

The Leave-taking (Apodosis) of the Entrance of the Theotokos;
Great-Martyr Katherine the All-wise of Alexandria
And the Thirteenth Sunday of Luke

Martyr Cercurios of Caesarea in Cappadocia; Martyr Mercurios of Smolensk

Sunday, November 25, 2018

Tone 1; Eothinon 4

Apolytikion for the Resurrection (Tone 1)

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

Apolytikion for the Entrance of the Theotokos (Tone 4)

Today the Virgin is the foreshadowing of the pleasure of God, and the beginning of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. Thou hast appeared in the Temple of God openly and hast gone before, preaching Christ to all. Let us shout with one thrilling voice, saying, Rejoice, O thou who art the fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation.

Apolytikion for St. Katherine the Great-Martyr (Tone 5)

Let us praise the all-lauded and noble bride of Christ, the godly Katherine, the guardian of Sinai and its defense, who is also our support and our help; for with the Holy Spirit's sword she hath silenced brilliantly the clever among the godless; and being crowned as a Martyr, she now doth ask great mercy for us all.

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 Entrance of the Theotokos (Tone 4)

The sacred treasury of God's holy glory, * the greatly precious bridal chamber and Virgin, * the Savior's most pure temple, free of stain and undefiled, * into the House of the Lord * on this day is brought forward * and bringeth with herself the grace * of the Most Divine Spirit; * her do God's Angels hymn with songs of praise, * for she is truly the heavenly tabernacle.

Daily Readings

THE EPISTLE (for St. Katherine the Great-martyr)

God is wondrous in His saints. Bless God in the congregation.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (3:23 - 4:5)

Brethren, before faith came, we were confined under the Law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the Law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

THE GOSPEL (for 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."

The Synaxarion

On November 25 in the Holy Orthodox Church we give up the Feast of the Entrance of the Most-holy Theotokos into the Temple, and we commemorate the holy and glorious Great-Martyr Katherine the All-wise of Alexandria.

Verses

Katherine, first a sage and a virgin, becometh,
By the sword, a Martyr; O three things right goodly!
On the twenty-fifth a sword the Maiden Rhetorician slew.

Her mother was secretly a Christian who, through her spiritual father, brought Katherine to the Christian Faith. In a vision, Katherine received a ring from the Lord Jesus Himself as a sign of her betrothal to Him. Katherine was greatly gifted by God, well-educated and very beautiful. When the iniquitous Emperor Maxentius offered sacrifices to the idols and ordered others to do the same, Katherine boldly confronted the emperor and denounced his idolatrous errors. The emperor, seeing that she was greater than he in wisdom and knowledge, summoned fifty of his wisest men to debate with her on matters of faith and to put her to shame. Katherine outwitted them. In a rage, the emperor ordered all fifty men be burned. By Katherine's prayers, all fifty confessed the Name of Christ and declared themselves Christians before their executions. During the torture of Katherine, an angel of God came to her and destroyed the wheel on which the holy virgin was being tortured. Afterward, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself appeared to her and comforted her. After many tortures, Katherine was beheaded at the age of eighteen, on November 25, 310. Her miracle-working relics repose on Mount Sinai in Egypt.

On this day, we also commemorate the Great-Martyrs Mercurios of Caesarea in Cappadocia; and Mercurios of Smolensk. 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

Holy Bread is being offered this morning by Alice & Carl Andrews with prayers offered for their great grandson, James Wei, celebrating his birthday (November 22) and Alice, who is celebrating her birthday (November 26). May God grant them many years!

The Coffee Hour is being hosted this morning by the Sweis family with prayers offered for the members of their family.

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

for the continued health of Babe Mittry.

for the safe travel of Dr. Samir & Amira Boutari
and Soad Mallouk.

for the continued health of Margaret Soffa.

For Planning Ahead

This year the Feast of the Holy Nativity (Christmas) falls on a Tuesday. The weekend of the The Sunday Before Christmas will include Vespers on Saturday, December 22nd at 5 p.m., Orthros at 8:45 a.m. and Liturgy at 10 a.m. on Sunday, December 23rd. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil for the Pre-Feast will be served following the Ninth Royal Hour, beginning at 3 p.m. on Monday, December 24th (Christmas Eve). The Festal Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom will be celebrated on Christmas Day (Tuesday), December 25th at 10 a.m., preceded by Orthros and the Christmas canon at 8:30 a.m.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

We are within the period of the Nativity Fast

[Note: The Fast of the Holy Nativity 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.]

