

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

Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

July 29, 2018 – 9th Sunday After Pentecost

Martyr Callinicus of Gangra in Asia Minor

The Holy Martyr Callinicus, a native of Cilicia, was raised from childhood in the Christian Faith. Grieving that many misguided people would perish for eternity because they worshiped idols, he went through the cities and villages to proclaim Jesus Christ and His teachings to the pagans, and with the Word of God he converted many to Christianity.

In the Galatian city of Ancyra the holy confessor was arrested and brought to trial before a governor named Sacerdonus, a fierce persecutor of Christians. The governor, threatening tortures and death, ordered the saint to offer sacrifice to the idols. The saint fearlessly declared that he was not afraid of martyrdom, since every believer in Christ receives from Him strength in ordeals, and through death inherits an eternal blessed life.

They cruelly beat the saint with ox thongs and tore at his body with iron hooks, but he endured everything with patience and calm. This aroused still greater fury in Sacerdonus, and he ordered that sandals with sharp nails be placed on the saint's



feet, and that they should drive the martyr with whips to the city of Gangra to be burned.

The pathway was arduous, and the soldiers who accompanied the condemned man were weak from thirst. In despair they began to implore the saint to pray the Lord for water. The saint, taking pity on his tormentors, with the help of God caused a miraculous spring of water to gush forth from a stone. The astonished soldiers were filled with sympathy for their rescuer, and they wanted even to set him free. Fear of execution, however, compelled them to bring the martyr farther. In Gangra, Saint Callinicus joyfully offered thanks to the Lord, Who had vouchsafed him the crown of martyrdom. He went into the blazing fire and gave up his soul to God. His body, remaining unharmed, was reverently buried by believers. (*from oca.org*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 3:9-17

Brethren, we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Matthew 14:22-34

At that time, Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind *was* boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out,

saying, “Lord, save me!” And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.” When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.

THE MIRACLE OF THE CHURCH OF THE PROPHET ELIJAH IN CHERNOBYL

The only church in Chernobyl dedicated to the Old Testament Prophet Elijah is first mentioned by chronicles in the 16th century. Following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in April 1986 the church was closed. Even in the hardest days of 1986, however, the area around the church was free of radiation. Services in it were resumed in 2001. The church contains the revered icons of “The Savior of Chernobyl” and of St. Nicholas the Wonder-Worker.

In April 2011, on the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visited Chernobyl. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church served a funeral service (panikhida) there for the repose of the accident victims. The Patriarch then noted that the containment and stoppage of the nuclear power station accident “became a great moral feat for thousands of people” and called upon the gathered people not to forget the Chernobyl disaster victims.

The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear plant happened on April 26, 1986, due to an explosion in the fourth power-generating unit. As a result of the disaster 19 Russian regions with a total area of about 60,000 square kilometers (23,166 sq. mi.) and a population of 2.6 million people, and 46,500 square kilometers (17,954 sq. mi.) of the neighboring territory of Belarus (23% of its total area) suffered from the radioactive fallout. The overall area of radiation pollution in the Ukraine was 50,000 square kilometers (19,305 sq.mi.) in 12 regions.

The icon “The Savior of Chernobyl,” in Prophet Elijah Church, painted (written) after the disaster, has a unique history. According to the web site of the Church of St. Theodosius in Kiev, the icon’s prototype appeared several times in dreams to Yuri Andreev, an atomic energy worker who received an enormous dosage of radiation at the time of the accident. Andreev dismissed the visions as simple dreams, or even heresy, but eventually decided to ask Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev (now recently-reposed) if it would be possible to have an icon made showing the Savior, together with the people of Chernobyl who risked or sacrificed their lives to save others from the radiation. Metropolitan Vladimir gave his blessing. The icon depicts The Savior, the Mother of God, and the Archangel Michael at the top of the icon. A star falls on Chernobyl, reminiscent of the Book of Revelation's

