

**Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost; 13<sup>th</sup> of Luke**  
**Great Martyr James the Persian**

Venerable Palladios of Thessalonika; Venerable Nathaniel of Natria;  
James, Bishop of Rostov

**Sunday, November 27, 2011**

**Tone 7; Eothinon 2**

**Apolytikion for the Resurrection (Tone 7)**

Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the Great Mercy.

**Apolytikion of St. James the Persian (Tone 4)**

Thy Martyr, O Lord, in his courageous contest for Thee received as the prize the crowns of incorruption and life from Thee, our immortal God. For, since he possessed Thy strength, he cast down the tyrants and wholly destroyed the demons' strengthless presumption. O Christ God, by his prayers, save our souls, since Thou art merciful.

**Apolytikion for our Patron, Michael the Archangel (Tone 4)**

O ye foremost of the heavenly hosts we beseech thee, though we are unworthy, pray that we may be encompassed with a shadow of thine unearthly glory; preserving us who kneel and cry endlessly: deliver us from oppression since ye are the prince of the highest powers.

**Kontakion of the Preparation of Christ's Nativity (Tone 3)**

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave where she will give birth in an ineffable manner to the Word Who is before all the ages. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest it heralded: Glorify Him, with the angels and the shepherds, Who chose to be seen as a new-born babe, the God Who is before all the ages.

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**Daily Readings** [Note: Arabic translation provided below]

THE EPISTLE (for the Twenty-fourth Sunday)

*The Lord will give strength to His People.*

*Ascribe, to the Lord, O sons of God, ascribe to the Lord honor and glory.*

**The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (2:14-22)**

Brethren, Christ is our peace, Who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the Cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And He came and preached peace to you, who were far off, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in Whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in Whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

THE GOSPEL (The Thirteenth Sunday of Luke)

**The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to St. Luke (18:18-27)**

At that time, a man came testing Jesus and asking, "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 the man 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 to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the man heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus, seeing him sad, 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?” Jesus said, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”

**NOTE**

At the end of the Liturgy during the veneration of the cross, please refrain from speaking loudly and keep in order that the prayers read after Holy Communion may be heard by everyone in the church. Thank you.

## **The Synaxarion**

On November 27 in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the contest of the holy Great-martyr James the Persian.

### **Verses**

*Cut limb by limb and suffering slaughter, the Persian saith:  
Be my soul saved, though my limbs have departed.  
On the twenty-seventh the Persian is slaughtered piecemeal.*

He was born in the Persian town of Elapa, or Vilat, of Christian parents. The Persian king, Yezdegeherd, loved James for his gifts and for his skill, and made him a noble at his court. Flattered by the king, James was deluded and offered sacrifice to idols, which the king also worshipped. James' mother and wife, hearing of this, wrote him a reproachful letter in which they grieved over him as an apostate and one spiritually dead, begging him at the end of the letter to repent and return to Christ. Moved by this letter, James repented bitterly, and courageously confessed his faith in Christ the Lord before the king. The furious king condemned James to death, and added that his body was to be cut to pieces, little by little, until he breathed his last. During the entire process, James gave thanks to God. A fragrance came from his wounds as of cypress. Thus this wonderful man repented of his sin, and his soul went to Christ God in the Heavenly Kingdom in about the year 400.

On this day, we also commemorate the Venerable Palladios of Thessalonika; Venerable Nathanael of Nitria; and James, bishop of Rostov. *By their intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.*

#### A Note Regarding Holy Communion

Since we understand Communion to mean that we have all things in common, sharing an identical Faith, *only* those who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting and recent Confession may participate in Holy Communion. (We invite all, however, to partake of the blessed bread which is distributed at the dismissal.) Please see the Pastor for inquiries on how to become a member.

## LITURGICAL CALENDAR

[Note: The **Fast for the Holy Nativity\*** that began on Tuesday, November 15 and is divided into two periods: 1) November 15 through December 19, the traditional fasting discipline is observed (no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine and oil), except on Tuesdays and Thursdays when wine and oil are permitted, and on Saturdays and Sundays when fish, wine and oil are allowed. It should be noted that some allow for fish on all days except Wednesdays and Fridays from November 15 to December 18; 2) December 20 through 24, traditional fasting is observed on all days except on Saturday and Sunday when wine and oil are permitted.

