chios wanted him to be ordained to the priesthood, but his bishop refused due to the Saint's lack of education. At the prompting of Anthimos' godfather, the Bishop of Smyrna ordained him instead in 1910. At the moment of his ordination there was an earth tremor, accompanied lightning and claps of thunder. Since his virtues and miracles provoked the jealousy of certain priests, he left the region. After a pilgrimage to Mount Athos in 1911, he returned to Chios, where he became chaplain to a leper

hospital. Soon the hospital, which had fallen into spiritual corruption, became a spiritual center, as much like a monastery as a hospital. Saint Anthimos tended many of the sickest with his own hands, working many miracles of healing; some of his recovered patients became monks or nuns (such as Venerable Nikephoros the Blind). Thirty-eight people were freed of evil spirits through his fasts and his prayers before the icon of the Mother of God.

With the notorious 'Exchange of Populations' of 1922-1924, refugees poured into Chios, many of them destitute nuns and girls. Ever since his youth, St. Anthimos had dreamed of founding a monastery on a certain steep uninhabited site that he knew of. Now, in response to a vision of the Mother of God, St. Anthimos received permission to found a monastery there in 1927, and he confirmed this by drawing lots three times following the Divine Liturgy. He built the monastery in 1930, which opened with thirty nuns and grew rapidly, despite the opposition of many who said that setting up such a community was out of date. The Monastery of Panagia Voithia, as it came to be known, soon housed eighty nuns and was known throughout Greece as a model of monastic life. Father Anthimos served as priest to the nuns, and continued to receive the many faithful – often sixty or seventy per day – who came to him for prayer or counsel. He carried on this ministry for more than thirty years, working many miracles of healing. When he was too old to work with his hands, he retired to his cell and prayed that he be enabled to serve his neighbor until his last breath.

On January 27, 1960 St. Anthimos celebrated his final Divine Liturgy. He reposed in peace at the age of ninety-one on February 15th, mourned and revered by the whole island of Chios. The remains of St. Anthimos are in the church inside of the monastery he founded and still work miracles along with the holy icon of Panagia Voithia. He was canonized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate on August 13, 1992. *(from johnsanidopoulos.com)*

## **Also Commemorated Today**

*[Follow the links below for more information. - Ed.]*

New Hieromartyrs Michael Piataev and John Kumin priests (1930).

New Hieromartyrs Nicholas, Alexis, Alexis priests, Simeon deacon, New Hieromartyr Paul and Virgin-martyr Sophia (1938).

Venerable [Paphnutius](#), recluse of the Kiev Caves (13th c).

Ven. [Paphnutius](#), monk, & daughter St. Euphrosyne, nun, of Alexandria (5<sup>th</sup> c.).

Venerable [Eusebius](#), hermit of Syria (440).

Venerable [Dalmatus](#), abbot & founder of the Dormition Monastery in Siberia (1697).

Martyr [Major](#) of Gaza (304).

St. Oswy, king of Northumbria (670) (Celtic & British).

St. Theognius, bishop of Bethelia near Gaza (523). (*see Cyril of Scythopolis, Lives of the Monks of Palestine*)

New Martyr [John](#) the Koulakiotis of Thessaloniki (1776)

St. [Berach](#) of Cluain, Abbot (Barachias, Berachius, Barry) (6<sup>th</sup> c.)

St. [Dochow](#) of Wales ([Dochau](#), Dogwyn) (bishop?) (473?)

St. [Farannan](#) of Iona, patron of Alterna in Sligo (Ireland) (c. 590)

St. [Sigfrid](#) of Wexlow, Bishop, apostle of Sweden (Sigfrid Vaxjo) (c. 1045)

Ss. [Winaman, Unaman & Sunaman](#), Monk-Martyrs of Wexlow (Växjö), Sweden (c. 1040)

Heiromartyr [Tanco](#) (Tancho, Tatta, Tatto), bishop of Werden (808) (Saxony)

Martyrs [Craton](#) and his family in Rome (c. 273)

St. [Decorosus](#), bishop of Capua (695) (Italy)

St. [Druthmar](#), abbot of Corvey (1046) (Germany)

Martyrs [Faustinus](#) and Jovita of Brescia (2<sup>nd</sup> c.) (Italy)

St. [Faustus](#), monk at Montecassino (6<sup>th</sup> c.) (Italy)

St. [Georgia](#) (Georgina), virgin-hermitess of Auvergne (c. 500) (Gaul)

St. [Quinidius](#) (Quiniz), bishop of Vaison (c. 579) (Gaul)

[Martyrs](#) Saturninus, Castulus, Magnus, and Lucius of Terni (273) (Italy)

St. [Severus](#) of the Abruzzi, priest of Trier (c. 530) (Italy)

St. [Walfrid](#) (Gualfredo) della Gherardesca of Pisa, abbot (c. 765) (Italy)

St. Glaudan of Brittany (6<sup>th</sup> c.)

St. Levenou (Laouenan) of Brittany

St. Waneng, founder of the abbey of Fécamp (686)

### **Pray for our priests and seminarians!**

Prayer is powerful, and we need more priests in our Diocese. Metropolitan Gregory is asking that each one of us pray daily that we have more vocations to the priesthood. He also wants us to pray by name for our clergy and seminarians--they aren't sick! The clergy that we are to pray for are: Fr. Kevin Greenwood, Fr. Andrew Gromm, and Deacon Donald Koch. The seminarians are: Deacon Maximus Cannaverde, Bradley Shaffer, Nicholas Cizin, John Bonnewicz-Coffey, John Fedornock III, Clay Raburn, Spyridon Raburn and Ignatios Leonardo (please also pray for Joshua Horner, who is taking a break from seminary to work full-time). We started this four years ago, and we already see its fruit – Fr. Seamus was on this list the last time I ran it!

#### Prayer for vocations

Master of all, You promised us, “I will be with you always, even until the very end of the world,” and You have taught, “I will build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Mindful of this pledge, we beseech Your great goodness to inspire men to the Holy Priesthood, the service of Your Holy Orthodox Church, so that she may properly be able to fulfill Your will for Your

people in this age. There are children to baptize, the sick to heal, and the dying to care for. There is the Bread of Life to distribute, and the Word of God to teach. There are sins to forgive, and charity to be done in Your Name. Send Your Church in this hour and in every age “vessels of clay” to be instruments of Your presence. Hear us, O Lord, and have mercy.

#### Prayer for the priesthood

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

#### 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. Seamus & Family, Fr. Joseph & Family, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Eldoret and Northern Kenya, Patty Blaydoe, Bennett family, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Roberta Corson, Tina Crull, Marlene Doukas, Alaina Espinal, Angelo Espinal, Linda A. Georgiev, Sandi Hebel, Howl family, John M. Janowiak, Johnson family, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Helen, Brian, Luke and Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & family, Nicholas Pavlik, Weston Perry & family, John Reece, Mary Reed, Marge Rusnak, Rose Song, Dennis Thomidis, Fr. Nectarios & Ia, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the suffering people of Ukraine & the Middle East, the newly reposed handmaiden of God Janette Gaydovchik and servant of God Robert Murray, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Seamus of changes.)