reference to "wormwood", which in Ukrainian is translated as "chernobyl". At the bottom left are the souls of the victims who died from the accident; on the bottom right are the workers who knowingly stayed in the deadly radiation in order to contain the accident. Between them is a pine tree, shaped like a trident, that stood at Chernobyl. "Workers of the Chernobyl nuclear plant were all non-believers," said Andreev, as reported by The Voice of Russia, "until they witnessed something which can only be interpreted as the power of God. In the very first seconds after the explosion on the fourth reactor a cloud with uranium particles moved towards the neighboring town of Pripyat," only 1800 meters (1 mile) away. "A pine stood in the way of the radioactive cloud. Before it reached the tree, the cloud broke into two halves and instead of covering the town, it passed it by a mere several meters from residential areas. No one can explain this to this day." During WWII, the pine had been used by fascists to hang Russian soldiers on.



The Icon has been the source of miraculous healings, according to the St. Theodosius Church website. During the consecration of the icon, a miracle occurred witnessed by thousands of people: a dove flew over the icon, a rainbow appeared in the sky in the shape of a halo (though there had been no rain), and then an Orthodox Cross appeared in the sky, with the sun in the center of it. (*adapted from eschatologia.com*)

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Beloved ones, the time has come to have recourse to the Mother of the Word, our only hope and refuge. Imploring, let us cry out to her, "save your city, as you know how, O Lady!" Let us set her up as our intermediary before her Son our God, and make her the witness and surety of our compact, she who conveys our requests and rains down the mercy of her Offspring, and scatters the cloud of enemies, and lights up for us the dawn of salvation. May we be delivered through her pleading of this present wrath, and be delivered also of the endless condemnation to come, in Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be all glory and thanks and veneration, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and ever. Amen.

– St. Photius the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Homily 3.7*

Thank You!

Dear Father Joseph & the parish,

Thank you for the generous scholarship that you gave me, and for your support as I continue on to college. Thank you for all of the many years of worship you have given me.

Sincerely,

Amanda Hampton

Also Commemorated Today: Heiromartyr Bessarion of Smolyan

Your heavens, O land of Bulgaria, are ablaze! Your sapphire-clear, pure heavens burn with the wounds of the yoke! Blood drips from the heavens and the moan of slaves echoes from the Rhodope Mountains. Souls are heavy with despondency. Hearts are rent by fear and suffering. Like Jeremiah, we call out: "Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider, and behold our reproach. Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens. We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as widows.... We have gotten our bread at the peril of our lives because of the sword of the Rhodopian wilderness. Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine. They ravished our women in the holy places and the maids before the altars of God. Princes were hanged up by their hand; the persons of our elders were dishonored... Wherefore do you forget us for ever, and forsake us so a long time?" (Cf. Lamentations, Ch. 5.)

The Turks destroyed the churches. They turned the divine books into ashes. They plundered treasures and demolished the holy things. A black night lay over the Bulgarian land.

Yet, the voice of the birds was not utterly silenced. Like a nightingale in the twilight, like a heavenly bird amidst the wilds of the forests, from within the hearts of the rocks, Bishop Bessarion of Smolyan raised his sweet voice: the saintly nightingale, whose very name seemed to betoken his feat, since Bessarion means "of the forest".

Bessarion, the bird of the forest, soothing, by the words of its songs, the souls of the banished faithful lambs of Christ; Bessarion, the Rhodopian falcon undaunted by the unapproachable cliffs of the Rhodopes; Bessarion, the turtle-dove of the forest, which found a nest in the footstool of God's feet, in the divers caves and wilds of the Rhodopes, from whence prayers go up as pure incense towards the



heavenly altars of the All-High God; Bessarion, the good shepherd, may he be glorified today by all the faithful!

But what hymns shall we offer, what candles shall we light before the face of our enlightened father, intercessor and guide towards the Light? Open your ears, you Rhodopian rocks, and hear the song of the falcon of our land, the sylvan eagle, vigilant, even unto this day, over the indomitable fortress: the Orthodox Church, the holy spiritual mother of our people, the honor and glory of the Bulgarian land!

During the reign of Machmoud IV, in the month of July of the year of salvation 1669 A.D., the enslavers crawled over the Rhodope-mountain and did great mischief to the Christians there. They forcibly converted some of them to their impious faith, slaughtered others, and drove others away into the forests.