*There is a general dispensation for the Thanksgiving holiday.]*

**The Feast of the Holy Apostle Andrew** – Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>

**The Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost and 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke  
Great Martyr Barbara; The Venerable John of Damascus**

Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

**Feast of St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra** – Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>

## OFFERINGS

Holy Bread is being offered this morning and the Coffee Hour hosted by Kitty Komashko and family for the one-year memorial of George Komashko (+24 November, 2010), beloved husband, father and grandfather. Memory eternal.

An offering of Holy Bread is being made with prayers for Alice Andrews celebrating her birthday (November 26), by her husband,

فدخولُ الجملي في ثقبِ الإبرة , قال له: "ما أَعسَرَ دخولَ ذوي الأموالِ إلى ملكوتِ الله  
أسهلُ من دخولِ الغنيِّ إلى ملكوتِ الله." فقال السامعون: "من يستطيعُ أن يخلصَ, إذن؟"  
" فأجابَ يسوع: ما لا يُستطاعُ عند الناسِ مُستطاعُ عند اللهِ "

اليوم العذراء تأتي إلى المغارة لتلد الكلمة الذي قبل الدهور، ولادة لا تُفسر، ولا يُنطقُ بها، فافرحي أيتها المسكونة إذا سمعت، ومجدي مع الملائكة والرعاة، الظاهر بمشنته طفلاً جديداً، وهو الإله قبل الدهور

## الرسالة

الربّ يؤتي العزة لشعبه، قَدِّموا للربّ، يا أبناء الله مجداً وعزاً

فصلٌ من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى أهل أفسس

يا أخوة، المسيح نفسه هو سلامنا، جعل بجسده الجماعتين شعباً واحداً، وهدم الحاجز الذي يفصل بينهما، أي العداوة، وألغى الشريعة وأحكامها، ليخلق في شخصه من هاتين الجماعتين، بعدما أحلّ السلام بينهما، إنساناً جديداً، ويُصلح بينهما وبين الله، ففضى على العداوة وجعلهما جسداً واحداً. جاء وبشركم بالسلام أنتم الذين كنتم بعيدين، كما بشر بالسلام الذين كانوا قريبين، لأنّ لنا به جميعاً سبيلاً إلى الله في الروح الواحد. فما أنتم بعد اليوم غرباء أو ضيوفاً، بل أنتم مع القديسين رعية واحدة ومن أهل بيت الله، بُنيتم على أساس الرسل والأنبياء وحجر الزاوية هو يسوع المسيح نفسه، لأنّ به يتماسك البناء كله ويرتفع ليكون هيكلاً مقدساً في الرب، وبه أنتم أيضاً تُبنون معاً لتصيروا مسكناً لله في الروح.

## الإنجيل

فصلٌ من بشارة القديس لوقا

في ذلك الزمان، دنا من يسوع إنسانٌ ليجرّبه فقال: "أيها المعلم الصالح، ماذا أعمل لأرث الحياة الأبدية؟" فأجابه يسوع: "لماذا تدعوني صالحاً، وما صالح إلا واحد وهو الله. أنت تعرف الوصايا: لا تزني، لا تقتل، لا تسرق، لا تشهد بالزور، أكرم أباك وأمك. فقال: "كلّ هذه الوصايا حفظتها من أيام صباي." فلما سمع يسوع ذلك، قال له: "يعوزك شيء واحد، بع كل شيء ووزعه على الفقراء، فيكون لك كنز في السماء، وتعال اتبعني." فحزن الرجل عندما سمع هذا الكلام، لأنّه كان غنياً جداً. ولما رآه يسوع أنّه حزن جداً

Carl, her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. May God grant her many years!

Holy Bread and wheat is being offered this morning by Violet Kavan for the one-year memorial of her dear friend, the servant of God, Genevieve Antoniewicz (+25 November, 2010); also in loving memory of Earle Joseph Thompson (+25 November, 1990) and William Kavan (+28 September, 1995). Memory eternal.

Holy Bread and Ecumenical Wine are being offered with prayers for the health, security, and happiness of Mary Wassef and her family; especially for Justina's third birthday (November 24), and for Mary's sister, Mona, and her family.

