

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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Waldorf, MD 20601

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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

Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

January 28, 2018 – Sunday of the Publican & Pharisee St. Ephaim of Syria | St. Isaac of Ninevah

Understanding, O my soul, the difference between the Publican and the Pharisee, hate the proud words of the one, and eagerly imitate the contrite prayer of the other, crying aloud: God be merciful to me a sinner and have mercy on me. (Saturday Vespers, Tone Three at the Litia).

Today we enter into the period of the Lenten Triodion, which includes the three weeks before Lent begins and continues up to Holy and Great Saturday. The purpose of everything that takes place during this period is to “recollect the entire work of God’s benevolence towards us.”(Synaxarion) These first three weeks instruct us and prepare us spiritually for the time of the Fast. On each of the Sundays before Lent begins, we are taught about a certain aspect of the spiritual life.

Today we learn about humility and repentance. Starting today, until the fifth week of Lent after the hymn, “Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ...”, penitential troparia are sung to instruct us about humility which is the beginning of the Christian life and also, the beginning of Lent. Repentance is the doorway to the Fast and humility is the foundation on which repentance is built. As Abba



Dorotheos teaches us, we need humility more than anything else; no other virtue can be achieved without humility. This is demonstrated through the services as we prepare ourselves for the Fast by looking to the Publican as an example of how we are to advance.

In today's Gospel (Luke 18:10-14), we are shown a contrast between a proud Pharisee and a humble Publican. Both offer prayers to God, but only the Publican's prayer is accepted. At the end of the parable, we are told that the Publican is justified because of his humility, and the Pharisee is condemned because of his pride. How is this shown?

The Pharisee says, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." One could ask, "Should we not be thankful that we have not fallen into any of these sins?" Of course, but not by our strength is this done, which the Pharisee does not acknowledge. He goes even further by comparing himself to other people such as the Publican, thanking God that he is not like them, as though he has avoided these sins by his strength. His pride becomes still more apparent when he praises his virtues of tithing and fasting.

St. John Climacus writes, "This passion [of pride] often draws strength initially from the giving of thanks, and at first, it does not shamelessly urge us to renounce God. I have seen people who speak aloud their thanks to God but who in their hearts are glorifying themselves, something demonstrated by that Pharisee with his 'O God, I thank You'."

St. Gregory Palamas sees in this passage that the Pharisee sets himself apart from all other men thinking that, "God saw fit to grant virtue to him alone." Moreover, in the Pharisee comparing himself to others, St. Cyril of Alexandria notes that even if he were better than many a bad man this does "not necessarily... prove him to be worthy of admiration." Instead, as St. John Chrysostom says, "Even if we should have mounted the very pinnacle of virtue, let us consider ourselves last of all... because... even if he was removed from [the] greed of gain and robbery he had rooted over his soul the mother of all evils – vain-glory and pride."

The Publican, in contrast, prays with these words, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." "Without any other intention or thought, he paid attention only to himself and God, turning over and repeating the supplication of a single thought, the most effective of all prayers." (Gregory Palamas)

The Publican reveals his humility not only by his words but also in that he was "standing afar off," "would not lift up his eyes," and "smote his breast." By his posture, presence and speech, the Publican shows us humility but what is this and how do we attain it?

In the *Gerontikon*, we read: “Humility has often saved many, even without effort; this is demonstrated by the Publican and the Prodigal Son, who said only a few words and were saved.” St. John of the Ladder says, “Those who possess [humility] have won the whole battle.”

Abba Dorotheos writes regarding humility that “what its nature is and how the soul obtains it, as I often said, none found or could understand, but only the soul which became worthy to learn about it by actions.” What actions? Hard bodily labor accomplished with the full knowledge of what is being done, considering oneself under all and ceaseless prayer. (*Gerontikon*) Hard bodily labor because since the Fall our bodies tend toward pleasures and the love of bodily comforts instead of the enjoyment of spiritual pleasures. Considering oneself under all because one will not think himself greater than his brother, thus overcoming pride. Finally, ceaseless prayer to God, ascribing every achievement to God and always thanking Him, calling upon His help, trembling that he might lose His help. (Abba Dorotheus)

Concluding on the humility of the Publican, let us pay attention to what St. John Cassian writes in regards to that perfection towards which we strive:

For however much effort may have been spent in fasting, keeping vigil, reading, solitude, and withdrawal for the sake of laying hold of the prizes of purity and integrity, which are so magnificent and so lofty, this diligence and toil cannot of itself be sufficient to obtain them. For never will a person’s own effort and human diligence be equal to the divine gift, if it has not been granted by the divine compassion to the one who desires it.

