

The Twenty-seventh Sunday after Pentecost and the Fourteenth Sunday of Luke

The Holy Prophet Habakkuk; Martyr Habib the New; Martyr Myrope of Chios;
Venerable John, Heraclemon, Theophilos and Andrew of Egypt; Martyr Stephen
Urosh, the Serbian King; Venerable Ioannikios of Devitch

Sunday, December 2, 2018

Tone 2; Eothinon 4

Apolytikion for the Resurrection (Tone 2)

When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to 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 Preparation of Christ's Nativity (Tone 3)

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

Daily Readings

THE EPISTLE (for the Twenty-seventh Sunday after Pentecost)

The Lord is my strength and my song.
With chastisement hath the Lord chastened me.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (6:10-17)

Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood,

but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

THE GOSPEL (for the Fourteenth Sunday of Luke)

The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to St. Luke (18:35-43)

At that time, when Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

The Synaxarion

On December 2 in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the Holy Prophet Habakkuk.

Verses

At thine end, O Habakkuk, and expiration,
God strengthened thy feet, even as thou saidest.
On the second, Habakkuk went up to the city of God.

Habakkuk was the son of Asaphat from the tribe of Simeon. He prophesied the coming of Christ 600 years His Nativity, during the time of King Manasseh, and foretold the destruction of Jerusalem. When

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, attacked Jerusalem, Habakkuk sought refuge in the land of the Ishmaelites. From there he returned to Judea, where he lived as a farmer. One day he was carrying lunch to the workers in the fields, when suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: Go carry the dinner that thou hast into Babylon unto Daniel, who is in the lion's den. But Habakkuk responded: Lord, I never saw Babylon; neither do I know where the den is. Then the angel took him by the hair and instantly brought him to Babylon, to the lion's den, where Daniel had been cast by King Cyrus as a punishment for not worshiping the idols. Daniel took and the dinner which God had sent him (Daniel 14:34-37). Then the angel of God again took Habakkuk back to his field in Judea. He died at an old age. His relics were discovered in Palestine during the reign of Theodosius the Great.

On this day, we also commemorate the Martyr Habib the New; Martyr Myrope of Chios; Venerable John, Heraclemon, Theophilos and Andrew of Egypt; Martyr Stephen Urosh, the Serbian king; and Venerable Ioannikios of Devitch. 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

The Holy Bread and Memorial Wheat are being offered and the Coffee Hour hosted this morning by the Azzam and Hallak families for the one-year memorial and in loving memory of our beloved mother Claire (+12 December, 2017); also remembering all who have fallen asleep in the Lord from the Azzam, Hallak, Abughazaleh, Tannous, Karam and Ababseh families; with special prayers for our brother, Bassem.

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

by Father Timothy Baclig for his grandson, James,
celebrating his ninth birthday

by Yuriko Yanni for the healing of her sister-in-law, Monica Cuevas.

by John Elac for his wife, Gloria Orjuela Elac,
and for his continued success in teaching

by Pat Malouf for the healing of Joni Eareckson Tada;
also for the repose of her cousin, the newly-departed Deborah Harris
(+19 November, 2018) of Detroit, Michigan. Memory eternal.

for the one-year memorial of Lynn Wilson (+30 November, 2017),
khouriye of the Archpriest Wayne Wilson, Pastor of St. Barnabas Church
(Santa Ana, California). Memory eternal.

for the speedy recovery of Samia Habib

for the repose of the newly-newly-departed
President of the United States, George Herbert Walker Bush
(+30 November, 2018. Memory eternal.

Ned Toomey extends his thanks to everyone for their prayers, cards,
phone calls he's received during the recovery of his recent surgery.

Included in our prayers throughout the month of December are those
celebrating their birthday: James Michael Baclig (12/1), Nicholas John
Malouf (12/1), Anne and Marina Coury (12/2), Jill Zraick Phipps (12/3),
Alexander Worotko (12/4), Noah Ajalat (12/5), Michael Mas (12/5),
Marcia O'Dea (12/7), George John Khouri III (12/8), Stephanie Slatko
(12/8), Thomas Anthony Zraick (12/09), Amira Boutari (12/11), Ibrahim
Wassef (12/11), Colin Michael Phipps (12/12), Nicole Mansur (12/15),
Katelyn Matarese (12/15), Odette George (12/16), Thomas Mulry
(12/16), Yuriko Yanni (12/16), Daniel Barney (12/17), Jonas Farr
(12/17), Logan Obenhaus (12/17), Rana Azzam (12/18), Daphne Thabet
(12/19), George Saade (12/20), John Tambouras (12/20), Linda Khouri
(12/22), Mark Nassief (12/22), Evelyn Hannah (12/23), Christine Nasr
(12/23), James Thomas (12/23), Logan Gary David Obenhaus (12/24),
Teddy Hage (12/26), Ned Toomey (12/26), Hanna Harb (12/28), Michelle
Ann Abdenour (12/30), Gabriella Lewin (12/31); also who celebrate
their wedding anniversary: Ron & Kathy Zraick (12/17), Rami & Yuriko
Yanni (12/28). May God grant them many years!