Special offerings and requests for prayer are being made . . .

for the good health of Adam Lamar.

for the continued health of Sondra Love.

for the continued recovery of Larry Lechlak.

for the two year memorial of Evelyn Haddad (+27 November, 2009).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Report of the Special Parish Meeting

At a special Parish Meeting held at the end of Liturgy last Sunday, the Nominating Committee presented its report for Parish Council election. Three (3) vacancies will be filled by three parishioners who will be elected for three (3) three year terms, beginning on January 1, 2012. In accordance with the Parish Constitution, all nominees must be at least twenty-five years of age or older, have been a pledging member of the parish for at least one year and have fulfilled the canonical requirements of the Faith [Article VI, Sec. 2]. The nominees must also be committed in

attending monthly meetings of the Council held on the second Monday of each month. There were no additional nominations made from the floor at the meeting, and all of the nominees indicated their willingness to serve on the Council. The nominees for Parish Council accepted and approved at the Special Meeting were (in alphabetical order): **Daniel Barney, Jeanice Deeb, Bobbi Monsue, Eric Nelson, Michael C. Srour, Kris Thabit, and Rami Yann**i. We sincerely thank members of the Council whose three-year terms are expiring: **Sondra Murr Love** (also serving as the current President of the Antiochian Women), **Don Meena** (current Chair of the Community Center Management Committee), completing a second three-year term (ineligible to serve another elected term), and **Richard Tamoush** for serving on our Council, also **Jeanice Rose Deeb, Bobbi Monsue** and **Michael C. Srour** for serving the past year as appointed members. The Parish Council Election will be held next Sunday, November 27<sup>th</sup> and Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup>. We also thank **Charmaine Darmour**, Chair of the Nominations Committee.

**Thank you!**

The teens would like to thank everyone who made our bake sale a great success. Thank you to all the parishioners who bought or donated to the sale; thank you to everyone who helped us set up, as well as bake on Saturday night; and a big thank you to the Yannis, who so generously opened up their home to us on Saturday night. The teens have decided to donate one third of the proceeds from this bake sale towards the DeCelis mortgage. We look forward to many more events like this and will hopefully we raise even more money for our parish in the future by coming together as a church like we did this past Sunday. We continually thank the Lord for all of His blessings, as well as for the opportunity to serve our church and His people. Thank you again!

### 2011 Pledge Total Update

Total of 2011 membership pledges: \$117,355.00

Total of 2011 membership pledges received as of 10-31-11: \$103,219.00

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory: of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. A-men.

EOTHINON 2	TONE 7
7 اللح	2 الايوثينا

### TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE

### GREAT-MARTYR JAMES THE PERSIAN

VENERABLE PALLADIOS OF THESSALONIKA;

VENERABLE NATHANAEL OF NITRIA; JAMES, BISHOP OF ROSTOV

### طروبارية القيامة على اللحن السابع

حطمت بصليبك الموت وفتحت للصل الفردوس، وحوّلت نوح حاملات الطيب،  
وأمرت رسلك أن يكرزوا بأنك قد قُمت أيها المسيح الإله مانحاً العالم الرحمة  
العظمى.

### طروبارية الشهيد يعقوب على اللحن الرابع

إلهنا، فإنه أحرز قوتك، فقهر المضطهدين شهيدك يا ربّ بجهاده نال الأكاليل غير البالية يا  
وسحق تجبر الأبالسة الذي لا قوة له. فبشفاعته أيها المسيح الإله خلص نفوسنا.

### طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة بالحن الرابع

أيها المتقدمون على الأجناد السماويين، نتوسل إليكم نحن غير المستحقين، حتى  
أنكم بطلباتكم تكتنوفوننا بظل أجنحة مجدكم غير الهولي، حافظين إياتنا نحن  
الجائين والصارخين بغير فتور، أنقذونا من الشدائد، بما أنكم رؤساء مراتب القوات  
العلوية.

### قنداق تقدمة الميلاد على اللحن الثالث

to follow you!” (verse 28) And on this point, it is very clear that it was not the Lord’s intention to target the rich. Within the entire context of the passage it was becoming increasingly apparent to the disciples, as well, that the way of the Cross was no picnic.