I do not say this in order to nullify human effort or in an attempt to turn anyone away from diligence and intense toil. Rather I declare clearly and most firmly – not by my own say-so but by that of the elders – that without these things perfection cannot be grasped at all, yet that no one can attain these things alone and without God’s grace.

Therefore, St. John concludes this for us by writing:

And so it is apparent that a person cannot attain the end of perfection and purity except by true humility... in the belief that, unless [God] offers him [H]is protection and help at every moment, he cannot ever reach the perfection that he desires and after which he is running with all his might.

Elder Ambrose of Optina was a “strict ascetic and precise keeper of the rules of the Church.” He was known to have quoted St. John Climacus as saying: “David did not say, ‘I have fasted,’ ‘I have kept vigil,’ or ‘I have lain on the bare earth,’ but ‘I humbled myself, and straightway the Lord saved me.’”

This is the reason we do not fast this week so that we would lay the groundwork of humility before all of the bodily and spiritual labors which will follow during Lent. May God help us to make a good beginning.

THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF OUR HOLY FATHERS, LORD JESUS CHRIST OUR GOD, HAVE MERCY ON US. (from holycross-hermitage.com)

St. Ephaim the Syrian

Saint Ephraim the Syrian, a teacher of repentance, was born at the beginning of the fourth century in the city of Nisibis (Mesopotamia) into the family of impoverished toilers of the soil. His parents raised their son in piety, but from his childhood he was known for his quick temper and impetuous character. He often had fights, acted thoughtlessly, and even doubted God's Providence. He finally recovered his senses by the grace of God, and embarked on the path of repentance and salvation.

Once, he was unjustly accused of stealing a sheep and was thrown into prison. He heard a voice in a dream calling him to repent and correct his life. After this, he was acquitted of the charges and set free. The young man ran off to the mountains to join the hermits. This form of Christian asceticism had been introduced by a disciple of Saint Anthony the Great, the Egyptian desert dweller Eugenius.

Saint James of Nisibis (January 13) was a noted ascetic, a preacher of Christianity and denouncer of the Arians. Saint Ephraim became one of his disciples. Under the direction of the holy hierarch, Saint Ephraim attained Christian meekness, humility, submission to God's will, and the strength to undergo various temptations without complaint.

Saint James transformed the wayward youth into a humble and contrite monk. Realizing the great worth of his disciple, he made use of his talents. He trusted him to preach sermons, to instruct children in school, and he took Ephraim with him to the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea (in the year 325). Saint Ephraim was in obedience to Saint James for fourteen years, until the bishop's death in 338.

After the capture of Nisibis by the Persians in 363, Saint Ephraim went to a monastery near the city of Edessa. Here he saw many great ascetics, passing their lives in prayer and psalmody. Their caves were solitary shelters, and they fed themselves with a certain plant.

He became especially close to the ascetic Julian (October 18), who was of one mind with him. Saint Ephraim combined asceticism with a ceaseless study of the Word of God, taking from it both solace and wisdom for his soul. The Lord gave him a gift of teaching, and people began to come to him, wanting to hear his

counsel, which produced compunction in the soul, since he began with self-accusation. Both verbally and in writing, Saint Ephraim instructed everyone in repentance, faith and piety, and he denounced the Arian heresy, which at that time was causing great turmoil. Pagans who heard the preaching of the saint were converted to Christianity.