The Twenty-seventh Sunday after Pentecost
and the 14th Sunday of Luke

Saturday, December 1st, Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 2nd, Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

Festal Celebration at St. Barbara Monastery

Monday, December 3rd, Vigil, 4 p.m.

Tuesday, December 4th - 10 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

Feast of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker - Thursday, December 6th
Great Vespers, (St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church; Northridge)

Wednesday, December 5th, 7 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to our New Council Members

Three (3) new Parish Council members were elected to serve three-year terms (2011-2021) at the Special Meeting of the Voting Membership on Sunday, November 18: Richard Ajalat, Regan Hines and Kris Thabit. Nominations were closed following the acceptance of the three candidates and a vote of acclimation confirmed their election.

Parish Council Dinner Meeting – Monday, December 3rd, 6 p.m.

[at the home of Michael & Mary Ann Mitchell:
26227 Reade Place; Stevenson Ranch; 91381]

Don't miss your chance to include your special message in the St. Michael 50th Anniversary Journal. The deadline is December 1st.

The 50th Anniversary Journal Committee is working hard to assemble the pictures, people, letters, and stories that will commemorate the history of St. Michael. We have had lots of interest from parishioners and friends of St. Michael from around the country who want to remember and celebrate family and friends in this historic Journal. If you and your family would like to place a special message in the 50th Anniversary Journal, see Samia Habib during coffee hour or go to the St. Michael Website www.stmichaelvannuys.org and click on the Events tab. The deadline to submit Journal forms is December 1, 2018. Remember, every family attending the 50th Anniversary Banquet will receive a copy of the Journal, and copies will be mailed to all contributors who are not able to join us. Your generous support of the Anniversary Journal will help us make a fine keepsake that you will cherish for years to come and will help make the Anniversary Banquet a successful and memorable event.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Charity Food Collection

This year, our parish will again be assisting a local food pantry ("Loaves and Fishes") in their new Van Nuys location. Please phone Cindy Tamoush at: 818-345-4363 if you are able to participate in our Thanksgiving and/or Christmas food collection. There are a few ways of participating:

1. If you wish for me to shop for you, just write a check made out to: "St. Michael Church," earmarked: "Holiday Food Collection." You will be credited on your year-end Financial Statement for tax purposes.
2. You can purchase grocery script for any amount. Don't forget to use your Ralph's Rewards Card so St. Michael may also benefit from your purchase.
3. Due to their lack of space, Loaves and Fishes is requesting any of the following: bottled water, personal care items, deodorant, soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, sanitary napkins and disposable razors, socks (for men and women), Any store scripts in denominations of \$5 or \$10. Please do not provide any clothing or household items.

All items must be at our church kitchen by Sunday, December 16. Thank you for your support.

Christmas Toy Collection

We are again 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 next Sunday, December 2nd, and all toys should be at the church by the date of our Christmas Program – December 9th. All toys and clothing will be distributed by the Archdiocese Prison Ministry with the assistance of our parish in Palmdale.

Christmas Program Lenten Lunch (December 9)

Our Church School Christmas Program Lenten lunch menu includes: Lenten Pizza, fruit and vegetable salads, and Christmas cookies. Please contact Subdeacon Richard Ajalat at: <rajalat@stmichaelvannuys.org> or phone him at: 818-800-2418 to assist with providing donated items for the menu. We are attempting to coordinate all contributions in order not to have left-overs or an excess of items. Thank you for your help.

Teen SOYO Raffle

Tickets for our Annual Teen SOYO Holiday Raffle have been mailed to you and additional tickets are also available each Sunday until the date of the drawing, Sunday, December 9, 2018, during our Church School Christmas Program. Proceeds from the raffle will help our Teen SOYO activities and assist in sponsoring the Special Olympics at the Antiochian Village.

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

St. Nicholas Day Luncheon - Sunday, December 2, 2018, 1 p.m.

