

The Conception of the Theotokos by Righteous Anna and the Tenth Sunday of Luke

The Consecration of the Church of the Holy Resurrection in Jerusalem

Sunday, December 9, 2018

Tone 3; Eothinon 6

Apolytikion for the Resurrection (Tone 3)

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

Apolytikion of the Conception of the Theotokos by St. Anna (Tone 4)

Today have the bonds of barrenness been loosened; God, having heard the prayers of Joachim and Anna, promised them openly that they should give birth, beyond hope, to the Maiden of God, from whom He, the infinite One was to be born, becoming man, commanding the angel to shout to her: Rejoice, O full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

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 Conception of the Theotokos by St. Anna (Tone 4)

All the world doth celebrate Anna's conception on this day with festive joy, because it came to pass through God; for by divine grace she hath conceived her that beyond words conceiveth the Word of God.

Daily Readings

THE EPISTLE (for the Conception of the Theotokos by Righteous Anna)

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

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (4:22-27)

Brethren, Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise. Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in travail; for the children of the desolate one are many more than the children of her that is married."

THE GOSPEL (for the Tenth Sunday of Luke)

The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to St. Luke (13:10-17)

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" As Jesus said this, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

The Synaxarion

On December 9 in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate Saint Anna's Conception of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Verses

Not like Eve dost thou bring forth children in sorrow,
For within thy womb thou bearest joy, O Anna.
On the ninth, Anna conceived Mary, God's Mother.

After many years of childlessness and fervent prayer, an angel of the Lord announced to Joachim and Anna that that they would be the parents of a daughter, the Virgin Mary, who would bring blessings to the whole human race. The Conception took place at Jerusalem. The Orthodox Church does not accept the teaching that the Mother of God was exempted from the consequences of ancestral sin (death, corruption, sin, etc.) at the moment of her conception by virtue of the future merits of her Son. Only Christ was born perfectly holy and sinless. The Holy Virgin was like everyone else in her mortality and in being subject to temptation, although she committed no personal sins. She was not a deified creature removed from the rest of humanity. If this were the case, she would not have been truly human, and the nature that Christ took from her would not have been truly human either. If Christ does not truly share our human nature, then the possibility of our salvation is in doubt. By her 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.

OFFERINGS

Holy Bread and Wheat* are also being offered by Salim El-Darzi, Maya and Marwan for the three-year memorial of Laila El-Darzi (+8 December, 2015), beloved wife and mother. Memory eternal.

The Third and Ninth-day Memorial Prayers are being said this morning with Wheat* and Holy Bread offered for the newly-departed servant of God, Bassem Azzam (+30 November, 2018), by the Azzam, Hallak and Yacob families. Memory eternal.

Holy Bread is being offered for the birthdays of George Khouri (December 8th) and Gabriella Lewin (December 31st). May God grant them His blessings for many, many years; by the Sadd, Khouri and Lewin families.

Holy Bread is also offered by Anita Chala for the birthdays of her sister, Marcia O’Dea (December 7th), daughter, Christina Ajalat (December 11th), goddaughter, Amy Miller (December 11th). May God grant them continued good health and happiness for many years. Prayers are also offered for Tere Chala’s complete recovery; also remembering dear Father John Reinhold (+9 December, 2003) of blessed memory and eternal repose.

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

for the continued recovery and good health of Edward George Deeb, Jr.

for the upcoming surgery and speedy recovery of Samia Habib.

* The offering of wheat (*amha*) for memorial services is a practice that can be traced back to the middle of the fourth century. In earlier times, bread and wine with olives, cheese or rice were offered in charity, and those who partook of them would pray, “Blessed be his/her memory.” The wheat is cooked sometimes with honey or sugar, mixed with figs, raisins, nuts and other sweets. The grain and fruit brought to the commemoration of the dead signifies that the dead will truly rise again from the grave, for both grain, which is sown in the earth, and fruit, which is laid on the earth, decays first and afterwards brings forth abundant ripe, whole fruit. The honey or sugar used with the wheat signifies that after the resurrection of the Orthodox and the righteous, there awaits a joyous and blessed life in the Heavenly Kingdom and not a bitter sorrowful one. The wheat prepared from grain expresses the faith of the living in the resurrection of the dead to a better life, just as that seed, having fallen upon the ground, although undergoing corruption yet grows to attain a better appearance. (See I Corinthians 15:35-57)

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

Holy Bread Offering List

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Dec 16 - the Meena family

Dec 16 - the Meena family

Ron & Kathy Zraick

Dec 23 - open

Dec 23 - open

Dec 24 - open

Dec 25 - open

Dec 30 - Ramez & Rima Hage

Dec 30 - Ramez & Rima Hage

Jan 01 - open

Jan 06 - open (Holy Theophany)

Jan 06 - open

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.

