

SOBORNOST

**St. Thomas the Apostle
Orthodox Church**

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Pastor**

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

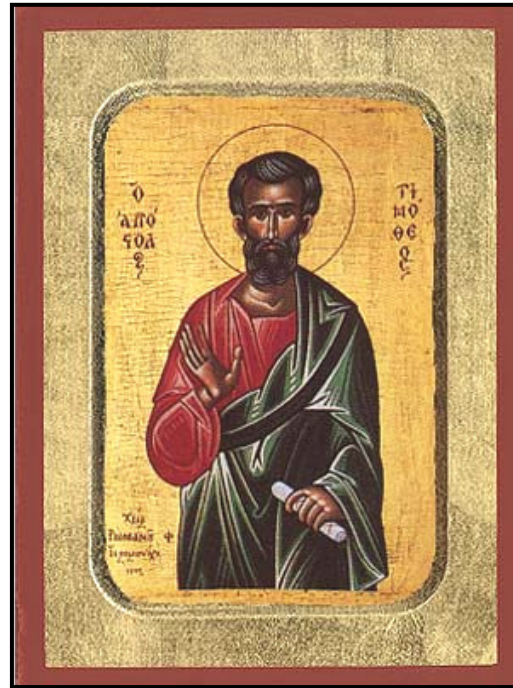
SERVICES

Sundays Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM, Divine Liturgy 10 AM

January 22, 2012 – 32nd Sunday after Pentecost

Apostle Timothy of the Seventy

Timothy was one of the Seventy Apostles. He was born in Lystra in Lycaonia of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. The Apostle Paul praised his mother and grandmother because of their sincere faith. "I yearn to see you again, recalling your tears, so that I may be filled with joy, as I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and that, I am confident, lives also in you" (II Timothy 1: 4-5). Timothy first met with the great apostle in Lystra and was himself a witness when Paul healed the one lame from birth. Later, Timothy was an almost constant traveling companion of Paul, traveling with him to Achaia, Macedonia, Italy and Spain. Sweet in soul, he was a great zealot for the Faith, and a superb preacher. Timothy contributed much to the spreading and establishing of the Christian Faith. Paul calls him "my own son in the faith." "Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus, Who is our hope, to Timothy, my own son in the Faith: grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Timothy 1: 1-2). After Paul's martyrdom, Timothy had St. John the Evangelist as his teacher. But when the Emperor Domitian banished John from Ephesus to the island of Patmos, Timothy remained in Ephesus to serve as bishop. During the time of an idolatrous feast called Katagogium, the pagans, resentful of the Christians, treacherously and in disguise, attacked Timothy and killed him about the year 93 A.D. Later his honorable relics were translated to Constantinople and interred in the Church of the Twelve Apostles alongside of the graves of St. Luke the Evangelist and St. Andrew the First-called.



Today's Epistle Reading – St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 1:15-17

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners; but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life. To the King of Ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory to the ages of ages. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading – Saint Luke 18:18-27

At that time, a ruler came to Jesus and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery; Do not kill; Do not steal; Do not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother.'" And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth." And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

A Word From the Holy Fathers



To the youth's stirring and awesome question, the Savior, as though angrily, answers, "Why do you call me good? No is good but God alone." If I am just a teacher, then I am not sufficiently good, divinely good and powerful, to be able to solve the question of eternal life. Only someone who has eternal life and can give eternal life can solve that question. If I am just a teacher – and that means just a man, and not God and Lord – then I am not in a position to solve your question ... No one is sufficiently good to be able to give the greatest good: eternal life. Only the Perfect Good – and this is God, the God-Man – knows and has the Perfect Life, Eternal Life, and can give it, and solve in every way the problem of eternal life on earth.

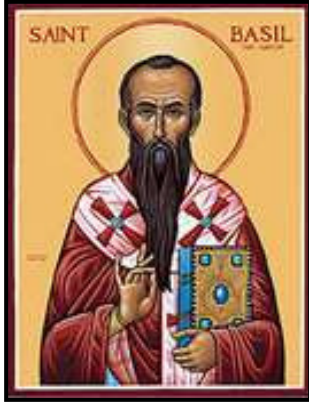
Archimandrite Justin Popovic - Commentary on today's Gospel reading.



On Understanding and Nurturing the Virtues

[We are in a somewhat 'calm' period of the Church Year. The major feasts of the Nativity of our Lord and Holy Theophany have passed, and we still have a little time before we enter the period of Great Lent - the preparation for the Passion and saving Resurrection of our Lord. As space permits, we'll try to use this time by offering thoughts on the virtues that the Holy Orthodox Church calls her faithful first to understand, and then to put into practice as we work out our salvation. Ed.]

