



*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,  
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

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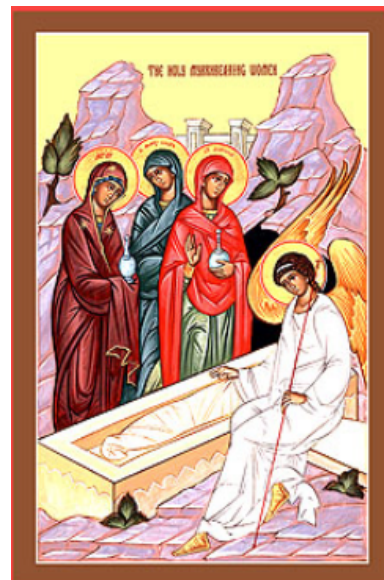
*Please join us for prayer and fellowship.*

**Upcoming Services:**  
**Saturday, May 11, 18**  
**Great Vespers: 5pm**  
**Sunday, May 12, 19**  
**Divine Liturgy: 10am**  
**Coffee and fellowship will  
follow the service**

*The above services are at  
St. Olympia Church  
34 North Main Street  
Norwood, NY, 13668*

*Mailing Address  
St. Olympia Orthodox  
Church PO Box 122  
Canton, NY 13617*

## **Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women May 19**



*The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure body from the Tree,  
wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb.*

*When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the  
splendor of Thy Godhead. The angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb  
and said: Myrrh is fitting for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to  
corruption! So proclaim: The Lord is risen, granting the world great mercy.*

## **Day of Rejoicing May 14**

On Tuesday of Saint Thomas week we remember those Orthodox Christians from all ages who have died in faith, and in the hope of resurrection.

There are indications of this commemoration in the sermons of the Fathers of the Church. Saint John Chrysostom, for example, mentions it in his homily "On the Cemetery and the Cross."

In pre-Revolutionary Russia bars remained closed and alcoholic beverages were not sold until this Day of Rejoicing so that the joy people felt would be because of the Resurrection, and not an artificial joy brought on by alcohol.

Today the Church remembers its faithful members at Liturgy, and koliva is offered in remembrance of those who have fallen asleep. Priests visit cemeteries to bless the graves of Orthodox Christians, and to share the paschal joy with the departed. It is also customary to give alms to the poor on this day.



## **Venerable Pachomius the Great, Founder of Coenobitic Monasticism May 15**

Saint Pachomius the Great was both a model of desert dwelling, and with Saints Anthony the Great (January 17), Macarius the Great (January 19), and Euthymius the Great (January 20), a founder of the cenobitic monastic life in Egypt. Saint Pachomius was born in the third century in the Thebaid (Upper Egypt). His parents were pagans who gave him an excellent secular education. From his youth he had a good character, and he was prudent and sensible. When Pachomius reached the age of twenty, he was called up to serve in the army of the emperor Constantine (apparently, in the year 315). They put the new conscripts in a city prison guarded by soldiers. The local Christians fed the soldiers and took care of them.

When the young man learned that these people acted this way because of their love for God, fulfilling His commandment to love their neighbor, this made a deep impression upon his pure soul. Pachomius vowed to become a Christian. Pachomius returned from the army after the victory, received holy Baptism, moved to the lonely settlement of Shenesit, and began to lead a strict ascetic life. Realizing the need for spiritual guidance, he turned to the desert-dweller Palamon. He was accepted by the Elder, and he began to follow the example of his instructor in monastic struggles.

Once, after ten years of asceticism, Saint Pachomius made his way through the desert, and halted at the ruins of the former village of Tabennisi. Here he heard a Voice ordering him to start a monastery at this place. Pachomius told the Elder Palamon of this, and they both regarded the words as a command from God.

They went to Tabennisi and built a small monastic cell. The holy Elder Palamon blessed the foundations of the monastery and predicted its future glory. But soon Palamon departed to the Lord. An angel of God then appeared to Saint Pachomius in the form of a schemamonk and gave him a Rule of monastic life. Soon his older brother John came and settled there with him. Saint Pachomius endured many temptations and assaults from the Enemy of the race of man, but he resisted all temptations by his prayer and endurance.

Gradually, followers began to gather around Saint Pachomius. Their teacher impressed everyone by his love for work, which enabled him to accomplish all kinds of monastic tasks. He cultivated a garden, he conversed with those seeking guidance, and he tended to the sick.

Saint Pachomius introduced a monastic Rule of cenobitic life, giving everyone the same food and attire. The monks of the monastery fulfilled the obediences assigned them for the common good of the monastery. Among the various obediences was copying books. The monks were not allowed to possess their own money nor to accept anything from their relatives. Saint Pachomius considered that an obedience fulfilled with zeal was greater than fasting or prayer. He also demanded from the monks an exact observance of the monastic Rule, and he chastised slackers.