Everyone is welcome to join us for a short Church School Christmas Program, “The Living Icon,” today immediately following Liturgy. A Lenten lunch will follow the program, and a free-will offering is being received for the meal to assist with the expenses of our Church School curriculum. We thank everyone for their help and support of our Church School Christmas Program.

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 Feast of St. Spyridon the Wonderworker – December 12th

The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ

Saturday, December 15th, Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 16th, Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

December is “St. Ignatius Month” in the Antiochian Archdiocese. Members of the Order of St. Ignatius are assisting in the services this month. Reading the epistle this morning is: John Khouri. For more information on The Order visit their website: www.orderofstignatius.org.

Food Pantry Collection

Our Christmas food collection is due next Sunday, December 16th. Please speak with Cindy Tamoush should you have any questions about items needed. Cindy may be reached at: 818-345-4363 or by e-mail at: [<famtam5@socal.rr.com>](mailto:famtam5@socal.rr.com). Our parish provides assistance to the local “Loaves and Fishes” food pantry in Van Nuys.

Teen SOYO Raffle

Tickets for our Annual Teen SOYO Christmas Raffle are available today up until the time of the drawing during our Lenten Luncheon following our Church School Christmas Program.

Young Adult Christmas Party

A “Potluck” Christmas Party is planned by Subdeacon Richard Ajalat for Thursday, December 20th, at 7 p.m. at his home: 616 Groveview Lane; La Canada, CA; 91011. For more information or if you plan to attend, please contact Richard at: 818-800-2418 or by e-mail at: rajalat@stmichaelvannuys.org

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.

Church School Recess

Church School will begin a recess following today's program. Classes will resume on January 6, 2019, when we celebrate the Feast of Holy Theophany.

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

The following article is the eighteenth 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.

Two aspects of Byzantine architectural design that is often an afterthought are matters that pertain to light and sound. As previously mentioned, air conditioning units and modern technology were never a part of the ancient church's construction plans. Similarly audio systems and various forms of artificial lighting were non-existent. That did not mean that there was no thought given to acoustics or natural light in the design and planning of early Orthodox Church structures.

Sound in the early period of worship in the church was never more than necessary. Church buildings were designed and built in such a way that a Reader, Chanter, or Singer did not need to strain in projecting his or her voice in order to be heard. This was also true because of the natural acoustics in the church design, but most importantly: those who reverently entered the church did not add confusion to what was heard being read, chanted or sung by being talkative or noisy. A person came to church to listen, to be attentive, and to meditate. It was understood that all conversation and all dialogue in worship is between God and His people. Hence, it was considered not just improper, but disrespectful to distract attention in the service by engaging in conversation, or to conduct oneself in the church as one would in a public social setting. The repeated call by the Deacon to "Attend!" or to "Stand upright!" were intermittently but intentionally heard within the Divine Liturgy precisely because of the need to restore order or to call the people to be attentive.

The antiphonal method of hymnology included both chanting and singing in the church involved the clergy and laity taking turns with verses and stanzas. In addition, the responsive participation of a "Right" and "Left" choirs were not the only vibrant sound heard in church services. There were also overlaying melodies that sometimes created some confusion, especially if the clergy, chanters and singers were not well trained in knowing how to properly execute them. In fact, the increase of "multiple layering" of melodies in the Russian Church had become chaotic, that by the 17th century a reform was initiated to restore order in the services. This resulted in prohibiting the overlapping of more than two melodies at one time. The rule helped to ensure that what was being sung was not just heard but understood. A good example of this today can

be heard during the “Little Entrance” led by the bishop in the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. While the hymn, “Come let us worship...” is sung, the clergy and choir simultaneously sing: “Many years to thee, Master!”