On humble mindedness



Extirpate two thoughts within thyself: do not consider thyself worthy of anything great, and do not think that any other man is much lower than thou in worthiness. Learn humble mindedness beforehand, which the Lord commanded in word and showed forth in deed. Hence, do not expect obedience from others, but be ready for obedience thyself.

Even if thy soul should suffer somewhat from an offense, keep the sorrow within thyself. For it is said: "Within me my heart is troubled" (Psalm 142:4), that is, the passion has not come out, but has been humbled like a wave that has broken up on the shore. Calm thy raging heart. Let

thy passions be ashamed at the presence of reason in thee, as playful children are ashamed before a man commanding respect.

Saint Basil the Great

If thou wilt endure an offensive word, then thou hast extinguished an ember. But if thou wilt think about it, then, like someone kindling a fire, thou wilt produce smoke, which is confusion. However, one can conveniently extinguish it too by silence, prayer and a bow from the heart.

Believe that dishonors and reproaches are medicines that heal the pride of thy soul, and pray for those who reproach thee, as for true physicians of thy soul, being assured that he who hates dishonor, hates humility, and he who avoids those who grieve him, flees from meekness.

Venerable Dorotheus

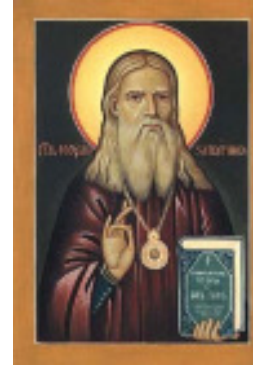
If thou, being offended by anything, dost sense that grief and wrath have seized thee, preserve silence, and say naught until unceasing prayer pacifies thine heart.

Venerable Ammon of Nitria

(Continued on Page 4)

On Understanding and Nurturing the Virtues (From Page 3)

St. Theophan the Recluse on the Forgiving of Offenses



Nothing is so powerful in the sight of the Lord as the forgiving of offenses, because it is the imitation of one of the actions closest to us of God's mercifulness; and we are not tempted by anything so easily as by irascibility and the desire for vengeance by a provoking word and, not infrequently, even a deed.

Why is it so, that we do not always forgive, but more often give ourselves up to outbursts of anger, annoyance and indignation? It is, I think, from inattentiveness to the value of forgiving. In moments of susceptibility to offense, one must restore in one's mind and heart the promise for forgiveness, which is undoubtedly more valuable than the greatest losses which an offense has the power to cause.

Let us forgive and we shall be forgiven; let us forgive again and we shall again be forgiven; and so on without end. He who forgives will himself walk under God's all-forgivingness, in the embrace of God's mercifulness and love. But let us hasten to forgive, in order to be forgiven, and this becomes easier, because that which we shall forgive is insignificant; while that which we shall be forgiven is so valuable that it cannot even be compared with it. In the Gospel parable, our sins against God are valued at ten thousand talents, while the sins of others against us are valued at a hundred denaria (Matthew 18:23-34). According to our reckoning, our sins are a thousand rubles, while the sins of others against us are one kopek. To gain a thousand rubles for a kopek for goodness' sake! if such an opportunity to make such a gain were to open up in everyday life, one would not even be able to force one's way through the crowd. But no gain on earth can be so sure as the Lord's promise is sure, and no appraisal of earthly things can be so exact as the comparative appraisal of our sins and the offenses caused us is exact, because it is determined by the God of righteousness Himself. Thus, remember the sins which thou hast been forgiven or sleekest forgiveness of, and if not out of thankfulness for mercy received, then in undoubted hope of receiving it, forgive, forgive and forgive with a wide and open heart.

Of course, it is not possible suddenly to acquire such a profound and abundant peace that would swallow up every insulting blow. The first degree of insusceptibility to offences and, consequently, forgiveness, is silence. When they offend thee, keep silent. Do so one time, and the next time thou wilt keep silent more easily; and the more often thou wilt keep silent, the more often thou wilt meet offenses with less disturbance. Lack of disturbance will bring rest, while rest will be reborn as peace. Then, in the face of offenses thou wilt be as a firm wall exposed to grains of sand flung up by the wind.

The frequent forgiving of offenses not only imparts ease and skill to this, but develops even a thirst for offenses, for the Lord's sake, during which he who is struck on the cheek turns the other, and he who is forced to go one mile goes two. This is a height which seems unattainable to us, but to which he who has begun to forgive as one ought ascends easily, naturally, without special efforts.