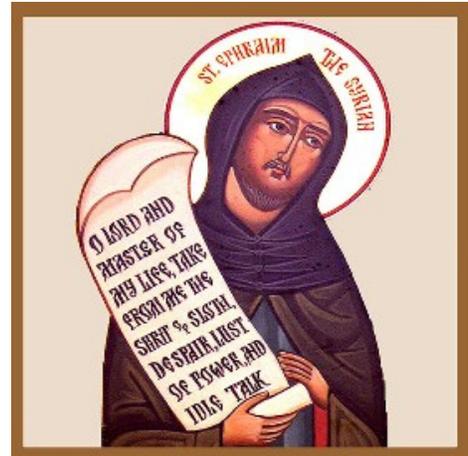
He also wrote the first Syriac commentary on the Pentateuch (i.e. “Five Books”) of Moses. He wrote many prayers and hymns, thereby enriching the Church’s liturgical services. Famous prayers of Saint Ephraim are to the Most Holy Trinity, to the Son of God, and to the Most Holy Theotokos. He composed hymns for the Twelve Great Feasts of the Lord (the Nativity of Christ, the Baptism, the Resurrection), and funeral hymns. Saint Ephraim’s Prayer of Repentance, “O Lord and Master of my life...”, is recited during Great Lent, and it summons Christians to spiritual renewal.

From ancient times the Church has valued the works of Saint Ephraim. His works were read publicly in certain churches after the Holy Scripture, as Saint Jerome tells us. At present, the Church Typikon prescribes certain of his instructions to be read on the days of Lent. Among the prophets, Saint David is the preeminent psalmist; among the Fathers of the Church, Saint Ephraim the Syrian is the preeminent man of prayer. His spiritual experience made him a guide for monastics and a help to the pastors of Edessa. Saint Ephraim wrote in Syriac, but his works were very early translated into Greek and Armenian. Translations into Latin and Slavonic were made from the Greek text.

In many of Saint Ephraim’s works we catch glimpses of the life of the Syrian ascetics, which was centered on prayer and working in various obediences for the common good of the brethren. The outlook of all the Syrian ascetics was the same. The monks believed that the goal of their efforts was communion with God and the acquisition of divine grace. For them, the present life was a time of tears, fasting and toil. “If the Son of God is within you, then His Kingdom is also within you. Thus, the Kingdom of God is within you, a sinner. Enter into yourself, search diligently and without toil you shall find it. Outside of you is death, and the door to it is sin. Enter into yourself, dwell within your heart, for God is there.”

Constant spiritual sobriety, the developing of good within man’s soul gives him the possibility to take upon himself a task like blessedness, and a self-constraint like sanctity. The requital is presupposed in the earthly life of man, it is an undertaking of spiritual perfection by degrees. Whoever grows himself wings upon the earth, says Saint Ephraim, is one who soars up into the heights; whoever purifies his mind here below, there glimpses the Glory of God. In whatever measure each one

loves God, he is, by God's love, satiated to fullness according to that measure. Man, cleansing himself and attaining the grace of the Holy Spirit while still here on earth, has a foretaste of the Kingdom of Heaven. To attain to life eternal, in the teachings of Saint Ephraim, does not mean to pass over from one realm of being into another, but rather to discover "the heavenly," spiritual condition of being. Eternal life is not bestowed on man through God's one-sided efforts, but rather, it constantly grows like a seed within him by his efforts, toils and struggles.

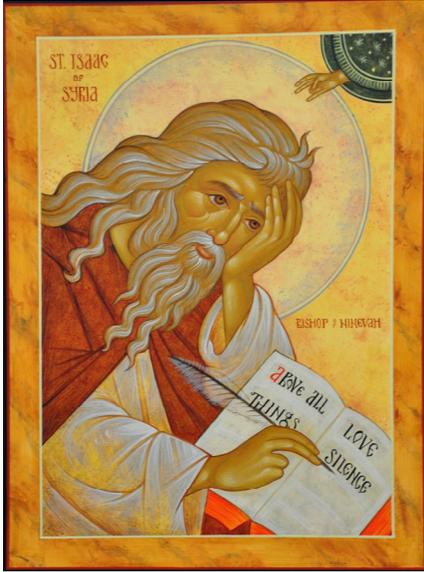


The pledge within us of "theosis" (or "deification") is the Baptism of Christ, and the main force that drives the Christian life is repentance. Saint Ephraim was a great teacher of repentance. The forgiveness of sins in the Mystery of Repentance, according to his teaching, is not an external exoneration, not a forgetting of the sins, but rather their complete undoing, their annihilation. The tears of repentance wash away and burn away the sin. Moreover, they (i.e. the tears) enliven, they transfigure sinful nature, they give the strength "to walk in the way of the Lord's commandments," encouraging hope in God. In the fiery font of repentance, the saint wrote, "you sail yourself across, O sinner, you resurrect yourself from the dead."