The appropriate times in the order of prayer services in the church were prescribed to follow the natural light in the sequence of the hours in a day, from sunrise to sunset. The earlier the Liturgy, the greater the Feast. Hence Holy Pascha, the Holy Nativity and Holy Theophany were among the cycle of festal services that had the most voluminous content and rigorous intensity. The corresponding services of the Liturgy, i.e., Vespers and Orthros, as known to us today, begin at hours that do not often correspond to their prescribed times within a day. Hence, darkening a church can be quite challenging when a Vespers service, normally done at sunset, begins in the middle of the morning. Also, because a Feast celebrated in the morning of a workday will not encourage lay attendance, the convenience of celebrating the morning Orthros followed by a Festal Liturgy in the early evening can seem very awkward. Needless to say, accommodating people’s personal schedules has in many cases brought about a “light show,” with the dimming and raising of lights in a church sanctuary in order to create an effect as prescribed by the appropriate hour of a particular service. This did not help the worshipper to experience the relationship of prayers prescribed to appropriate times of a day. Today not many are aware that the appropriate time to begin the Divine Liturgy in the morning is much earlier than 10 a.m., and certainly not near to the noon hour! Entering a church to begin the morning Orthros prayers was done while it was still dark, and as the sun gradually rose to the time of the start of the Liturgy. Artificial lighting therefore, has become a very important and useful aspect of a church’s design. The ability to dim and raise levels of brightness has helped to create an effect that corresponds to the appropriate time and content of the services. Moreover, it should be mentioned that candlelight and oil lamps were among the first means of properly illuminating a sanctuary. Perhaps the greatest and most vivid example of this is known just before midnight of Holy Pascha when prayers are said and chanted in utter darkness before the procession begins with the Holy Light that leads us to the joy of the Empty Tomb and a fully lit church that also exemplifies a great earthquake with bright chandeliers in motion.

The “drama” that characterizes the services of Holy Week, especially those that walk us through the Twelve Passion Gospels depicting the Crucifixion, Death, and Entombment of Christ are among the services that do require appropriate lighting and is not always best experienced by electric artificial lighting. It is from the very dark and foreboding sadness of Holy Week to the fully bright and brilliant joy of Pascha that we learn by our prayers what we also fully experience: the two extremes of light and darkness.

Finally, more must be said about the vocal quality of Orthodox prayer services that cannot be substituted by instruments. Singing *a-capella* (without instrument accompaniment) is not very easy especially if a chanter or singer does not have a “musical ear.” In the Orthodox Church Tradition, voices were trained to read, chant or sing properly in the church by: 1) being in church, 2) being reverent and humble, 3) listening attentively, and 4) learning to pray as an apprentice from a lead chanter or *protopsalty* [Πρωτοψάλτη]. Notice that the objective as a Reader, Chanter or Singer is to pray. One prays in the Orthodox Church by reading, chanting and singing as a concelebrant and not as a soloist. Keeping the proper cadence for each melody is also necessary for various melodies. It is also important that prayer is a regular part of the life of all who are called to serve as a reader chanter or singer, and not only at church services. The Orthodox *ethos* has no concept of “rehearsing” music in praying the hymns or chanting the melodies of the church. Rehearsals have also lent itself as a practice to heighten the concept of “performance.” With the addition of the various rituals of a service, it was not difficult for spectators to perceive the ceremonial character of the Liturgy as a great “pageant.”

Byzantine melodies began being written in western notation in North America thanks to a special project that was initiated and funded by Metropolitan PHILIP (Saliba) of thrice-blessed memory. Prior to the monumental work of Basil Kazan Byzantine notation was all that existed for use by trained chanters. Kazan was commissioned to transpose Byzantine notation into “crude” melody lines by writing a musical score without following the “rules” of western notation. Kazan’s objective was to preserve the *ethos* of the Orthodox Byzantine pneumatic system that would otherwise be “frozen” if forced to be written in a strict western format that required proper key and time signature stanzas and

measures. Byzantine notation, on the other hand, provided a gifted chanter with a “script” line and the underpinning pitch of a monotone *eson*. In the Byzantine churches the sound of male chanters often resonated in a sanctuary with good acoustics, just as a four part musical score was the norm in the Slavic (Russian) churches. With this in mind, the ability to augment the use of a good audio sound system in a well built Orthodox Church structure today is very challenging if professional expertise is not sought. Similarly, the proper artificial lighting of various settings must be carefully considered in the design phase of a church if the variety of Orthodox worship services are to have the appropriate ambience for prayer. [end of Part XVIII]

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. 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. The annual payment to the Archdiocese from St. Michael Church is 10% or 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.

SCHEDULE OF FESTAL 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 60% 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>.