St. Nicholas Cathedral (Los Angeles) Heritage Ballroom

\$35/adults; \$15/children 16 and younger

St. Michael Church School Christmas Program Rehearsal and Program

Saturday-Sunday, December 8-9, 2018

St. Michael Church (Whittier) Advent Retreat: December 8, 2018
“Obedience, Repentance and Pure Prayer” 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Speaker: V. Rev. Patrick O’Grady

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

Holy Bread Offering List

Dec 02 - the Azzam/Hallak families
Dec 09 - Carolyn Sadd
Salim El-Darzi and family
Dec 16 - the Meena family
Ron & Kathy Zraick
Dec 23 - open
Dec 30 - Ramez & Rima Hage

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Dec 02 - the Azzam/Hallak families
Dec 09 - Church School Christmas Luncheon
Dec 16 - the Meena family
Dec 23 - open
Dec 30 - Ramez & Rima Hage

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

**St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church
of the San Fernando Valley**

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Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and all North America

V. Rev. Timothy Baclig, Pastor
pastor@stmichaelvannuys.com

Church Telephone: 818/994-2313
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*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things,
at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
(II Corinthians 9:8)*

Dear Members of St. Michael,

We are soon approaching the end of the calendar year and our Parish Council is preparing to provide us with our 2019 Annual Budget. A parish cannot solely rely upon the income of Sacramental offerings because we would not be able to meet our month-to-month expenses based upon anticipating baptisms, weddings, or funerals that will take place each year, nor can we adequately pay for our ongoing maintenance without the shared responsibility of our membership. Our parish is able to provide its clergy and facilities, the prayer services of the church and its Sacraments because of the membership of our faithful parishioners who help to financially support the salaries and the operational costs of our church property.

We are again asking everyone to prayerfully consider making a reasonable annual financial pledge to our parish for the New Year. We have much to be thankful for in anticipating our 50th year as a parish community and look forward to honoring our past and facing the challenges of the future. We are very thankful for the commitments of many who have provided us with additional funds to begin the construction of our new church sanctuary, and are moving forward to complete a water-tight building. The New Year will begin the second phase of our project to complete the interior of our new temple and additional information will be provided in January.

May God bless you and you your family with His grace in granting you continued health and prosperity.

In Christ,

Subdeacon Richard Tamoush

Stewardship Chair

THE CHRISTMAS FAST – ADVENT

The Church ordains that this preparation begins on November 15. The Fast is forty days long and is sometimes known as Philip's Fast because it begins the day after November 14, which is dedicated to St. Philip the Apostle.

The Fast has very ancient origins. Leo the Great, in the Fifth Century, made mention of it as an ancient, established Fast, which gave importance to the event of the Birth of Christ by the Church, even at that time. The Christians Church did not universally observe the Fast in length and method until the Council of Constantinople in 1166 AD. It was at that Council that the ancient regulations and various customs and traditions of the churches were studied and forty days was chosen to be most representative.

Many of us want the Feast without the penitential note that precedes it. We want Christmas without Advent. The result is that most of us only “observe” the day of Christmas and fail to “keep” the day holy. The Christmas fast gives us time to meditate upon the meaning of our Lord's coming (God born as a man) – in the past, present, and future. Only to the extent that we prepare carefully for His Coming can we receive Him worthily. Hence, as Christmas approaches, we should be aware of the meaning of the Christmas fast (Advent) upon us and our souls. Consciences need examination; sins need to be forgiven. Above all, souls need refreshment with His Sacramental Presence when the Christmas Fast ends and Christ is born.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

[The Sacrament of Confession with Absolution is available by appointment or up until 15 minutes prior to the services.]

The Sunday before The Holy Nativity

“The Sunday of the Genealogy”

Saturday, December 22nd – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 23rd – Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m.

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

Monday, December 24th (Christmas Eve and *Paramon*)

The Ninth Royal Hour, 3 p.m.

Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great* – 3:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 25th (Christmas Day)

Orthros and the Christmas Canon, 8:30 a.m., Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m.

[There is **no** fasting from December 25th to January 4th]

The Circumcision of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ and the Feast of St. Basil the Great (New Year’s Day)

Monday, December 31st (New Year’s Eve) – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.
with prayers for the New Year

Tuesday, January 1st (New Year’s Day) – Orthros, 8:45 a.m.;
Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m., with prayers for the New Year

THE GREAT FEAST OF HOLY THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY)

Friday, January 4th — The Ninth Royal Hour, 4:30 p.m. followed by
Daily Vespers of the *Paramon* (Eve) of Theophany, 5 p.m.

Saturday, January 5th The Eve of Theophany (*Paramon*) – [observed as a strict fast day]
Daily Orthros, 9 a.m., The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* 10 a.m.