Now listen to the words of St. Paul in his epistle to Timothy: **“But godliness with contentment is great gain.”** Meaning: To desire godliness, to make holiness our goal, **to seek after righteousness, is to greatly prosper.** “For,” Saint Paul goes on to say, “we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a trap, and into many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For **the love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many griefs” (I Timothy 6:6-10).

Continuing on at the end of the chapter the Apostle says this: “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be haughty (which is also translated: arrogant), nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” And notice here St. Paul’s careful choice of words. He is not saying that the material benefits are not provided for our pleasure and enjoyment. He says the opposite. However, his message leads up to a much more important point in the following verses: **“Let them (the rich) do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share. In this way they will store up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life (eternal life)”** (verses 17-19).

### Prayer

O Lord our God, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, save us from all manner of greed and every form of idolatry. Trusting in you as our Source and the sole Provider of all things, we ask you to bless the offerings of our time, talent, and possessions that we may truly acquire the treasures of your Kingdom in the age to come, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt and where thieves neither break through or steal. May we know the meaning of contentment in doing your will. Fill our homes with your presence, especially at this season of Thanksgiving, when we gather together with our families to offer our thanks for your bountiful goodness. Keep us all safe under the shadow of your wings. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

### This Year Christmas will be celebrated on Saturday – Sunday

The schedule of services for the Feast of the Holy Nativity (Christmas) will include: Friday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, Daily Vespers and Compline, 5 p.m.; Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> (The Pre-Feast *Paramon*) – Orthros, 9 a.m., Liturgy, 10 a.m.; Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Day), Orthros and The Christmas Canon, 8:30 a.m., Liturgy, 10 a.m.

### Our Parish is now on “Good Search!”

We now have a simple and easy method of earning money for our church. Every time you search for anything using the GoodSearch search engine (powered by Yahoo), we earn money. Simply go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and search for St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church, and then start searching the web. You can also download a toolbar for easier and more convenient searching! Please make every effort to use this whenever you search on the internet. If you have any questions, please ask our Treasurer, Natalie Malouf.

### Teen SOYO Raffle

Tickets for our Annual Teen SOYO Holiday Raffle are available each Sunday until the date of the drawing, Sunday, December 11, 2011, during our Church School Christmas Program. Proceeds from the raffle will help Teen SOYO sponsor the Special Olympics at the Antiochian Village.

### Bookstore Sale

Come shop at the Bookstore. There is a sale on Christmas trees, ornaments, gift items, jewelry and many other religious items (icons and books excluded).

### For Planning Ahead . . .

Mark Your Calendar (see foyer bulletin board for more information)

St. Andrew Church Consecration (Riverside, CA) Saturday, December 3  
Orthros, 9 a.m., Liturgy 10 a.m. followed by Banquet

St. Nicholas Cathedral Feast Day Celebration – Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011

Advent Retreat – St. Michael Church (Whittier, CA)  
Saturday, December 10; 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Church School Christmas Program – Sunday, December 11, 2011

“Valley Harmonette’s Christmas Concert – Sunday, December 18, 3 p.m.  
5650 Shoup Avenue (at Collins), Woodland Hills; minimum donation: \$5

### Last Call

Today is the deadline to include being listed on our parish Christmas card. Please contact Frieda Kabbash immediately at: [frieda702@aol.com](mailto:frieda702@aol.com).

**Note to Coffee Hour hosts: coffee and paper goods will be provided each week.**

#### Holy Bread Offering List

Dec 04 – The Malouf family  
Dec 11 – Nuha & Adeeb Abughazaleh  
Dec 18 – Claire Azzam  
Dec 24 (Christmas Eve) – open  
Dec 25 (Christmas Day) – Emile Skaff

#### Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Dec 04 – The Malouf family  
Dec 11 – Church School Program  
Dec 18 – Order of St. Ignatius  
Dec 25 (Christmas Day) – open

Please contact Father Timothy [pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org](mailto:pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org)

to sign-up to offer Holy Bread for any of the open upcoming Sundays.  
Contact Frieda Kabbash [frieda702@aol.com](mailto:frieda702@aol.com) to host the Coffee Hour.