Saint Ephraim, accounting himself as the least and worst of all, went to Egypt at the end of his life to see the efforts of the great ascetics. He was accepted there as a welcome guest and received great solace from conversing with them. On his return journey he visited at Caesarea in Cappadocia with Saint Basil the Great (January 1), who wanted to ordain him a priest, but he considered himself unworthy of the priesthood. At the insistence of Saint Basil, he consented only to be ordained as a deacon, in which rank he remained until his death. Later on, Saint Basil invited Saint Ephraim to accept a bishop's throne, but the saint feigned madness in order to avoid this honor, humbly regarding himself as unworthy of it.

After his return to his own Edessa wilderness, Saint Ephraim hoped to spend the rest of his life in solitude, but divine Providence again summoned him to serve his neighbor. The inhabitants of Edessa were suffering from a devastating famine. By the influence of his word, the saint persuaded the wealthy to render aid to those in need. From the offerings of believers he built a poor-house for the poor and sick. Saint Ephraim then withdrew to a cave near Edessa, where he remained to the end of his days. (*from oca.org*)

St. Isaac the Syrian the Bishop of Nineveh



Saint Isaac the Syrian, Bishop of Nineveh, lived during the sixth century. He and his brother entered the monastery of Mar Matthew near Nineveh and received the monastic tonsure. His learning, virtue, and ascetic manner of life attracted the notice of the brethren, and they proposed that he head the monastery. Saint Issac did not want this burden, preferring a life of silence, so he left the monastery to live alone in the desert.

His brother urged him more than once to return to the monastery, but he would not agree. However, when the fame of Saint Isaac's holy life had spread, he was made Bishop of Nineveh. Seeing the crude manners and disobedience of the inhabitants of the city, the saint felt that it was beyond his ability to guide them, and moreover, he yearned for solitude.

Once, two Christians came to him, asking him to settle a dispute. One man acknowledged that he owed money to the other, but asked for a short extension. The lender threatened to bring his debtor to court to force him to pay. Saint Isaac, citing the Gospel, asked him to be merciful and give the debtor more time to pay. The man said, "Leave your Gospel out of this!" Saint Isaac replied, "If you will not submit to Lord's commandments in the Gospel, then what remains for me to do here?" After only five months as bishop, Saint Isaac resigned his office and went into the mountains to live with the hermits. Later, he went to the monastery of Rabban Shabur, where he lived until his death, attaining a high degree of spiritual perfection. (*from oca.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Second Letter to Timothy 3:10-15

My son Timothy, you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 18:10-14

The Lord said this parable, "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

A humble man is never rash, hasty or perturbed, never has any hot and volatile thoughts, but at all times remains calm. Even if heaven were to fall and cleave to the earth, the humble man would not be dismayed. Not every quiet man is humble, but every humble man is quiet. There is no humble man who is not self-constrained; but you will find many who are self-constrained without being humble. This is also what the meek humble Lord meant when He said, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls.' [Matt 11:29] For the humble man is always at rest, because there is nothing which can agitate or shake his mind. Just as no one can frighten a mountain, so the mind of a humble man cannot be frightened. If it be permissible and not incongruous, I should say that the humble man is not of this world. For he is not troubled and altered by sorrows, nor amazed and enthused by joys, but all his gladness and his real rejoicing are in the things of his Master. Humility is accompanied by modesty and self-collectedness: that is, chastity of the senses; a moderate voice; mean speech; self-belittlement; poor raiment; a gait that is not pompous; a gaze directed towards the earth; superabundant mercy; easily flowing tears; a solitary soul; a contrite heart; imperturbability to anger; undistributed senses; few possessions; moderation in every need; endurance; patience; fearlessness; manliness of heart born of a hatred of this temporal life; patient endurance of trials; deliberations that are ponderous, not light, extinction of thoughts; guarding of the mysteries of chastity; modesty, reverence; and above all, continually to be still and always to claim ignorance.