Great Vespers of Holy Theophany, 5 p.m.

Sunday, January 6th — Festal Orthros, 8:30 a.m. followed by “The Great Sanctification
of Water” immediately followed by The Festal Divine Liturgy

* *Services with Holy Communion*

Capital Funds Campaign Committee Recommends Building Fund Donation Tax Benefits

A charitable donation of long-term appreciated securities, i.e., stocks, bonds and/or mutual funds that have realized significant appreciation over time is one of the best and most tax-efficient of all ways to give. This method of giving has become increasingly popular in recent years. There are two main advantages: 1) Any long-term appreciated securities with unrealized gains (meaning they were purchased over a year ago, and have a current value greater than their original cost) may be donated to the church with the benefit of receiving a tax deduction for the full fair value of the securities—up to 50% of the donor's adjusted gross income; 2) since the securities/stock is being donated rather than sold, capital gains taxes from selling the securities no longer apply. And the more appreciation the securities have, the greater the tax savings will be.

Second: A Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD) is an option for anyone 70.5 years of age or older. You are able to take advantage of withdrawing from your personal IRA (Individual Retirement Account) without paying Federal or State Taxes. This will give the donor an opportunity to fulfill their pledge. You would not be able to take a tax deduction on the donation, however, not having to pay Federal or State Taxes on the IRA withdrawal far exceeds the benefit of a tax deduction. [Your IRA deduction cannot exceed \$100,000 per year.]

In both of the above options the funds would need to be transferred from either your Securities Brokerage Account or IRA Account directly to the St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church Brokerage Account in order for the donation to qualify.

Third: Many corporations provide their employees with a “Matching Funds Program” to the charity of their choice. The amount may vary with each company. We suggest that you check with the Human Resources Department or the Comptroller of the company where you are employed to see if such a program is being offered.

St. Michael Church has benefited by all of the above from its members. For more information please speak with Ron Zraick, Chairman of the Capital Funds Campaign Committee <ronaldzraick@yahoo.com>.

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

The following article is the sixteenth of a series of writings 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. This, and subsequent articles are written by Father Timothy Baclig.

“We who mystically represent the Cherubim and sing to the life-giving Trinity the thrice-holy hymn now lay aside all worldly care.” These words of the “Cherubic Hymn,” sung by the choir and prayed by the priest that begins the *anaphora* (second part of the Divine Liturgy which follows the Entrance and Lessons), sharpen the focus of our worship in God’s house. As members of Christ’s Body on earth, we share in the timeless worship of the Holy Trinity together with all of the saints of all of the ages. We share a space with the bodiless powers that transcends all worldliness. Our presence is surrounded by the heavenly iconographic imagery that dons the church interior, especially at the place of the holy altar which is positioned (facing east) at the high place of the sanctuary.

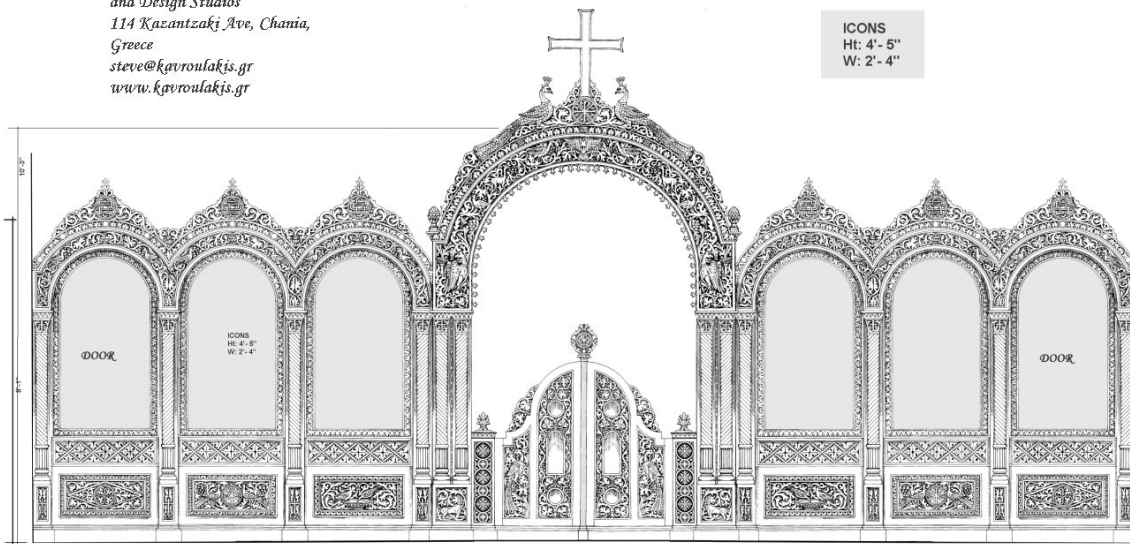
The position of icons in the church follows a specific order beginning with the *Pantocrator* [Χριστὸς Παντοκράτωρ] Christ the Almighty and Omnipotent depicted in the high dome surrounded by angels, above the icons of the Holy Prophets. The dome is physically supported by four main pillars from which rise the images of the four Gospel Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Feast of the Holy Nativity is depicted on north apse, and the Feast of Holy Pascha in the south apse. In the east apse within the altar space is the icon of the *Platytera* [Πλατυτέρα τῶν Ουρανῶν], or she who is “more spacious than the heavens,” depicting Christ (the Creator of the universe) in the womb of the Holy Theotokos, the Mother of God; signifying the “uncontainable God.”

