

St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley
a Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
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His Eminence, Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York
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The Forefeast and Sunday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross; The After-feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos
Great Martyrs Severian of Sebastia;
Holy Fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council

Sunday, September 9, 2018

Tone 6; Eothinon 4

Apolytikion for the Resurrection (Tone 6)

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Apolytikion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone 4)

Thy nativity, O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole world; for from thee hath dawned the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, annulling the curse and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting.

Apolytikion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone 2)

As we celebrate the remembrance of Thy righteous Ancestors, O Lord our God, through them we beseech Thee to save our souls.

Apolytikion for our Patron, Michael the Archangel (Tone 2)

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 Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone 4)

By thy holy nativity, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: The barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life.

Daily Readings

THE EPISTLE (for the Sunday before the Elevation of the Cross)

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.
To Thee, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (6:11-18)

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the Law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all, who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

THE GOSPEL (for the Sunday before the Elevation of the Cross)

The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to St. John (3:13-17)

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

The Synaxarion

On September 9 in the Holy Orthodox Church we continue to celebrate the Nativity of the Theotokos, and we celebrate the Synaxis of the righteous Joachim and Anna.

Verses

Let Joachim rejoice together with his yoke-mate,

who gave birth to spiritual joy for creation.

The ninth found the Synaxis of the begetters of God's Mother.

Joachim, the son of Barpathir, was of the tribe of Judah and a descendant of King David, to whom God had revealed that the Savior of the world would be born from his seed. Anna was the daughter of Matthan the priest of the tribe of Levi; her family came from Bethlehem. The couple lived at Nazareth in Galilee. They were childless into their old age and all their life they grieved over this; but they fervently prayed to God for a child, humbly trusting in Him. One day, after great humiliation, each prayed separately to God to grant them a child; He answered their prayers. An angel told them that a daughter would be born to them, who would be blessed above all other women. He also told them that she would remain a virgin, would be dedicated to the Lord and live in the Temple, and would give birth to the Savior. Obeying the instructions of the heavenly messenger, Joachim and Anna met at the Golden Gate in Jerusalem. Then, as God promised, a daughter was born to them and they named her Mary. Joachim died a few years later at the age of 80, after his daughter went to live in the Temple. Anna died at the age of 70, two years after her husband. Couples trying to have children invoke this holy couple for intercession.

On this day, we also commemorate the Great-martyr Severian of Sebastia; and the Holy Fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council. By the intercessions of Thy Saints, 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.

OFFERINGS

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

for the good health and long life of John Khouri and Chrisa Sadd on the occasion of their birthdays, by Carrie Khouri, George Khouri, George and Joanne Khouri, Carolyn Sadd, Chrisa Sadd, Leilah, Daniel and Gabriella Lewin. May God grant them many years!

by George Khouri for the continued good health and safety of
Carrie Khouri for her upcoming surgeries.

for Chrisa Sadd and John Khouri on the occasion of their birthdays.
May God grant them many more years!

by Daphne Thabet for her daughter, Andrea Waldman on the occasion of
her birthday (September 8th). May God grant her many years!

You are invited to join us for our annual
Church School Awards Presentation Coffee Hour

Today, following the Divine Liturgy
We will be honoring our children's achievements, efforts,
participants and winners of this year's Creative Festivals
[a free-will offering will be received for our curriculum]

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

NOTE: Wednesdays and Fridays are observed as days of fasting

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – Friday, Sept. 14th
[observed as a day of strict fasting]

Thursday, September 13 - Vesperal Divine Liturgy, 6:30 p.m.

The Sunday after the Elevation of the Holy Cross

Great Vespers – Saturday, September 15th, 5 p.m.

Orthros – Sunday, September 16th, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.
with the Procession of the Holy Cross

[Reminder: The Procession of the Holy Cross precedes its veneration and the
reading of the Holy Gospel. It is important that we gather for Liturgy on time at
the start of the Divine Liturgy (10 a.m.)]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Young Adult Fellowship "Wine Tasting"

Any young adult (21-40) are welcome to attend a gathering at the home of Richard Ajalat [616 Groveview Lane; La Canada; CA 91011; 818-800-2418] on Friday, September 21, 2018. For more information contact Richard, also via his e-mail <rajalat@stmichaelvannuys.org>.