– St. Isaac the Syrian, *Homily 72*

Volunteers Wanted

We are excited to announce that St. Thomas is forming a choir! Rehearsals will start in February in preparation for Easter. All interested men and women in our parish who enjoy singing are encouraged to get in touch with Adina or Bernard Vallandingham at adinavall@yahoo.com or valland.b@gmail.com. The choir will first meet next Sunday, February 4th after church to discuss rehearsal schedule and location. The first rehearsal is scheduled for Thursday, February 8th at 6:30 pm.

Lenten Retreat - March 24, 2018

Speakers:

**His Grace, Bishop Gregory of Nyssa
(ACROD)**

Fr. Anthony Perkins

**Retreat will focus on our
call to become disciples
and to evangelize.**

**Preteens will explore
the topic "A Day in
the Footsteps of St.
Herman" with Fr.
Matthew Stagon.**

*Let your light so shine before men, that
they may see your good works and glorify
your Father in heaven.*

Matthew 5:16

***St. Francis Center for Renewal
395 Bridle Path Road
Bethlehem, PA***

Retreat registration: Adults ACROD \$35 (late fee \$20)

Adolescents \$20 (late fee \$10)

Children (under 12) \$7

***Registration includes all meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner.
For more information contact: Oleh or Natalie Bilynsky at
nsufler@aol.com call - 610-892-7315***

LENTEN RETREAT
SATURDAY, March 24, 2018

9:00 AM TO 6:30 PM

ST. FRANCIS CENTER FOR RENEWAL
395 BRIDLE PATH ROAD BETHLEHEM, PA

REGISTRATION FORM

– To Be Filled Out For Each Participant –

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Parish _____

Age (Youth ages 7-18 only) _____

Name of Parent(s)/Adult Chaperone Attending With _____

Cell Phone of Parent/Adult Chaperone _____

\$35 for adults ACROD (prior to deadline)

\$20 for adolescents (aged 13 to 18)

\$7 for children 7 to 12

Appropriate Registration fee is enclosed: Yes _____ No _____ *Amount _____

Check made for total of all family members to: Ukrainian Orthodox League of the USA.

Return registration w/payment to: Oleh Bilynsky 703 Pine Ridge Rd. Media, PA 19063

Please submit registration by March 14, 2018. After this deadline late fees of \$20 for adults and \$10 adolescents is applied.

Pictures from the Retreat can be used for publicity. Please indicate if you do not want pictures of you and/or your child used.

Also Commemorated Today: New Martyrs of Russia

On the Sunday nearest (or after) January 25, we commemorate the New Martyrs of Russia who suffered under the Soviet yoke. Among them are Hieromartyrs Bartholomew and Theodore, commemorated January 28 (Old Calendar).

The MonkMartyr Bartholomew (Ratnykh) was born in 1894 in the village Matrenki of the Kiev province in a peasant family. He graduated from the parish school. In 1913 he entered the noviciate in one of the monasteries of the Kiev diocese. Two years later he was drafted into the army and sent on the Romanian front, where he fought until the end of the war in 1918. Returning from the army, he again served as a novice in a monastery and after a while was tonsured with the name Bartholomew and ordained Hieromonk.

From 1927 to 1934, Hieromonk Bartholomew served in one of the churches the city of Pereyaslav. In 1936 he was arrested and kept for some time under investigation, but then was released. In the same year he moved to the city Feodosy in the Crimea and settled in the house of his distant relative. Here he lived in seclusion, almost not communicating with anyone, writing only with his spiritual children.