The iconostasion [εἰκονοστάσι(-ον)], or icon screen, that separates the Holy Place of the altar from the central nave of the church has a long history, beginning as a low (chancel) rail that marked off the definitive space for the clergy and all who served around and in front of the Holy Altar. By the fifteenth century, the iconographic images that surrounded the sanctuary formed a focal

point in the development the iconostasion. In the Russian Church, this evolved with the expansion of a thick wall that included up to five tiers of icons rising from the altar floor. The Byzantine Church, however, maintained the tradition of two tiers: with the images of the Holy Apostles and a central Icon of the Mystical Supper above the row of primary icons that included: a) Christ, b) the Holy Theotokos, c) John the Baptist, and the d) Church Patron, e) two icons on the “Deacon’s Doors,” and possibly more as space would allow. The position of the Holy Apostles were in some sanctuaries substituted by the icon of “The Communion of the Holy Apostles” below the *Platytera* (seen in our worship space today), especially when an iconostasis was designed as a single row of icons. The “Royal Gate” or “Royal Doors,” at the center, and directly in front of the Holy Altar, included the icon of the Annunciation. The opening of the doors signified: the good news of Christ’s Divine presence as the priest, passing through them, blesses the faithful. Its closing with a *katapetasma* [καταπέτασμα] or curtain, served a liturgical function that placed emphasis, when fully drawn closed (especially during Great Lent), of our sinfulness and need of repentance. Its opening symbolized our restoration through Christ’s victory over the Evil One, sin and death; and our entrance to His Heavenly Kingdom.

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ICONS
Ht: 4'- 5"
W: 2'- 4"



As a partition, the iconostasion, Royal Doors and curtain, heightens our awareness of the Holy Place that must be properly maintained and preserved as distinct from any other part of the church sanctuary. The exaggeration of a high and thick wall in the Russian Church is evidence of the great emphasis and seriousness placed upon the need for proper preparation by the clergy and the faithful in being united with God through the Holy Sacraments. During the era of modern Orthodox Church structures in the United States built in the 1970's (mentioned in earlier articles), there were creative attempts to design the iconostasion that were more open with transparent grills and lattice patterns. This trend did not last, especially when altar servers resisted the "overexposure," or were found to be a distraction to a praying congregation. One of the objectives was not only to reduce the size of "a wall," but to create a sense of closeness to the altar. This, however, tended to make the "holy place" too accessible and diminished a sense of reverence for the sacred space.

The *solea* [σόλιον], meaning: "an elevated place," is a lower extension of the high altar floor that also rises above the nave floor. The Traditional position of the two choirs, chanters and readers (right and left) are on the both sides of the solea on the nave floor. This position of two choirs toward the front — on the right and left side of the altar is also evident in Western churches, i.e, the Church of England. The Western church, however, did not position choirs in a protruding alcove (under two apses) as in a Byzantine structure, but along a central aisle facing, each other, in a space between the altar and the nave — where the people faced the altar from a distance. The position of the choir on the floor plan of Holy Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Cathedral (OCA) in Los Angeles is literally on the right (and left) side of the elevated solea.