The forgiving of offenses is a most attractive virtue, often bringing into the heart a reward for itself.

PARISH NEWS

Trip Planned to Venerate Myrrh-Streaming Icons in Taylor, PA

Our diocesan parish of Saint George in Taylor, PA, is being blessed by the miraculous streaming of fragrant myrrh from two icons in their church. Our Potomac parish, Holy Resurrection, has scheduled a bus trip to venerate the icons Saturday, February 4th. If seats remain after Holy Resurrection faithful have signed up for the trip, it will be opened to St. Thomas and Nativity of our Lord in Manassas on a first-come, first-served basis. The cost of the trip has been underwritten by the Potomac ACRY Chapter, and we are only asked to make a free will offering to cover a gift to Saint George and a tip for the bus driver. The trip departs from Potomac at 8 AM. Bring a lunch to eat on the bus and money for the free will offering and a stop for dinner on the way back home. See Dn. Steve right away if you would like to be on the waiting list.

Saint Thomas Yard Sale Set to Expand, Broaden Scope in 2012!

Dennis and Phyllis Thomidis dropped by St. Thomas on Wednesday to do some cleaning, and unexpectedly found themselves in the midst of a 2012 strategic planning discussion.

This goes back to last Sunday, when Trustee Herman Blaydoe was expressing his frustration that the parish seems to have become a little (maybe more than that little?) complacent since the completion of the new building. Father Joseph joined the conversation, and invited building committee chairman (with lots of 'free time' on his hands now that the building is complete?) and Dn. Steve to join him for a 2012 planning session on Wednesday morning after Liturgy to consider ways to rekindle and refocus parishioners' energies in the New Year.

The first item up for consideration was expansion of the long-standing annual Saint Thomas Parish Yard Sale. Having now relocated to the parish grounds, we might broaden its scope with elements of a Church Festival - increasing publicity and promotion, offering church tours that could include talks on iconography and Orthodoxy, food (probably catered, and tailored to Southern Maryland tastes) and making our baked goods available for sale with 'free samples' for folks unfamiliar with Arabic baklava and eastern European nut, fruit and poppy seed rolls. The possibility of hosting or participating in additional Yard Sales was discussed. Dennis and Phyllis had already planned to participate in Calvert County sales, as well as adding a second, spring sale at Saint Thomas, which has traditionally been held only once a year in the fall. May 12th was chosen for the first Spring Sale/Festival, with a May 19th rain date. In addition to community outreach and evangelization, it is hoped that the expansion will bring in additional revenue that can be applied to off-budget building and grounds improvements. Stay tuned!

The Consecration of the new church building and the twentieth anniversary of the parish were also discussed, and it was agreed to begin the planning process by hoping they will take place on the third or fourth weekend in October if it is God's will. See the separate article on this subject on page 7, and then tell Melanie Samson that you want to help out! BE INVOLVED!

PARISH NEWS

Please Remember Your Diocesan Priests' Pension Fund Donation

Just a reminder that at our most recent Diocesan Council/Sobor Meeting, a request was made approved for a voluntary \$15 annual contribution to our diocesan Priests' Pension Fund from each adult member of the diocese for a four-year period. This is to help offset the Fund's losses that resulted from sharp declines in the value of the Fund's investments and the sharp increase in the number of retirements among our senior diocesan priests. Many of you have responded to this appeal in recent weeks, and we thank you. For those who have not done so as yet this year, please remember in this way the needs of our retired priests and their panis.

The Child of God Nicholas Hewitt Received into Holy Orthodoxy

On Saturday, January 14th, Nicholas Hewitt was received into Holy Orthodoxy through the Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation. Nicholas is the son of Eddie and Anna (Samouris) Hewitt, and the grandson of Nick and Annette Samouris. The newly-illuminated servant of God Nicholas' godparents are his Uncle Brian and Aunt Stephanie Guy. Father Joseph Churched Nicholas before the Liturgy last Sunday, when he also later received Holy Communion for the first time. May God grant to His servant Nicholas many blessed and happy years!



PARISH NEWS (Continued)



Collection for January 15, 2012

Gifts and Pledges	\$ 1,586.00
Candles & Prosporiki	84.00
Building Fund	758.00
Charity	40.00
Assessments	279.00
Priest Pension Fund	30.00
Calendars	11.00
Total	\$ 2,788.00



Attendance: Adults 44, Youth 20, Total 64

Planning Begins for Church Consecration and Parish's Twentieth Anniversary (And You Can Help!)