Included in our prayers for the separated in the month of December are:

Elia Habib, +9 Dec. 1959	Hani Sweis, +26 Dec., 2006
Francis Boyer, Dec., 1960	Margaret Nassief, +1 Dec., 2007
Nicole Saadeh, +31 Dec.	Tamam Mitchell, +16 Dec., 2007
Antone Saadeh, +21 Dec.	Bahat Bicker, +8 Dec. 2008
Charles Malouf +20 Dec., 1973	Bradley Abraham, +8 Dec. 2010
Albert Elias Gillet, +6 Dec., 1978	Mary Wassef, +7 Dec., 2011
Mary Anne Mansur, +19 Dec., 1979	Rodney Khalil, +10 Dec. 2011
Woldemichael Kidane +12 Dec. 1982	Nicholas Soffa, +9 Dec. 2012
Saliba Kassis, +30 Dec., 1987	Yvonne Tibshraeny, +11 Dec. 2012
Michael G. Hayek, +2 Dec., 1990	Angel Kheir, +12 Dec., 2012
Katherine Zaki, +1 Dec., 1993	Issa Gazie Ababseh, +6 Dec. 2013
George S. Nasser, +24 Dec., 1993	Alsace George, +22 Dec., 2013
Faraj Azzam, +20 Dec., 1994	Edward Chaffin Sr., +19 Dec. 2014
Marie Abdou, +10 Dec., 1995	Fred Safady, +24 Dec. 2014
Anton Abdelahad, +25 Dec., 1995	Blanche Barghash, +29 Dec. 2014
Grace Haggar, +30 Dec., 1995	Laila El-Darzi, +8 Dec., 2015
Nicholas Satel, +28 Dec., 1997	Mike Glissen, +15 Dec., 2015
Alice Meena, +10 Dec., 1999	Mona Latif, +17 Dec., 2015
Wydea Haddad, +26 Dec., 1999	Philip G. Deeb, Sr., +1 Dec. 2016
John Black, +1 Dec., 1999	Tommy Schmidt, +15 Dec., 2016
Haradu Woldetatiou, +2 Dec., 2002	Claudine Lakah +25 Dec., 2016
Charles Homsy, +2 Dec. 2002	Mary Vogel +30 Dec., 2016
V. Rev. John Reinhold, +9 Dec. 2003	William Christopher +31 Dec. 2016
Annette Mittry, +26 Dec. 2003	Lillian B. Meena, +6 Dec. 2017
Minnie Abdun-Nur, +23 Dec. 2004	James T. Peck, +10 Dec. 2017
Mike Sarchizian, +6 Dec. 2006	Claire Azzam, +12 Dec. 2017
Ileen M. Shaheen, +21 Dec. 2006	Gladys Najjar, +12 Dec. 2017
Shehadeh Moujaes, +22 Dec., 2006	Tommy Schmidt +15 Dec. 2017
	Mike Glisson +16 Dec. 2017

Memory Eternal!

Please phone the Church Office if there are any omissions or corrections to the above listing of names and dates. Please bear in mind that some have chosen not to be included in our announcement. Please pardon any errors. Thank you for your understanding.

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

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

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. Barbara and St. John of Damascus
Vigil (Vespers/Orthros) at St. Barbara Monastery, Monday at 4 p.m.
Tuesday, December 4 - Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

The Feast of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker – December 6th
Great Vespers, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church (Northridge) on
Wednesday, December 5th at 7 p.m.
Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral
Thursday, December 6th at 9 a.m.