A balcony was never the position of a choir in the Orthodox Church. Balconies were the designated space for those who were not in communion with the church, and included the catechumens. At one time in the early period of the empire, the balcony was also known to be a place for women. Our new church sanctuary will include a small mezzanine that will serve the practical purpose of providing older children with a better view of the Liturgy.

In the church, one of the positions of the Bishop's throne is on the south side of the solea. In the fourth century of the Byzantine Empire it was the seat of the emperor; while the "high place," directly behind the altar and under the apse was the throne of the Bishop. Following the end of the empire, the bishop's vestments, inherited from the emperor, symbolized "the Lord as King... robed in majesty." The bishop also assumed the seat of the head of State on the solea (when not celebrating at the altar). The central position of the Bishop's Throne, however, has always remained at the "high place" behind the altar with additional seats for the celebrating clergy on his left and right.

Today, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is performed on the solea if not in a side chapel of the narthex. The solea is also where a couple is united in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony; also where the body of a deceased person is positioned, facing the altar, for The Funeral Service. The original place of Holy Baptism was located outside of the main sanctuary, prior to one's entrance into the church nave and to the area of the solea where the Sacrament of Holy Communion was first received by the newly Baptized.

Generally speaking, the designated purpose of the elevated solea and altar floor is for the specific use by altar servers, Readers, and the members of the clergy. For this reason, there are no ramps to the solea or to the floor of the altar. The Church's Canonical Tradition clearly specifies that a person among the orders of service must meet the spiritual and physical requirements of their office. Hence, a physically disabled person would not qualify for ordination, or to serve as a bishop, priest, deacon, or member of the lesser orders. Based upon the American Disabilities Act, our church sanctuary will not need to include ramps to the solea or altar floor. This is also supported by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision that verifies: Churches, including places of worship, are exempt from the American Disabilities Act public building requirements (Section 307 of the ADA, 2001). Moreover, the church's Canonical Tradition is also supported by the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA; 2008).

Next week we will further clarify the place of the congregation (the nave) and the space for liturgical movement in church services. We will also address the place of entrance: the Narthex and its function. [end of Part XVI]

Frequently Asked Questions When Completing a Pledge Form

What is the reason for completing an annual parish Pledge Form?

Each year planning for budgeted receipts and expenditures are an important part of being responsible stewards of Christ's church. Some of our month-to-month expenses include: priest and staff salaries, utility and maintenance expenses, the payment of taxes on all investment (income) property (yes, churches do pay property taxes), and insurance. Moreover, it is not uncommon for these expenses increase each year. It is a goal of our Parish Council to meet these expenses with the contributions of our members. The Pastor does not receive stipends (monetary gifts) for house blessings, baptisms, weddings and funerals if a family is not enrolled with the parish and completed an annual pledge form. The Pastor's living expenses and allowances are included the Annual Budget of the parish.

What is an annual "Fair Share Commitment?"

Each parish of the Antiochian Archdiocese pays 10% of its parish income to assist with the expenses of our bishops, Archdiocesan and Diocesan departments and programs. Over one-fourth of the Archdiocese budget is dedicated to youth programs. You can see two charts that provide the financial highlights of Archdiocese receipts and expenditures provided in our Annual Report booklet. The annual payment to the Archdiocese from St. Michael Church is currently: \$25,000 or 10% of our parish income (excluding contributions received for the Building Fund, charity collections, special Archdiocese collections, and memorial gifts). This money is collected from our parishioners from their first contribution to the church: \$50 for each adult and \$35 for each child (17 years of age or under) in a household. All additional funds pledged by our parishioners assist with the month-to-month expenses of the parish.

Our 2019 Pledge Form is included in a separate attachment.

The form may be completed and returned to the Church Office at: 16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys; California; 91406; or turned in on Sunday to Mary Ann Coury, Comptroller.