Among the fugitives was also the Bishop of Smolyan, the praiseworthy Bessarion, who, like an Angel and guardian of the sweetness of Eden, took refuge in the hamlet of Raikovo ("of Eden"), where with the fiery sword of his words he kept the filthy hands of the Moslems from the hearts of his faithful sheep. The shepherd of the people was always surrounded by many Bulgarians from the neighboring villages. Sheltered under the wings of their guardian, they abode joyously in their holy Christian Faith. And all around them, like rabid wolves, the Turks did all sorts of reprehensible acts that I cannot describe; my jaws are benumbed.

The lamp of the Rhodope Mountains remained for a year in Raikovo. However, the hater of light sought a way to extinguish this radiant flame, in order to bring to an end his baleful plans. For the hapless and over-grieved Bulgarians, Bessarion was an eagle's wing; and while he sojourned in their midst, their turbans and yashmaks wallowed contemptible in the sacks at the squares. This made the Moslem rancor ever more virulent.

At the first dawn of July 29, in the year 1670 A.D., the saintly Vladyka, together with some ten guardians, all on horses, took to the road towards Gorno Ezerovo. But suddenly, in a dale, some armed Ottomans ambushed them, and after a long and bloody fight, they captured the Bishop alive, along with his loyal guardians. God's finger was pointing towards Golgotha. The time had come for the faithful servant of Christ to be glorified. And instead of reaching Gorno Ezerovo ("the

higher village of the lake"), the praiseworthy Bessarion was preparing to pass to the higher lakes of never-ceasing heavenly joy, where there is neither pain nor darkness, but Christ is all in all.

Having reached Smolyan, it was ordered by the local governors that Bessarion be offered the chance to accept Islam in a mild way, and thus keep his temporal life. The sly Moslems hoped, in this way, to wheedle the rest of the Bulgarians who remained faithful to Christ into the pernicious Mohammedan faith and thus to revenge their previous steadfastness. But the holy hierarch answered gently: "A man who loves the Divine Truth is unfaltering in his faith. My death will make me immortal before God."

Then the Turks disrobed him and began pinching his flesh with some specially prepared pincers, tearing pieces of meat from his living body. The Bishop endured fearlessly these infernal pangs and did not beg for his life. The blood streamed out of the body of this genuine martyr. Afterwards, he was beaten in a most cruel way with iron sticks all over his body, until the holy hierarch lost consciousness. But the torturers brought him round and began stabbing him with knives, cutting pieces from his body. Then they put a candescent tripod on his head, jeering at him in all fashions. Yet, this was not enough for them. They mortified him before all of the people, leading him around the town bare and naked for show. The Bishop swallowed this insult with humility. In the end, a frenzied Turk stepped out of the throng and thrust a sharp dagger in the breast of the sanctified martyr. The fanatical Turks threw themselves with a vengeance over the relics of Bessarion, assailing them with stones and disfiguring them, hacking them into a mangled mass.

Then they commanded his guardians to dig a grave in an orchard, near the village-green of Smolyan, where they buried his holy relics. Thus, on the July 29, 1670, Bishop Bessarion of Smolyan, the light of the Rhodopes was martyred in Smolyan. His memory today illumines all the land of Bulgaria. With songs and brilliant words, let us glorify this sylvan bird, the most wondrous Bessarion, praising jubilantly his valiant temper and his great staunchness in the Faith. (*adapted from prophet-elias.com*)

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August Anniversaries and Birthdays



Anniversaries:

Doug & Sandy Tucker 11th Dana & Olga Dewey 12th
David & Kathryn Newman 17th William & Gabriela Howl 24th

Birthdays:

Larry Hartenstein 4th Kari David 7th Sandy Tucker 8th
Reagan Beauchamp 13th Elena Chadwick 14th David Newman 15th
Carol Wright 16th Carol Vallandingham 19th Anna Connour 24th
Ashley Vallandingham 27th

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 Dominiacki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert & Pam 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, Alexander Shostko, Bernie Takabayashi & family, 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.)