In one of the letters, Father Bartholomew wrote:

"So, your loving God and Lord says: 'Take up your cross and come to me!' What is the cross and what is carrying it and from what is it made for everyone? The cross is made from many components and heterogeneous: gold, silver, copper, iron and wood - but we chose a cross for ourselves of iron, that is, patience and trust in God. We believe that he who trusts in Him will not be disgraced, but he will give us patience with deliverance to the glorification of His Holy Name. So you put all your trust in God, and He will feed you and save your soul. Praise the Lord and do His commandments. You will be saved ... Do not be afraid of anything: wherever you are driven, there is the Lord and His people. If you have a mind, you will understand. From the lives of our contemporaries, how much they suffer, how many tears are shed. And even who is not a Christian. We, Christians, are deprived of all – even life, but do not be afraid, little flock, for the Lord was pleased to give us The Kingdom of Heaven! The one who endures to the end will be saved. Rejoice in the Lord... "

On July 13, 1937, NKVD officers arrested Hieromonk Bartholomew. During the interrogation, he was asked about this letter, which they found during the search, accusing that in the letter he raised slander against Soviet power. Father Bartholomew disagreed with the fact that the letter contained slander against the authorities, saying that all written is the real truth and nothing more.

On December 10, 1937, the NKVD troika sentenced Father Bartholomew to execution. Hieromonk Bartholomew (Ratnykh) was shot on February 10, 1938 and buried in an unknown common grave.

The Priest Theodore (Fyodor) Feodosy was born on February 26, 1881 in the village of Seslavino in the Yaroslavl district of Yaroslavl province in the family of the priest Paul and his wife Catherine. In 1904, he graduated from the Yaroslavl Theological Seminary and on January 21, 1905, was appointed a teacher in the Oboltinsk parish school. On October 24, 1905, Fyodor Pavlovich moved to the Zemstvo school. On December 20, 1907, he was ordained priest to the church of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the village of Pokrovskoe in Zhary Danilovsky county.

In the 1920s, Father Theodore served as rector in a church in the village of Osenevo in the Gavrilov-Yamsky area. In early February 1930, rumors reached the village that many priests of this region were being arrested and deported, and all their property confiscated. Talking about this with the deacon of the temple, Sergius Urusovsky, Father Theodore offered to serve on the next Saturday, February 8, as this is the day of the memory of his deceased relative, and there might not be another chance to serve.

On February 7, 1930, a team from the city came to the village for the organization of the collective farm. A meeting of the villagers was held, the charter of the collective farm was adopted, and a group of poor people raised the issue of evicting kulaks [well-off members of the peasant class – Ed.] outside the district.

On February 8, a divine service was held, attended by more forty of the parishioners. After Matins, they confessed, but during the Liturgy even more people came, as the day was a market day. Many peasants came from neighboring villages, everyone heard a rumor that the church could be closed, and many communed. Some who came during the Liturgy did not have time to confess, and Father Theodore offered them to prepare for confession and Communion the next day, Sunday. After the Liturgy, Father Theodore, according to testimony of witnesses, allegedly said: "The time has come for us to say goodbye to you, the Soviet government is exiling us all and taking us to who knows where. Communicate for the last time, Orthodox, and be ready for anything."

On February 10, the priest Theodore Feodosy, Deacon Sergius Urusovsky and four parishioners were arrested. Answering questions of the investigator, Fr. Theodore said: "Of the peasants arrested with me, I know all as parishioners. On February 8, on Saturday, the church service was performed. Matins was without ringing on the bell tower. About forty people were present. During Liturgy, I cannot say how many people gathered. During the service, believers thought to themselves, 'Communicate'. Among the peasants there were rumors that soon the church

would be closed and the clergy will be expelled, so I guess that the thoughts of confession and communion are caused by the influence of these rumors. I do not consider myself guilty of anti-Soviet agitation. "

On March 16, 1930, the OGPU troika sentenced Father Theodore and the others arrested with him to three years of exile to Siberia. Father Theodore was exiled to the city of Totma, Vologda region, where he died of pneumonia on February 10, 1933. *(from "Lives of the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Twentieth Century" compiled by the abbot Damaskin (Orlovsky))*

Individual Assessments for 2018

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

Thanks be to God, we have reached the New Year, and with that comes our responsibility to be good stewards of all that He has entrusted to us; our environment, our parish and our Diocese.

To support our Diocese, each individual age eighteen and older (except for high school and undergraduate college students) is asked to contribute \$70.00 in 2018.