**THE LEAVE-TAKING (APODOSIS) OF THE ENTRANCE
OF THE HOLY THEOTOKOS; THE FEAST OF THE GREAT-MARTYR
KATHERINE THE ALL-WISE OF ALEXANDRIA
AND THE THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE
MARTYR MERCURIOS OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA;
MARTYR MERCURIOS OF SMOLENSK**

طروبارية القيامة على اللحن الأول

إِنَّ الْحَجَرَ لَمَّا خُتِمَ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ، وَجَسَدَكَ الطَّاهِرَ حُفِظَ مِنَ الْجَنْدِ، قُتِمَتْ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّلَاثِ أَيْهَا
الْمَخْلُصُ، مَانَحًا الْعَالَمَ الْحَيَاةَ. فَلذَلِكَ قَوَاتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ هَتَفُوا إِلَيْكَ يَا وَاهِبَ الْحَيَاةِ: الْمَجْدُ
لِقِيَامَتِكَ أَيْهَا الْمَسِيحِ، الْمَجْدُ لِمَلِكِكَ، الْمَجْدُ لِتَدْبِيرِكَ يَا مُحَبِّبِ الْبَشَرِ وَحَدِّكَ.

الْيَوْمَ الْعِذْرَاءُ الَّتِي هِيَ مُقَدَّمَةٌ مَسْرَّةَ اللَّهِ، وَابْتِدَاءُ الْكَرَازَةِ بِخَلَاصِ الْبَشَرِ، قَدْ ظَهَرَتْ فِي هَيْكَلِ
اللَّهِ عَلَانِيَةً، وَسَبَقَتْ مُبَشِّرَةً الْجَمِيعَ بِالْمَسِيحِ. فَلَنَهْتَفُ نَحْوَهَا بِصَوْتِ عَظِيمِ قَائِلِينَ: إِفْرَجِي يَا
كَمَالَ تَدْبِيرِ الْخَالِقِ.

لِنَمْدَحِ عَرُوسَ الْمَسِيحِ الْكَلِيَّةَ الْمَدِيحِ، * كَاتِرِينَا الْإِلَهِيَّةَ حَافِظَةَ سِينَا، * فَهِيَ عَوْنُنَا الْأَكِيدُ
وَسَنَدُنَا. * لِأَنَّهَا أَفْحَمَتْ، بِقُوَّةِ الرُّوحِ، نُبْلَاءَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ بِبَهَاءِ. * وَإِذْ كَلَّلْتَ كَشْهِيدَةً، فَتَسَنَّمِدُ لِلْجَمِيعِ
الرَّحْمَةَ الْعُظْمَى. *

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة بالحن الرابع

أَيْهَا الْمُتَقَدِّمُونَ عَلَى الْأَجْنَادِ السَّمَاوِيِّينَ، نَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْكُمْ نَحْنُ غَيْرَ الْمُسْتَحَقِّينَ، حَتَّى أَنْتُمْ
بَطْلِبَاتِكُمْ تَكْتَنُفُونَنَا بِظُلِّ أَجْنَحَةِ مَجْدِكُمْ غَيْرِ الْهَيُولِيِّ، حَافِظِينَ إِيَانَا نَحْنُ الْجَائِثِينَ
وَالصَّارِحِينَ بِغَيْرِ فِتُورٍ، أَنْفَقُونَا مِنَ الشَّدَائِدِ، بِمَا أَنْتُمْ رُؤَسَاءُ مَرَاتِبِ الْقَوَاتِ الْعُلُويَّةِ.

الْيَوْمَ الْهَيْكَلُ الَّذِي لِلْمَخْلُصِ، الْكَلِيُّ النَّقَاءِ، الْعِذْرَاءُ الْخِدْرُ ذُو الثَّمَنِ الْجَزِيلِ، وَهِيَ الْكَنْزُ الطَّاهِرُ
لِمَجْدِ الْإِلَهِ، إِذْ تَدَخَّلَ بَيْنَ الرَّبِّ، تُدْخِلُ نِعْمَةَ الرُّوحِ الْإِلَهِيِّ مَعَهَا. فَلَنُسَبِّحُهَا مَلَائِكَةَ اللَّهِ، لِأَنَّهَا
الْمِظَلَّةُ السَّمَاوِيَّةُ.

الرسالة

عَجِيبٌ هُوَ اللهُ فِي قَدَيْسِيهِ. فِي الْمَجَامِعِ بَارِكُوا اللهُ
فَصَلُّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدَيْسِ بُولَسَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ غَلَاطِيَةِ.