Attention Parents, Grandparents and Godparents:

Are your children / grandchildren registered for Church School? If not, please plan to do so today. Please contact our Church School Superintendent, Anna Farha Crowe for more information: <afarha@stmichaelvannuys.org>. Next Sunday, September 16, is the first day of Church School classes when our children will also participate in the Procession of the Holy Cross early in the Liturgy.

Parish Council Meeting - Monday, September 17, 7 p.m.

Senior Ride Option

GOGO Grandparent is a safe and affordable transportation service for seniors needing a ride to and from any location. The company also provides assistance with seniors using walkers and wheelchairs. For more information go to: <gogograndparent.com> or phone: 855-464-6872.

Union Rescue Mission Hygiene Kit Assembly and Donations

Help us serve the homeless community in Skid Row in Los Angeles. Hygiene products are a constant need for Union Rescue Mission, with female hygiene products being a constant yet unmet need for homeless and low-income women. They include: deodorant, and sanitizers, tissues, baby wipes, and pads/tampons. Socks and first aid supplies are also needed and are among the least donated items. We have extended our deadline for receiving donations. They are being accepted up until September 30, 2018. Contact Mary Sarchizian for more information: 818-217-9510; gengarmar@gmail.com

Parish Council Nominations

On Sunday, November 18, 2018 we will be holding a brief Special Meeting of the Voting Membership solely for the purpose of receiving and accepting nominations for Parish Council members to be elected for three (3), three-year terms (January, 2019 to December, 2021). At this meeting the Nominations Committee will present their report and additional nominations will be open from the floor. It is important that persons being considered be able to fulfill the commitment to serve. Therefore it is necessary that all nominees first be personally asked if they would accept nomination, and second be approved by the Pastor as someone who is qualified. The Parish Constitution prescribes that all nominees must be at least twenty-five years of age or older, have been a pledging members 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 Parish Council meetings held on the third (3rd) Sunday of each month. We sincerely thank Eric Nelson [ending his seventh consecutive year; able to be appointed for a one-year term]; Richard Ajalat [electable; appointed to complete the first (1st) term of the late, Caren Deeb Kouri]; and Richard Tamoush [completing his first (1st) term; re-electable]. Our three (3) one-year appointed members whose terms are expiring are: David Alexander [first year appointed], Amy Castillo [second year appointed], and Regan Hines [first year appointed]. The Parish Council election will be held on two (2) consecutive Sundays: November 25 and December 2. Council members whose terms are unexpired are: Joe Ayoub, Carrie Sadd Khouri, Connie Abdun-Nur Barilla, Adam Lamar, Michael Mitchell, and Deacon Andrew Monsue. Charmaine Darmour is also completing her eighth (8th) consecutive year as President of the Antiochian Women.

2019 Church Offering Envelope Order - due September 23

To continue or begin using our church offering envelopes please notify our Comptroller: Mary Ann Coury at <maryanncoury@aol.com>. Using envelopes enables you to provide cash offerings that are recorded for year-end Financial Statement for income tax purposes.

Upcoming Events (see the foyer bulletin board for more information)

Start of Church School Classes - next Sunday, September 16, 2018

(21-40 year old) Young Adult "Wine Tasting," Friday, September 21, 2018
at the home of Richard Ajalat - <rajalat@stmichaelvannuys.org

St. Mark (Irvine) Annual Fundraiser - Saturday, September 22
"Dueling Pianos Dinner and Show" San Juan Golf Club (32120 San Juan
Creek Rd.; San Juan, Capistrano; buffet dinner 6 p.m.,
show 8 p.m.; \$60/person by Sept. 9, \$70 after Sept. 9

Emergency Preparedness Presentation by Deacon Andrew,
Sunday, September 23 Coffee Hour

October is "Youth Month"

Fall Gathering - hosted by St. Peter the Apostle Church (Pomona)
Friday-Saturday, October 12-13, 2018