Pastor's Sermon

The Tenth Sunday of Luke

By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig

December 9, 2019

The setting of the miracle of the woman spoken of in today's Gospel reading is at a synagogue where the Lord was teaching. The love of God and His great mercy is central to the Gospel lesson. It is the good news of this season when we prepare to celebrate His birth.

The Lord repeatedly called the people to repentance from the practice of a religion that fails to practice mercy. Every Lenten season, our lessons point to the heart of what it means to be non-hypocritical. He rebukes those who claim to know the Law as being ignorant of the very thing in which they should be more knowledgeable and better instructed than anyone.

"You hypocrites," He says, "Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

The ruler of the synagogue condemned the Lord for healing on the Sabbath. For him religion consisted of the observance of laws that could not be set aside even for the sake of mercy. The ruler's reaction to the healing of the woman who "had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years" illustrates how radically misunderstood and misused the Law had become among those whom God had so favored and of whom he expected so much.

You may recall from one of the readings of the twelve Gospels (Matthew 23:13-39) on Great and Holy Thursday the words of our Lord: "Woe to you teachers of the Law, Sadducees, Pharisees hypocrites"... You brood of vipers..." ...[loving] the praise of men more than the praise from God..."

In today's lesson the Lord heals the woman by His word—"Woman, you are set free from your infirmity"—and then by His touch: "He put His hands on her; and immediately she was straightened up and praised God" (vv.12-13). The miracle is remarkable for two reasons: First, the woman was not seeking to be healed and no one spoke on her behalf. Second, the Lord demonstrates that He is the incarnate God by the simple declaration that she was healed.

The rejection of Christ as the incarnate God by the Jews is matched by the heretics who claim that the eternal God could not possibly humble Himself and condescend to take on our nature. In the case of the heretics, they can only understand Christ to be a created being. To this point, **St. Gregory of Nazianzus says, “Do you conceive of Him as less... because he humbles Himself for the sake of the (woman) that is bent down to the ground, that He may exalt with Himself that which is bent double under the weight of sin?”**

Our Lord was never threatened by anyone or any circumstance. Nor was he controlled by any person or any situation. He did not need to prove who He was; nor did He need to demonstrate anything to justify Lordship. This was not His aim or purpose in His coming. If we miss this point, that we will never know the depth of meaning which is revealed in the upcoming Feast of His incarnation (called: “The Great Dispensation”) “I behold a mystery, great and most wonderful... For some of us: this way of being humble is something we learn by being crushed or by being broken. This was for our Lord something that He not only understood, but something He chose and demonstrated before His crucifixion by His every word and deed.

Every crisis in our life can do one of two things: It can lead us closer to God by way of the Cross, or it can alienate us from God and cause us to reject His call to holiness. The lesson therefore is clear: There are the more weighty matters of the Law that we cannot ignore. The practice of true religion is not neglecting what is obvious: namely, God’s love, mercy and compassion which fulfill the Law.

Many of us, as creatures of habit, dislike disruptions to our routine or what we are familiar with or accustomed to. When you and I are most comfortable with things being done a certain way, change is very difficult. We lose our orientation, and being disoriented can be devastating to our pride. Meaning can be lost as we define what is meant by what we do with no thought to why we are doing it. Today’s lesson forces us to recognize that we can be misguided and lose sight of what really matters—as far as God is concerned.

As we begin our countdown to Christmas, may we not lose sight of the reason for the season: God has come. We are preparing to celebrate His full revelation in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He takes on human flesh and assumes our entire nature, except for sin; but for the purpose of taking on the sin of the world. He renews and restores all that was lost with Adam. As the New Adam He fulfills the Law and is our righteousness.

**THE CONCEPTION OF THE THEOTOKOS BY RIGHTEOUS ANNA
AND THE TENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE**
CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION IN JERUSALEM

طروبارية القيامة على اللحن الثالث

لتفرح السماويات وتبتهج الارضيات, لانّ الربّ صنعَ عزاً بساعده, ووطئ الموت
بالموت, وصارَ بكرَ الاموات, وأنقذنا من جوفِ الجحيم, ومنح العالمَ الرحمةَ العظمى

اليومَ تَنَحَّلُ قُبُودُ العُقرِ, فَإِنَّ اللهَ قَدِ اسْتَجَابَ صَلَاةَ يُوَاكِيمَ وَحَنَّةَ, فَوَعَدَهُمَا جَلِيًّا
بِأَنَّهُمَا يَلِدَانِ عَلَى غَيْرِ أَمَلٍ فَتَاةَ اللهِ, الَّتِي وُلِدَ مِنْهَا مُتَأَنِّسًا, وَهُوَ غَيْرُ مُتَحَيِّزٍ وَلَا
مَحْصُورٍ, وَقَدْ أَمَرَ الْمَلَاكُ بِأَنْ يَهْتَفَ نَحْوَهَا قَائِلًا: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا مُمْتَلِئَةَ نِعْمَةً, الرَّبُّ
مَعَكَ.