The Conception of the Holy Theotokos by Righteous Anna
and the Tenth Sunday of Luke
Saturday, December 8th, Great Vespers, 5 p.m.
Sunday, December 9th, Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.
followed by the Church School Christmas Program and Lenten Luncheon

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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 Program Lenten Lunch (December 9)

Our Church School Christmas Program Lenten lunch menu includes: Lenten pizza, fruit and vegetable salads, Christmas cookies and beverages. 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 today. The drawing will take place next Sunday, December 9, 2018, at the end of 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.

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

Holy Bread Offering List

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Dec 09 - Carolyn Sadd
Salim El-Darzi and family
Dec 16 - the Meena family
Ron & Kathy Zraick
Dec 23 - open
Dec 24 - open
Dec 25 - open

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.

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

Young Adult Potluck Christmas Party - Thursday, December 20,
7 p.m. at the home of Subdeacon Richard Ajalat

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.

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*

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

"O Lord, I Have Loved the Beauty of Thy House" (LXX Psalm 25:7) Part Seventeen

The following article is the seventeenth 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 article is written by Father Timothy Baclig.

Designing and constructing an Orthodox Church sanctuary today in Southern California requires complying with many specifications, some of which were never considered in history. These include several laws that are designed for public safety along with City Codes that have the purpose of ensuring environmental conservation. With this in mind it is important to understand that the approved plans for our church allow us to construct the largest Traditional Byzantine church sanctuary possible on our three acre church property. The building totals 8,213 square feet of floor space for an occupancy of 291 persons, with 149 parking spaces. The specified height of the dome is restricted to a maximum height of 40 feet (that includes a cross). The building's seating capacity was also based upon compliance with fire safety requirements. Our Project Manager was able to provide the City of Los Angeles with plans that fully comply with the City Code that exempts church sanctuaries from being required to include water sprinklers for fire. The code exemption, however, will not allow the church to have a fixed seating occupancy of more than 300 persons. As mentioned earlier, this exemption afforded St. Michael church a cost savings of over \$250,000. Our structure, however, is required to have all "open steel" in cavities of the building sprayed with a fire retardant foam; also to include adequate exit doors and windows that meet emergency requirements. In addition, several environmental issues now require all construction to include an underground "filtration system" that prevents run-off rain water to carry pollutants into the sea. This installation was completed and

approved during the grading phase of our property. Moreover, our parking lot is also required to provide long-term and short-term parking for sixteen bicycles, six car spaces for persons with disabilities, and four electric car stations. We should note that this parking provision has helped us to reduce the size of our church property by selling the two single family homes, originally purchase for the purpose of additional parking. Building Codes also now require efficient solar heating units in building plans. Our plans provide for this on the roof of our existing assembly hall and a covered parking area for 39 spaces. Hot and cold air conditioning was never a consideration in the ancient world, however, provision for this will include use of the church roof space for several units, which otherwise would be an eye-sore and noisy addition during service processions on the ground space along the sidewalk that encircle the building.

Seating in an Orthodox Church was originally provided for those who were either allowed to sit, i.e., the bishop and clergy, also the elderly or disabled. Worship in the Orthodox Church always allowed for movement that included *metanias*, including bows and prostrations for prayers, veneration, and ceremonial processions. Pews were an addition to the church in North America. It limited if not stifled the ability for movement in worship. It has long been the Traditional practice in Orthodox churches that the position of prayer in the church is either standing or kneeling. In the Russian Orthodox Church pews are very rare, if they exist at all. In fact, most seats are nothing more than a short stool for the elderly. Sunday is universally understood in the Orthodox Church as the Lord's Day, when we stand to celebrate our Lord's Holy Resurrection. This is true for the entire period of Holy Pascha (Easter) when there is no kneeling for forty days. Kneeling and prostrations are normative on weekdays, especially the four annual periods of fasting on the church calendar. Most who attend church, if regularly on Sundays, do not experience the full cycle of the weekday fasts and feasts of the church to know or understand the various liturgical movements, such as kneeling and prostrations, along with festal processions that accompany prayer an hymnology in worship.

The church has never prevented anyone from being able to sit, especially when necessary, however, the habit of sitting, especially sitting casually (with legs crossed) was considered disrespectful in the house of God. This also added another "regimen" to the order of worship. People needed to know when it was proper to sit and when it was appropriate to stand. In the earlier period of the Orthodox Church in the United States, priests were known to use a light that was turned on and off from the altar, in clear view of the congregation, in order to help let the people know when to stand and sit. This became necessary when pews were added to the

churches and when English was not used in the services. Such a practice further confirms how the church had lost its sense and meaning in worship in the Liturgy.