Annual Mediterranean Festival - Saturday-Sunday, October 6-7, 2017
St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral

St. Michael Feast Day Luncheon - Sunday, November 11, 2018

St. Michael Church School Christmas Program Rehearsal and Program
Saturday-Sunday, December 8-9, 2018

St. Michael Church 50th Anniversary Celebration with His Eminence,
Metropolitan JOSEPH - Saturday and Sunday, January 26-27, 2019

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

Holy Bread Offering List

Sep 16 - Parish Council
Sep 23 - open
Sep 30 - open
Oct 07 - open
Oct 14 - open

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Sep 16 - open
Sep 23 - The Murr family
Sep 30 - open
Oct 07 - open
Oct 14 - open

Please contact Fr. Timothy (818/219-3761; pastor@stmichaelvannuys.org) to sign-up to offer Holy Bread for
open upcoming Sundays and Cindy Tamoush at: (818-345-4363; famtam5@socal.rr.com)
to sign-up for the Coffee Hour.

“O Lord, I Have Loved the Beauty of Thy House” (LXX Psalm 25:7)

Part Six

The following article is the sixth of a series of writings by His Grace, Bishop BASIL that helps us to understand how the relationship between the art, architecture and music of the Orthodox Church communicates the presence of the Kingdom of God in this world.

The sanctuary, the area which is often referred to as “the altar,” is the space that is behind the iconostasis, when correctly built, should not appear as a “wall of separation,” but rather as a “wall of interpenetration” between the nave and sanctuary. The iconostasis serves to protect the sanctuary and mark it off as a special space. The sanctuary is an image of the Holy of Holies (of the Jerusalem Temple), but today — the fullness of the Kingdom of God toward which we are moving in time. It is for this reason that the church building should face east — in anticipation of the day when Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, will come again in glory to inaugurate the “world to come.” The sanctuary is also raised up a few steps from the level of the nave — this is why we call it “the high place,” emphasizing through architectural design that we consider the Holy of Holies as being “forward” and “up.” This is also the reason why we consider it inappropriate to have pews that are raised in such a way as to look down toward the altar (such as in a theater seating arrangement or as in Frank Lloyd Wright’s Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin). A raised “solea” (the wide area that extends out from the iconostasis into the nave) that is a step or two up — upon which the Sacrament of Marriage and the Funeral Service is done).

Because everything that is in the sanctuary would be an image of the Holy of Holies (i.e., the altar table is the image of the Heavenly Altar) it stands to reason that other things (such as the vestment closets, sinks, waste baskets, etc.) should not be there. There is no “heavenly image” which parallels a waste basket. The sanctuary should be exactly what its name implies: a holy place where the priest (who is the image of Christ — particularly when he blesses and brings out the Body and Blood of Christ from the “high place” down to the faithful who are gathered in the nave) and his concelebrants gather to offer the one eternal sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Special rooms should be built to

accommodate the practical needs of preparing the bread and wine and vesting. These rooms are historically called the “Prothesis” (preparation room) and “Diakonikon” (deacon’s room) — and they were often located on both sides of the sanctuary. They were separated from the sanctuary by a few steps, a hallway, and/or door. To have a separate Prothesis room in modern designs makes sense liturgically. The Great Entrance, the long procession around the people in the nave and up the center aisle, was historically a transfer of the unconsecrated gifts (the prepared bread and wine) from a separate room (sometimes it was even in another building) to the altar table in the sanctuary. To have this long procession, when the prothesis table is in close proximity to the altar table to begin with, does not make sense practically. The Great Entrance should not just be seen as a “historical liturgical movement” but also a practical movement — and this is made clearer when the prothesis area is in a separate location. The interior space must be laid out according to theological, liturgical and practical considerations. If we expect people to have a clear understanding of the movements of the liturgy, we must design a church that both reflects and inspires our worship. [end of Part V]



“13 Reasons: Why We Must Engage With Our Teens”