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة باللحن الرابع

أيها المتقدمون على الأجناد السماويين, نتوسلُ إليكم نحن غير المستحقين, حتّى أنكم
بطلباتكم تكتنوفوننا بظلِّ أجنحةِ مجدكم غير الهيولي, حافظين إيانا نحن الجائين
والصارخين بغير فتور, أنقذونا من الشدائد, بما أنكم رؤساء مراتب القواتِ العلوية.

اليومَ تُعَيِّدُ الْمَسْكُونَةُ لِحَبْلِ حَنَّةَ, الَّذِي تَمَّ بِإِذْنِ اللهِ, فَإِنَّهَا قَدْ وُلِدَتْ الَّتِي وُلِدَتْ الْكَلِمَةَ, بِمَا
يَفُوقُ الوَصفَ.

الرسالة

عَجِيبٌ هُوَ اللهُ فِي قَدِيسِيهِ. فِي الْمَجَامِعِ بَارِكُوا اللهَ
فصلٌ من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى أهل غلاطية (27-4:22)

يا إِخْوَةُ، إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ ابْنَانِ، أَحَدُهُمَا مِنَ الْجَارِيَةِ وَالْآخَرُ مِنَ الْحُرَّةِ * غَيْرَ أَنَّ الَّذِي مِنَ الْجَارِيَةِ وُلِدَ بِحَسَبِ الْجَسَدِ، أَمَا الَّذِي مِنَ الْحُرَّةِ فَبِالْمَوْعِدِ * وَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا هُوَ رَمَزٌ. لِأَنَّ هَاتَيْنِ هُمَا الْعَهْدَانِ، أَحَدُهُمَا مِنْ طُورِ سِينَاءَ، بَلَدِ الْعُبُودِيَّةِ، وَهُوَ هَاجِرٌ * فَإِنَّ هَاجِرَ، بَلَّ طُورَ سِينَاءَ، جَبَلٌ فِي دِيَارِ الْعَرَبِ وَيُنَاسِبُ أورشليمَ الْحَالِيَّةَ. لِأَنَّ هَذِهِ حَاصِلَةٌ فِي الْعُبُودِيَّةِ مَعَ أَوْلَادِهَا * أَمَا أورشليمُ الْعُلْيَا، فَهِيَ حُرَّةٌ، وَهِيَ أُمَّنَا كُلُّنَا * لِأَنَّهُ كُتِبَ: أَفْرَحِي أَيَّتُهَا الْعَاقِرُ الَّتِي لَمْ تَلِدِ. اهْتَفِي وَاصْرُخِي أَيَّتُهَا الَّتِي لَمْ تَتَمَخَّضْ. لِأَنَّ أَوْلَادَ الْمَهْجُورَةِ أَكْثَرُ مِنْ أَوْلَادِ ذَاتِ الرَّجُلِ.

الإنجيل

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس لوقا

في ذلك الزمان كان يسوع يعلم في أحد المجامع في السبت، وهناك امرأة فيها روح مرض من ثماني عشرة سنة، وكانت منحنية الظهر لا تستطيع أن تنتصب. فلما رآها يسوع دعاها وقال لها: "أنتِ معافاة من مرضك. ووضعي يديه عليها، فانتصبت في الحال ومجدت الله. فقال رئيس المجمع للحاضرين وهو مغتاظ، لأن يسوع أبرأ في السبت: "عندكم ستة أيام ينبغي العمل فيها، ففيها تأتون وتستشفون، لا في يوم السبت!" فأجابه الرب: "يا مرائي! أما يحل كل واحد منكم رباط ثوره أو حماره في السبت من المذود ويأخذه ليسقيه؟ وهذه ابنة إبراهيم رباط الشيطان من ثماني عشرة سنة، أما كان ينبغي أن تحل من رباطها يوم السبت؟" ولما قال هذا، خزي جميع معارضيهِ، وفرح الجمع بكل الأعمال المجيدة التي كان يعملها

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

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