### Save the Date and Plan to Attend

Our Church School Christmas Program will take place on Sunday, December 11. Plan to join us for a Lenten lunch following Liturgy and to support our young people by your attendance. [Attention parents: Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> is the Program Rehearsal from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and will include: a pizza lunch and visit from St. Nicholas! Please plan to bring your luncheon donations two dozen cookies to the

he commit any murder. He never stole or lied, and he honored his father and mother. “All of these I kept since I was a young man,” he said. He was the ideal future son-in-law!

The greatest wisdom that he possessed was his awareness: that everything he had acquired and was able to achieve was not enough. We hear him in today’s lesson ask Jesus about what else he needed **to do** to inherit eternal life.

For many young people learning about their Christian faith can result in knowing more about what they should not do than what they are supposed to do. They can easily end up like the rich young man who questioned our Lord on what he still lacked. Notice that our Lord did not add to his knowledge any additional instructions concerning what he was NOT TO DO.

However, we are told that Jesus’ response brought much sadness to the man, “because he was a man of great wealth”. He said to him: “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven” (verse 22). This becomes the condition that is placed before the rich man who apparently indicated his desire to follow Jesus, and who he calls a “Good teacher”. The implication from the man’s compliment, based upon the teaching of the Law, is that the rich man was patronizing the Lord as a *good man*. However, there was no apparent confession of Jesus as Lord.

From here the Lord, then, looking directly at the man says, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God! “Indeed,” He goes on to say, “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” (verses 24-25).

It was not a sin that the young man in today’s Gospel lesson happened to be rich. His greatest challenge was how to be rich toward God. It is the same personal challenge that we face as people who strive for a standard of living that is largely defined by the possession of things.

In today’s lesson, the rich man’s obvious attachment to his possessions, and more importantly, his failure to recognize Jesus for who He is, is what caused him great sadness. **Take notice of the fact that in verse 26 we hear others who heard Jesus’ words say, “Who then can be saved?”** Peter even comments, “We have left all we had

thinking. The young man was rich according to the standards of this world, but suffered from a spiritual poverty. He was presumptuous in thinking that he was righteous; a trap that you and I today, can very easily be tempted to fall into.

In predicting His own death on the Cross, Jesus said to His disciples: “For whoever wants to save his soul will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul” (Matthew 16:25-26).

Having something does not mean that we should flaunt it. Even in having knowledge and intelligence is something that we must use with good judgment. Being intelligent does not mean that we should always let people know what we know, how much we know or how we know it. We must use good judgment in all that we have been blessed with: have prudence and seek wisdom. These virtues are not something acquired in a classroom. It comes by learning through experience and the lives of others. And this is precisely the reason why the Church places importance upon the lives of the saints. They are the concrete examples of living the Christian life.

Consider the people who contributed to who you are as a person. I am not speaking about only providing you with material resources, but those who you looked up to and remember with great affection and thankfulness. They are the ones who truly taught you to be who you are.

You may also recall lesson of the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21) who regarded his life as consisting of the things he possessed. The sin of greed motivated him to tear down his storage facilities and build new ones in order that he could store the greater quantity of his abundance. The man’s folly was made clear when, in light of suddenly facing death, he could no longer benefit from his possessions.

We are also reminded by the words chanted in the Orthodox Funeral Service: “I called to mind the prophet, as he cried: ‘I am earth and ashes;’ and I looked again into the graves and beheld the bones laid bare, and I said: ‘Who then is the king or the warrior, the rich man or the needy, the upright and the sinner?’” “Where are the gold and the silver? Where is the multitude of household servants and their clamor?”

Today’s Gospel lessons focuses upon a rich ruler who considered himself righteous insofar as observing the Law is concerned. He did not commit adultery, nor did

rehearsal. Also, to sign-up to contribute towards the luncheon, please contact Tania Mulry at: [mrsmulry@yahoo.com](mailto:mrsmulry@yahoo.com)]

### **Christmas Toy Collection**

We will again be collecting new toys and children’s clothing to be given to children of prisoners and the homeless. The toys should not include guns or require batteries. We especially need sports items: soccer balls, basketballs, and games for the children. All financial contributions should be turned in no later than Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, and all toys should be at the church by the date of our Christmas Program – December 11<sup>th</sup>. All toys and clothing will be distributed by Father Duane Pedersen of the Archdiocese Prison Ministry who hopes to be with us on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Please contact DeAnne Abraham <[dmarieabe@aol.com](mailto:dmarieabe@aol.com)> should you have any questions.