We (St Thomas Parish) have paid the 2018 assessments in full for each parishioner when we received the bill from the Diocese. We trust that each person in turn will re-pay us during the year. Your assessments are used to support the following basic needs of our Diocese:

- Our Diocesan Bishop Gregory whose Ordination and teachings are directly traceable to our Lord's Apostles. Without our Bishop, we cannot exist as a parish of the Holy Orthodox Church!

- The General Administration of our Diocese.

- Christ the Savior Seminary for the formation of the future Priests of our Diocese.

- The Church Messenger - the production and distribution of our monthly Diocesan Newspaper (If you are not receiving the Messenger, please let us know).

- The Mission Fund, which assists in the establishment and support of new mission parishes (We at St. Thomas have been the beneficiaries of this fund in the form of a generous interest-free loan toward the construction of our new church building).

- The maintenance of our Diocesan Cathedral church in Johnstown, PA, the home parish of our Diocesan Bishop and Chancellor.

If you are unsure whether your 2017 Assessment has been paid in full, please see or call Dana Dewey, Trustee, at (301) 481-3445. Thank you in advance for your timely and generous support of our God-saved Diocese.

Yours in Christ,

Kari David, Treasurer | Dana Dewey, Trustee

CAMP NAZARETH SUMMER CAMP 2018

The time for Summer Camp is Rapidly Approaching!!! The clock is ticking!!

REGISTER ONLINE STARTING MAR. 1, 2018!!!

Dates for the Summer Camping Program

Week 1 -- July 15 - 21, 2018

New England, NY, NJ, Florida and Canada Deaneries

Week 2 -- July 22 - July 28, 2018

Johnstown, Pocono, Southern Tier, Youngstown and Chicago Deaneries

Week 3 -- July 29 - August 4, 2018

Register Online Starting March 1, 2018

Register at – *campnazareth.org*

From the Home Page, From the 2018 Summer Camp Icon, or From the Diocesan Summer Camp Tab found under the Summer Camp Tab and look for Camper Registration.

If you are Clergy or a Volunteer go to the 2018 Summer Camp Icon on the Home Page or the Diocesan Summer Camp Tab found under the Summer Camp Tab and look for the paper forms under Clergy/Volunteers.

\$20 Early Bird Discount Per Child!!!!

(one-time only, not per week)

Register & pay by May 15, 2018!!!!

Online Registration MUST be complete AND payment must be submitted by May 15 in order to qualify for the Early Bird Discount.

Registrations after June 15 will incur an additional \$20 late fee.

- ❑ When you register online please note that **you will still need to submit a paper copy of the Medical Examination Form (i.e. Camper Physical)** which must be filled out and signed by a licensed medical professional (licensed physician or physician's assistant). This form will be emailed to you after you complete the online registration process.
- ❑ **Payment by check, money order, or credit card is accepted.** Checks and Money Orders are to be made payable to *Camp Nazareth* and sent to *Camp Nazareth at 339 Pew Road, Mercer, PA 16137.*



February Anniversaries and Birthdays



Anniversaries:

Stefan & Jennifer Popescu 20th

Birthdays:

Benjamin Dewey 3rd
Lauren Chadwick 11th
Walter Howl 19th

Doug Chadwick 3rd
William Howl V 17th
Clara Vallandingham 24th
John Edgington 28th

Bernard Vallandingham 5th
Caleb Karbowsky 19th
Rachael David 27th

MEETING OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE

We will celebrate this Feast of the Lord with a vesperal liturgy on Wednesday evening, Feb. 1, at 7:00 PM. Please observe at least a three hour fast if you plan to receive the Eucharist.

Parish News

1. Lenten reading – we meet after Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evenings in Lent to discuss reading material to help deepen our spiritual lives. This year, we will be reading *On Living Simply: The Golden Voice of John Chrysostom* by Robert Van de Weyer. It's a collection of short extracts from St. John's homilies. It can be found on Amazon or www.abebooks.com for less than \$10.

2. Holy water was blessed on Theophany for parish use. If you'd like to take some home, please bring a container. Contact Fr. Joseph or Pani Stacey to get your house blessed.

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

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

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

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, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, 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. Nectarios and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)