We've entered the twentieth year since the establishment of our mission parish of Saint Thomas the Apostle in 1992, and with thanksgiving to God, we've recently been able to build and begin to worship Him in a beautiful new church. A celebration seems to be in order!

Father Joseph has requested that the Consecration of our new church be placed on the diocesan calendar for late October of this year, to coincide with our twentieth anniversary. While we realize that during this period of awaiting the election of a successor to our beloved +Metropolitan Nicholas it isn't yet possible to set a firm date for the Consecration, a great deal of planning and preparation is necessary, and it seems wise to begin to do so at this time.

Melanie Samson had graciously accepted Father Joseph's request that she chair the newly-established joint Twentieth Anniversary & Consecration Committee. If you would like to offer your services to the Committee, please see Melanie as soon as possible. It's 'only January,' and October may seem far away, but there is **much** to be done!

Annual Parish Meeting Reminder and Preview

The Saint Thomas annual parish meeting has been scheduled for Meatfare Sunday, February 19th. Here are a few planning suggestions ...

- We'll be adopting a **2012 Budget**. You'll receive a proposed budget and other reports for you're your review with the February 12th bulletin. Please help us keep the meeting short by coming prepared with your questions or comments.
- Want to serve? Please see Trustee Herman Blaydoe if you'd like to **run for office**: Treasurer, Secretary, Auditor or Trustee. Or nominate the candidate of your choice!
- Bring a dish for the **Pot Luck** - no one is scheduled to host the social on Meeting Day.

PARISH NEWS (Continued)



Welcome 'Home' to Liturgy at St. Thomas

Last Sunday we welcomed 'home' former parishioners Kathy and Reagan Beauchamp. Kathy has retired from the Marine Corps, having served most recently in San Diego, Iraq, and Quantico, VA. She now resides in Munhall, PA. Kathy was secretary of St. Thomas parish when we bought the 'house church' in 1998. She and her daughters moved from their townhome into the house church, with the rent money going into the parish treasury. Her parents, Ernie and Merle Pido were instrumental in converting the former recreation room into the chapel that became our church from 1998 until last June. Kathy's daughter Reagan, a graduate of Lycoming College, is completing work on her master's degree, and is employed by the federal government. She left on Thursday to return to the Congo, where she has been working in law enforcement.

Time to Schedule Your Home Blessing!



We've celebrated the Theophany of our Lord, and we're now in the season of Home Blessings. Father Joseph will be blessing the homes of Saint Thomas faithful during the next few weeks. Please see Pani Stacey as soon as possible to arrange to have your house blessed before we enter Great Lent.

In Your Prayers – Please Remember...

Please remember in your prayers: His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Archbishop DEMETRIOS, Fr. Joseph & Family, Fr. John Baranik, Pani Yvonne Lysack, Christina Alexandru, Andrew Anderson, Mary Lou Angus, Matthew Baker & Family, Riley Bodenhorn, Millie Borys, Cecilia Bosch, the Boswell family, Sean Buckingham, Christos Charuhas, Arthur Chumak, Matthew Costis, Tina Crull, Kari & Mary Diane David, Rev. Joe Dobson, Donald Faulkner, Robbie Graves, Michael Hall, Father Chuck Harding, Gregory Harmening, Heather Himler, Nancy Hinderliter, Cameron Houk, the Howl Family, Kelly Jennings & Family, Ron Justice, Michael Kapeluck, Faith Kirby, Nam Koory and Family, Phyllis & Christos Kopan, Alex Makowelski, Jim Maston, Anna Marie Matula & Family, Michael McKenzie, Janet McKinley, Anna Meinhold, Daniela and Michael Milne, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry Osborne, infant Westin Perry & Parents, Kaylee Pilkerton, Katie Piazza, Kelly Plowchin and Family, Mary Reed, Anne Rosario, Jennifer Ross, the Samson Family, Cynthia Sawyer, Rose Shaffer, Stephen & Marian Sheptak, Maria Shostko, Marilyn Single, George Smilo, John Smilo, Jeanne Springer, Michael Stainbrook, Linda Stevenson, Bryan Tucker, Lydia Vita, Leslie Wilkinson, Lori & Eric Wood, the Wright Family, Ann, Elizabeth, Elizabeth, Michaela, Natalia, Nicole, Tracy, Xenia, the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, Fr. Martin's Society and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of any prayer list changes.)