يَا إِخْوَةَ، قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ الْإِيمَانُ كُنَّا مَحْفُوظِينَ تَحْتَ النَّامُوسِ، مُغْلَقًا عَلَيْنَا إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ الَّذِي
كَانَ مُرْمَعًا إِعْلَانُهُ. فَالنَّامُوسُ إِذْ كَانَ مُؤَدِّبًا لَنَا يُرْشِدُنَا إِلَى الْمَسِيحِ، لِكَيْ نَتَبَرَّرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ. وَلَكِنْ
بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَ الْإِيمَانُ، لَسْنَا بَعْدُ تَحْتَ مُؤَدِّبٍ. لِأَنَّكُمْ جَمِيعًا أَبْنَاءُ اللهِ بِالْإِيمَانِ بِالْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ.
لِأَنَّكُمْ لِأَنَّكُمْ كَلَّمْتُمْ الَّذِينَ اعْتَمَدْتُمْ بِالْمَسِيحِ، قَدْ لَيْسْتُمْ الْمَسِيحِ. لَيْسَ يَهُودِيٌّ وَلَا يُونَانِيٌّ، لَيْسَ عَبْدٌ وَلَا
حُرٌّ، لَيْسَ ذَكَرٌ وَلَا أُنْثَى، لِأَنَّكُمْ جَمِيعُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ. فَإِذَا كُنْتُمْ لِلْمَسِيحِ، فَأَنْتُمْ إِذَا
نَسَلْتُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَوَرِثْتَهُ بِحَسَبِ الْمُوعِدِ. وَأَقُولُ: إِنَّ الْوَارِثَ مَا دَامَ طِفْلًا، فَلَا فَرْقَ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْعَبْدِ، مَعَ
كَوْنِهِ مَالِكُ الْجَمِيعِ. بَلْ هُوَ تَحْتَ أَوْصِيَاءَ وَوَكِلَاءَ إِلَى الْوَقْتِ الْمَوْجَلِ مِنْ أَبِيهِ. هَكَذَا نَحْنُ أَيْضًا: لَمَّا
كُنَّا أَطْفَالًا، كُنَّا مُسْتَعْبِدِينَ تَحْتَ أَرْكَانِ الْعَالَمِ. وَلَكِنْ لَمَّا حَانَ مِلءُ الزَّمَانِ، أَرْسَلَ اللهُ ابْنَهُ مَوْلُودًا
مِنْ امْرَأَةٍ، مَوْلُودًا تَحْتَ النَّامُوسِ، لِيَقْتَدِيَ الَّذِينَ تَحْتَ النَّامُوسِ، لِنَنَالَ التَّبَنِّيَّ.

الإنجيل

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس لوقا

في ذلك الزمان، دنا من يسوع إنسانٌ ليجرِّبَهُ فقال: "أيُّها المعلمُ الصالحُ، ماذا
أعملُ لأرث الحياةَ الأبدية؟" فأجابه يسوع: "لماذا تدعوني صالحاً، وما صالحُ
إلا واحدٌ وهو الله. أنتَ تعرفُ الوصايا: لا تزن، لا تقتل، لا تسرق، لا تشهدُ
بالزور، أكرمُ أباك وأمك. فقال: "كلُّ هذه الوصايا حفظتها من أيام صباي."
فلما سمع يسوع ذلك، قال له: "يعوزُكَ شيءٌ واحدٌ، بع كلَّ شيءٍ ووزعه على
الفقراء، فيكون لك كنزٌ في السماء، وتعال اتبعني." فحزن الرجلُ عندما سمعَ
هذا الكلام، لأنه كان غنياً جداً. ولما رآه يسوع أنه حزن جداً قال له: "ما أعسرَ
دخولَ نوي الأموالِ إلى ملكوتِ الله، فدخلُ الجملِ في ثقبِ الإبرةِ أسهلُ من

دخول الغني إلى ملكوت الله. " فقال السامعون: "من يستطيع أن يخلص، إذن؟"
"فأجاب يسوع: ما لا يُستطاع عند الناس مُستطاعٌ عند اللهِ

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

إن مفهومنا لتناول القربان يعني عمومية المشاركة فيه لذوى العقيدة الواحدة، إلا إن المشاركة في سر القربان المقدس هنا مقتصر فقط على أعضاء الكنائس الارثوذكسية والذين يحضرون أنفسهم بالصلاة والصوم والاعتراف منذ فترة قريبة (وعلى كل حال، فإننا ندعو الجميع للمشاركة في الخبز المقدس الذي يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس). رجاء مراجعة الكاهن إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضواً في الكنيسة الارثوذكسية.