### **Day Trip Planned**

A trip to the Reagan Library has been arranged for Wednesday, December 14, 2011. All who are interested must be at St. Michael Church parking lot at 11:30 a.m. The bus will leave from St. Michael Church lot at 12:00 p.m. The tour at the library will include food, beverage, a docent led tour of the library, Air Force One pavilion and the American holiday tree exhibit. The visit will end at 3:30 p.m. and we will board the bus at 4:00 p.m. Total price is \$54.95. Please make your check to St. Michael Church. Last day for reservation is today. Please see Sondra Love if you are interested in joining the group. Thank you.

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**PASTORAL SERMON**  
**The Thirteenth Sunday of Luke**  
**By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig**  
**November 27, 2011**

Following Holy Baptism, the first step in growing spiritually is education. Cognitive learning, however, is not a total education. You and I grow in different ways. Learning is not only by means of accumulating knowledge; as one would think that being wealthy is defined by the accumulation of one's material riches. We learn more completely by acquiring knowledge with wisdom through example and experience. Moreover, having and determining one's direction and goal in life is very important. Without knowing what you want to grow towards, it would be very difficult to discover yourself growing at all.

In Christian Baptism we believe that our nature is washed with the "laver of regeneration." It is also described as the waters of renewal. We are initiated as members of God's Kingdom, but remain persons whose lives are very much a part of this fallen world. The Sacramental life of the church does not afford us the full revelation or experience of God's Kingdom with all of its perfection. Salvation for us is something past, present, and still to come. Consequently, as Christians we do not live our lives as existentialists. We do not only think of ourselves as individuals who are responsible for our actions. The definition of a Christian goes beyond the realm of being an existentialist.

The rich young man's encounter with our Lord heard in today's Gospel lesson could be described as an existentialist. He was an individual who was responsible. The young man was rich in his own mind and according to the Laws of God; however our Lord's response to his question marks the beginning of the awareness of his true poverty. He was erroneous in his presumption of being righteous by justifying himself (like the Priest and Levite in the Parable of the Good Samaritan heard in the Gospel lesson last Sunday) – Justifying ourselves is an easy trap that you and I can very easily be tempted to fall into. Like the young man, if you and I are good moral people who consider ourselves to be responsible individuals, it is not very difficult to have a good feeling about ourselves, to be self confident and to actually believe that we are righteous.

Very often our Christian faith and teaching is perceived by others, and especially young people, as a faith that is built upon guilt and fear. In other words, if you and I were never taught about being sinful and condemned to hell, we would not have felt it necessary to struggle with guilt feelings and being fearful. As convincing as that may sound; Christian teaching does not reduce our moral responsibility to such simplistic terms.

What you and I receive at Holy Baptism is the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Like a seed planted, the Gift of God's Spirit must be nurtured to germinate through the formative years of a child's life. Being Baptized and Confirmed in the Church does not mean we automatically know everything and are automatically "saved." Similarly, if you or I were to inherit great riches, there is no guarantee that you and I will experience growth with prosperity.

The process of growing spiritually as Christians (or as Muslims, or Jews, or even Atheists) pertains to learning a way of thinking; liturgically we say, "Setting our minds aright;" learning to think differently from the way many people of this world have us to think. As God's children and members of His Kingdom, we perceive of life with an eternal perspective and view our life as something that extends beyond what is seen.

In the greater context of today's epistle reading we hear: "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking" (Ephesians 4:17).

And in Romans 12:2 we hear: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God". To some, such thinking is not only senseless, but foolish. And that is something also mentioned in scripture: "*For [our message] is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (I Cor. 1:18).*" "*We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age...*" (2:6). "*We have not received the spirit of this world but the Spirit who is from God, ... The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" (2:12, 14).

Today's Gospel lesson provides us with a good example of what I am saying. The rich young man's encounter with our Lord demonstrates how easy it is to err in our