

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

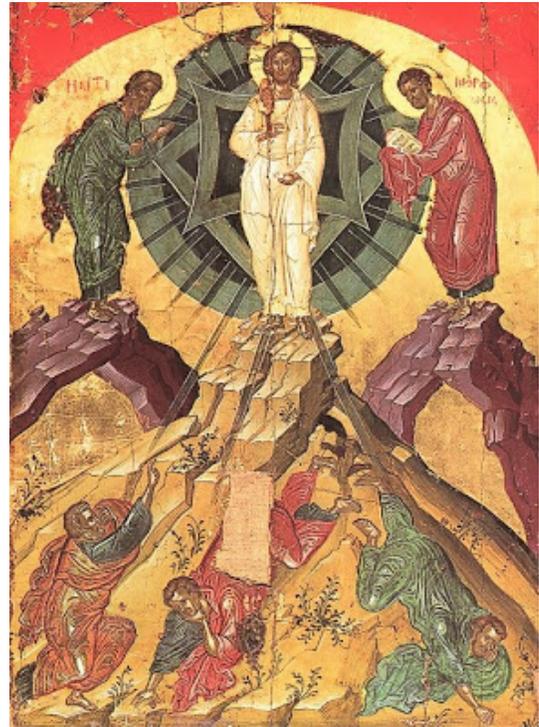
Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.



August 6, 2017 – 9th Sunday After Pentecost | The Holy Transfiguration of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

On the sixth day of the month of August, the Holy Church celebrates the commemoration of the Divine Transfiguration of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ with exceeding gladness. This is what took place. Since Christ had discoursed much with His Disciples about dangers and death, and His own Suffering, and about the slaughter of His Disciples, and the former were in the present life and at hand, whereas the good things were a matter of hope, wishing to assure their very sight and to show the kind of glory wherewith He was to come, He brought them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them; and His face shone as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light; and there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him. He took along those three alone, because they were superior to the rest. For Peter showed his superiority by exceedingly loving Him; but John by being exceedingly beloved of Him; and James because he was able to drink the cup of which the Lord spoke. He brought forward Moses and Elijah that He might set aright the incorrect conjectures made about Him by the multitudes. For since some were saying that He was Elijah, but others that He was Jeremiah, He brought the leading Disciples so that they might see the difference between the servants and the Master; and so that they might

learn that He was the One Who had all power both of death and life. To Him be the glory and the dominion unto the ages. Amen. (Synaxarion for the Feast)



Today's Epistle Lesson – The Second Letter of St. Peter 1:10-19

Brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 17:1-9

At that time, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Since the entire word of God abounds in the commands of the Lord, why is it that our Lord says of love, as of a unique command: "This is my commandment that you love one another"? Unless it be that every command is concerned with love alone, and all are one commandment, because whatever is commanded is grounded in love alone. For just as the many branches of a tree grow out of a single root, so the many virtues spring from one love, and the branch of a good deed is without a touch of green if it is not rooted in love. And so, the commands of the Lord are many and yet one - many in the different things to be done, one in the root of love. Now how this love is to be maintained he himself suggests when in various things he says in holy Scripture he tells us that our friends are to be loved *in* him and our enemies *for* him.... There are some who love their neighbor with a tie of affinity and blood; they are not in contradiction with Holy Writ... what we offer by the impulse of nature differs from what we owe out of obedient love at the command of the Lord... When our Lord says: "This is my commandment, that you love one another..." he immediately adds: "As I have loved you." It is as though he were to say more clearly: "Love for that reason for which I have loved you.

...there is only one supreme proof of love, and that is, if we love someone who is against us. This is why Truth itself endured the suffering of the Cross, saying: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do..." He expressed the sum total of love when he added: "No one has greater love than this, that they should lay down their lives for their friends." How can we live out this paradox by which love is offered to friends and enemies alike in times when we are not directly persecuted? For the virtue of love to be undefeated in time of trouble, it must be nurtured by mercy in time of peace, so that someone may first learn to offer his possessions to almighty God and, finally, himself.

"You are my friends." How great is the mercy of our creator! We are unworthy servants, and yet are called 'friends'... Having heard of the proud distinction, notice also the struggle for it: "If you do what I command you... I have called you friends for all that I have heard from the Father I have made known to you." What are all these things he has heard from his Father that he wished to make known to his servants in order to make them his friends, if they are not the joys of interior love, if they are not those festivals of the heavenly country which he daily impresses upon our minds by the longing of his love? For when we love the heavenly things of which we hear, we already know what we love, for the love itself is the knowledge.

– St. Gregory the Great, *Homily 27* (on John 15:12-16)

On Stewardship and the Orthodox Life – Part 146:

Two Paths



“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”
(Genesis 1:26 RSV)

God having made man in His image gave man the unique ability of free choice. Freedom to choose is a divine attribute of those whose purpose is to become sons and daughters of God. We have two choices that present themselves to us: the **good path** or the **bad path**.

Many of us have chosen the path that leads into the secular world and all the desires and passions that accompany it. **Self-love and self-centeredness guides our way**. We rely on our rational mind to know right from wrong. Going to church is something that we just do and holds no true meaning or impact on our daily lives. We seek our own enjoyment, entertainment, comfort and wellbeing with little concern for our neighbors. We use the gifts that God has given us for selfish reasons, that is if we even realize what gifts He has given us.

There are those that chose a different path. God becomes the center of their life. The many gifts which God has bestowed upon them by His grace when they were baptized become apparent to them and they use these gifts in their journey to **Theosis**, being in communion with God, as well as **sharing** these gifts with others, who also are on their journey to Theosis. God made us to be “**persons in communion**” with Him and with the body of Christ, the Church. Sharing the gifts that He gave each of us is **essential and necessary** for the health of the Church as well as our own physical and spiritual health. Our life on earth is ephemeral, it is gone in the blinking of an eye. Eternity is forever and we will all be there, some enjoying it while others are relegated to the “**smoking**” section.

God gave us the freedom to choose as He did Adam. Adam made the wrong choice. What about you? Can you say you made the correct choice? Did you choose the good path? Do you recognize the gifts God has given you and are you gratefully returning them to the glory of God and the body of Christ? Or, are you selfishly using them for your own self-aggrandizement? The choice is yours, **smoking or non-smoking!** If you have made the wrong choice until now, there is hope. True repentance is the medicine the Church prescribes for taking the wrong path. We do not know the day or time that our judge will come so if you are on the wrong path make the change of direction, **metanoia**, to the correct path. Be a **good steward** of all that He has given you! (*from acrod.org*)

July Treasurer's Report

Glory to Jesus Christ! For the month of July our income/expenses were:

Operating Income \$ 24,428.00 | Operating Expenses \$ 8,590.51
Income Over/Under \$15,837.49

There were no major expense for the month. There was a one time large donation. Thank you for your support! Thank you for being good stewards of God's house.

Your servant in Christ,

Kari

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Grace Bishop GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbyteria Katie Baker and family, Santiago Alzugaray, Alicia Barosio and family, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Deanna Jarrett, Tucker Karl and family, Robert Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, Josh Moore, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectaros and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, the newly departed handmaiden of God Caroline Schmuck, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)