His sister Maria came to see Saint Pachomius, but the strict ascetic refused to see her. Through the gate keeper, he blessed her to enter upon the path of monastic life, promising his help with this. Maria wept, but did as her brother had ordered. The Tabennisi monks built her a hut on the opposite side of the River Nile. Nuns also began to gather around Maria. Soon a women's monastery was formed with a strict monastic Rule provided by Saint Pachomius.

The number of monks at the monastery grew quickly, and it became necessary to build seven more monasteries in the vicinity. The number of monks reached 7,000, all under the guidance of Saint Pachomius, who visited all the monasteries and administered them. At the same time Saint Pachomius remained a deeply humble monk, who was always ready to comply with and accept the words of each brother.

Severe and strict towards himself, Saint Pachomius had great kindness and condescension toward the deficiencies of spiritually immature monks. One of the monks was eager for martyrdom, but Saint Pachomius turned him from this desire and instructed him to fulfill his monastic obedience, taming his pride, and training him in humility.

Once, a monk did not heed his advice and left the monastery. He was set upon by brigands, who threatened him with death and forced him to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Filled with despair, the monk returned to the monastery. Saint Pachomius ordered him to pray intensely night and day, keep a strict fast and live in complete solitude. The monk followed his advice, and this saved his soul from despair.

The saint taught his spiritual children to avoid judging others, and he himself feared to judge anyone even in thought. Saint Pachomius cared for the sick monks with special love. He visited them, he cheered the disheartened, he urged them to be thankful to God, and put their hope in His holy will. He relaxed the fasting rule for the sick, if this would help them recover their health. Once, in the saint's absence, the cook did not prepare any cooked food for the monks, assuming that the brethren loved to fast. Instead of fulfilling his obedience, the cook plaited 500 mats, something which Saint Pachomius had not told him to do. In punishment for his disobedience, all the mats prepared by the cook were burned.

Saint Pachomius always taught the monks to rely only upon God's help and mercy. It happened that there was a shortage of grain at the monastery. The saint spent the whole night in prayer, and in the morning a large quantity of bread was sent to the monastery from the city, at no charge. The Lord granted Saint Pachomius the gift of wonderworking and healing the sick.

The Lord revealed to him the future of monasticism. The saint learned that future monks would not have such zeal in their struggles as the first generation had, and they would not have experienced guides. Prostrating himself upon the ground, Saint Pachomius wept bitterly, calling out to the Lord and imploring mercy for them. He heard a Voice answer, "Pachomius, be mindful of the mercy of God. The monks of the future shall receive a reward, since they too shall have occasion to suffer the life burdensome for the monk."

Toward the end of his life Saint Pachomius fell ill from a pestilence that afflicted the region. His closest disciple, Saint Theodore (May 17), tended to him with filial love. Saint Pachomius died around the year 348 at the age of fifty-three, and was buried on a hill near the monastery.

*As a pastor of the Chief Shepherd, O Father Pakhomios, you guided flocks of monks into the heavenly sheepfold, where you learned about the Schema and way of life which is fitting for ascetics. Having taught this to the monks, /now you rejoice with them in the heavenly abodes.*

**Troparion**

*Since you lived the life of the Angels while in the body, you were also deemed worthy of their glory, O God-bearer Pakhomios. Now you stand with them before the throne of God, /interceding that divine forgiveness may be granted to all.*

**Kontakion**

## **The Myrrhbearing Women** *(Compiled from Father Hopko and the Lives of the Saints)*

The third Sunday after Pascha is dedicated to the myrrhbearing women who cared for the body of the Saviour at his death and who were the first witnesses of His Resurrection. The three troparia of Holy Friday are sung once again and from the theme of the day:

*The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure body from the Tree, wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb.*

*When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead. The angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb and said: Myrrh is fitting for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption! So proclaim: The Lord is risen, granting the world great mercy.*

*You visited Christ the Lord in the night, / and were born from above<sup>1</sup> being received, as it were, as a secret Apostle. / With good courage you disputed with the Pharisees and Scribes<sup>2</sup> / and followed the Savior. / Taking Him dead from the Cross, / you wrapped Him in cloths with myrrh and laid Him in the tomb, / O fervent<sup>3</sup> Nikódēmos.*

The Myrrh-bearing women are those women who followed the Lord, along with His Mother. They remained with her during the time of the saving Passion, and anointed the Lord's body with myrrh. Joseph and Nikódēmos asked for and received the Lord's body from Pilate. They took it down from the Cross, wrapped it in linen cloths and spices, then they laid it in a tomb, and then they placed a great stone over the entrance of the tomb.

According to the Evangelist Matthew (27:57-61) Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses (Mark 15:40) were there sitting opposite the sepulchre, and they saw where He had been laid. This other Mary was the Mother of God. Not only were these present, but also many other women, as Saint Luke says (24:10).