Trying to navigate hard topics with teenager is not easy and can be overwhelming if not frustrating. That is why Faithtree Resources has collaborated with Dr. Philip Mamalakis from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology to create an incredible 20+ page resource to help equip you for a challenging conversation. With practical insights, immediately applicable strategies, and a common sense approach to deeply engaging with your teen, Dr. Mamalakis shares the Church’s perspective on how to talk about the hard stuff. Get your free copy of “13 Reasons: Why We Must Engage With Our Teens by logging on to: www.faithtree.org/#13reasons

Pastor's Sermon
The Sunday before the Elevation of the Cross
By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig
September 9, 2018

The Feast and message of the Holy Cross speak to us as parents, grandparents, godparents and teachers. The Church places so great an emphasis on the meaning of the Cross this week that it includes three (3) gospel lessons, beginning today: The Pre-feast and Sunday before the Feast, Thursday, the Feast itself, and next Sunday.

The lessons point to the many choices we face as children, young people, young adults, husbands, wives, parents, godparents; choices that always begin with parenting and the challenge to love with the sacrificial love of God. It is the same lesson heard in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism when Godparents are reminded of their commitment to Christ and their responsibility to teach their Godchildren by example (word and deed). It is the same lesson heard in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony when a couple is challenged to love as Christ loved the church, "submitting to one another out of reverence of Christ." It is the same lesson heard at the time of an ordination when one responds to God's call to service. It is also the lesson learned in the Sacrament of Healing, and includes the Sacrament of Confession and reconciliation.

With each Sacrament, the lesson remains the same: Love is never mastered. It is always tested. It is grounded in commitment and devotion. It always begins in humility. It is selfless and (as we hear St. Paul say) is not proud, not rude or boastful, does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It is full of mercy. It protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres. It grows with patience and is never practiced in a vacuum. It is greater than faith and hope [see I Corinthians 13]. Love is eternal.

In today's gospel we clearly hear that love took the initiative: *God so loved the world that He gave...* It is sacrificial but not presumptuous; not without consideration or thoughtfulness. God's love is also not conditional. He did not say: "Get your act together and I'll love you." His love is not, "I'll love you if..." or "I'll love you when..." It's not even something He needed to explain: "I love you because..." His love is grounded in His relationship with His creation. And as the Author of Life, however, His love is also not permissive. It cares. It speaks the truth, but lovingly. It extends itself. It reaches out. Consequently, as Christians: Love works with others for a greater good and considers a team effort more important than one's personal agenda or interest.

The Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is always on the 14th of September. While it is a day with historical significance tied to the Holy City of Jerusalem and specifically the Church of the Holy Resurrection, it is observed as a day of strict fasting because (like the fast on Wednesday of each weekday), we are reminded of our Lord's passion; and like the fast of the Friday of each weekday, we are reminded of our Lord's Death.

Thursday's Vespertine Liturgy (on September 13) will take place at 6:30 p.m. The Gospel reading for the Feast is of our Lord's judgment and crucifixion, reminding us of his passion; his saving work. It is the most important Feast of the fall season, celebrating the redeeming love of God and renewing our lives and equipping us with virtue of spiritual power.

We are reminded that the Holy Cross is called the "life-giving" Cross: **A sign of hope**, as Christ is seen not as a victim but victor: He who trampled down death by Death. It is a symbol of God's unconditional love as we hear in today's Gospel. The Feast of the Holy Cross is among several days in the Church calendar devoted to the theme of God's boundless love, His supreme sacrifice and what it means to be committed to Christ. Finally, the Holy Cross is for us an ironic emblem. It is called a "weapon of peace" and a "trophy invincible." It is the symbol of deliverance and healing. For St.

Paul the Cross is our boast. It is the cause of joy because its end is God's victory over sin and death: His triumph in the Holy Resurrection!

These very facts are heard in the content of today's short and very concise Gospel lesson: *“No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”*

God's prophetic word is complete and there is no need for any new prophet. Most importantly, as Christians we must now be vigilant in knowing how to respond and not react to all that we see and hear around us. In every circumstance our response is in love. That love, however, is grounded in the truth. And our actions cannot be anything other than what is based upon that Christ has fulfilled and accomplished for us.

Prayer

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance, granting victory over the adversary and by the power of your life-giving Cross, guard and protect all who follow Thee!