Today the Church honors

Saints Mary Magdalene (July 22),

Mary the wife of Cleopas (May 23),

Joanna (June 27),

Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee (August 3),

Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus (June 4),

and the Most Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary,

who was the stepmother of her husband Joseph's sons James (October 23) and Joses (October 30).

Today we also remember Saint Joseph of Arimathea (July 31), who was a secret disciple (John 19:38), and Saint Nikódēmos, who was a disciple by night (John 3:3; 19:38).

The holy right-believing Queen Tamara of Georgia is honored twice during the year: on May 1, the day of her repose, and also on the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women. On this day the Church also remembers All Saints of Thessalonica, Saint Seraphim Bishop of Phanar (December 4, 1610), the New Martyr Elias Ardunis (January 31, 1686), and the New Martyr Demetrios of the Peloponnesos (April 13, 1803).

### **Schedule Now Available for 2024 Memorial Day Pilgrimage to St. Tikhon's Monastery**

The monastic brotherhood of the Monastery of Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk has announced the 120th annual Memorial Day Pilgrimage to take place from May 24 to May 27, 2024. His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon will preside at the pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage events include Hierarchical Divine Liturgies, a healing service to the Mother of God, the Blessing of the new Arts Center Building and a concert on Sunday evening celebrating the Arts Center's grand opening. More info & tickets for the performance Sunday evening can be found here.

Singers are warmly invited to join the St. Tikhon's Festival Choir for the weekend! All details and registration for the festival choir can be found here.

All are welcome to join us for the weekend, to share in this wonderful event, to be strengthened and encouraged!

<https://www.oca.org/news/oca-news/schedule-now-available-for-2024-memorial-day-pilgrimage-to-st-tikhons-monastery>

**<<Time to visit Zach ☺>>**



**PARISH CURRENT NEEDS!**  
*Holy Mother Olympia, Pray to God for us!*

**Protecting our stained-glass windows!**

Our newly-revealed 12-foot tall 19<sup>th</sup> century stained-glass windows need protection. Please consider sponsoring a Plexiglas storm window for \$700 installed or donating what you can toward this project in support. We have four stunning windows that we would like to cover before they get vandalized and six additional ones that we'd like to winterize.

**Providing area rugs for our sanctuary and altar area!**

We are also in need of sponsors for carpets. Now that the moldy, hole-y 1970s carpet has been ripped out and the floor refinished, we need some area rugs. We've ordered four thick oriental-style wool rugs at a tremendous discount. Two 9'6" x 13'6" rugs are already covered and two need "adoption" at \$575. Also a 4'6" x 6'6" oval (\$128), a 2' x 3' rug for before the altar. (\$30) and a 2' x 12' non-slip rug pad (\$42.50).

You may donate directly at [saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org](http://saintolympiaorthodoxchurch.org) ) or if you would like more information, please contact Jessica Suchy-Pilalis.

**UPCOMING DIOCESAN & PARISH EVENTS**

**Parish Council Meeting**

Monday, May 13, 7:30 PM via Google Meet

**Diocesan Council Meeting**

Wednesday, May 15, 11:00 AM  
Bronxville, NY

Most men believe in the resurrection of Christ, but very few have a clear vision of it. ... That most sacred formula which is daily on our lips does not say,

*"Having believed in Christ's resurrection," but,*

***"Having beheld Christ's resurrection, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, who alone is without sin."***

How then does the Holy Spirit urge us to say, "Having beheld Christ's resurrection", which we have not seen as though we had seen it, when Christ has risen once for all a thousand years ago, and even then without anybody's seeing it? Surely Holy Scripture does not wish us to lie? Far from it! Rather, it urges us to speak the truth, that the resurrection of Christ takes place in each of us who believes, and that not once, but every hour, so to speak, when Christ the Master arises in us, resplendent in array and flashing with the lightnings of incorruption and Deity.

For the light-bringing coming of the Spirit shows forth to us, as in early morning, the Master's resurrection, or, rather, it grants us to see the Risen One Himself. Therefore we say,

**'The Lord is God, and He has given us light' (Ps. 118:27)**

and we allude to His second Coming and add these words,

**'Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord' (Ps. 118:26).**

Those to whom Christ has given light as He has risen, to them He has appeared spiritually, He has been shown to their spiritual eyes. When this happens to us through the Spirit He raises us up from the dead and gives us life. He grants us to see Him, who is immortal and indestructible. More than that, He grants clearly to know Him who raises us up (Ephesians 2:6) and glorifies us (Romans 8:17) with Himself, as all the divine Scripture testifies.

These, then, are the divine mysteries of Christians. This is the hidden power of our faith, which unbelievers, or those who believe with difficulty, or rather believe in part, do not see nor are able at all to see.

Saint Symeon the New Theologian