In many Orthodox countries today pews have begun to be added, however, *stasidia* (meaning: “to stand”) Traditionally provided a type of seating with high arm support and a folding bench seat along the walls and between the pillars of the church, that lined the route of processions. It was not uncommon for the bishop’s throne to also be designed in this way. The *stasidia* are more commonly used in monastic churches, however, some of our urban churches have begun using them, especially in the area of the chanters. Several are in use at St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church in Riverside, California. Seats for the congregation in our new church building will include individual cushioned chairs with kneelers. Individual chairs allow a flexible use of the worship space for various service venues. Attendance at the majority of church services will enable the chair seating to provide more room for the worshippers who will be able to position themselves closer to the solea and altar, choir and chanters, in the area directly under the dome.

The narthex, or vestibule, which is a space at the west end, and a part of the church building, is not part of the church proper. The main church sanctuary is entered from a second set of doors in the narthex that lead to the nave. The narthex has mistakably become for many a “lobby” or entry. However, it has traditionally served as a chapel and gathering place. It is where the bishop is received by the clergy and faithful before entering the church; also a place for offerings. It is where a bride (and groom) begins their journey into the church as husband and wife with their attendants. It is also where the clergy meet the body of a deceased person with family members before processing into the church. Hence, as a place for gathering, it is important that the narthex be spacious. Icons with offering tables are part of the space of the narthex. As a vestibule, it is also where one dons an appropriate cassock or robe before entering the church. In some monasteries, the narthex is used for personal prayers and small services, such as Daily Compline, when the full sanctuary of the church is not needed.

Besides the narthex, the room for vesting is located on the north side of the altar space, where the clergy and altar servers enter the church. It is where robes and vestments are properly stored. At the south side of the altar space is the sacristy where the Holy Bread is cut, and a French drain sink is provided for the cleaning the Sacramental vessels. [end of Part XVII]

In the next article we will further discuss the various technical aspects of a church building that includes the ornamental lighting, audio systems and the traditional use of oils and candles.

PASTORAL SERMON
The Fourteenth Sunday of Luke
By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig
December 2, 2018

Today's Gospel lesson of the healing of blind Bartimaeus is a good example of what it means to earnestly, persistently, and eagerly seek God. Commenting on the healing of the blind beggar, St. John Chrysostom writes:

Therefore learn, my beloved, that though we {are very vile} may be an outcast, but yet approach God with earnestness, even by ourselves, we shall be able to bring about whatever we ask . . . Though God may delay the gift, though there may be many who seek to hold us back, let us not desist from asking. For in this way most of all we shall win God to our side. (Homily 66 on Matthew)

This is quite a radical statement for a Father of the Church. It almost gives you the impression that we can, in fact, influence God. Most of us tend to think that our Christian response to whatever situation we find ourselves in is to be passive, and more accepting of whatever we face. But God never said, or desires that we should be miserable, unhappy, especially to the degree that we end up becoming resentful, bitter, full of anger and malice. Other Church Fathers point out that although Bartimaeus was physically blind, the eyes of his soul were illumined by God's grace because he had believed what he had heard from others about Jesus. The saints also speak of blind Bartimaeus as an example of earnest and humble prayer. Every time we come to Christ in prayer, they say, we should come to Him as blind beggars and cry out to Him to receive new light day by day.

All too often, while we may know what we want for ourselves, we may not always know what is best for us. The Holy Apostle Paul spoke of this in his letter to the Corinthians when he said: *Everything is permissible for me but not everything is beneficial.* (I Corinthians 6:12). We make

personal choices each and every day of our lives. We also teach our children the importance of making good choices, to have good judgment, and to be responsible for their decisions. However, as much as we try, some things are not easily learned except by experience and at times, making mistakes. Yet some things can in fact be avoided, especially when one practices good common sense.

With this in mind: petitioning God and asking Him to grant us our request may mean that we might need to be prepared to receive what we may not even know we are asking for. From time to time, for example, people ask me to pray that they learn patience. Well then, I must ask, are you prepared to grow in learning patience? Do you realize what being patient requires you to do? Or better yet, how does having patience help you to know God better, or draw nearer to Him? It's almost as though we expect God to do it all while we remain uninvolved with no responsibility to accept.

And so, petitioning and asking God to grant us our request may also mean that we may also need to be prepared to know what we must also do. Pray for peace, we say. However, praying for peace may also mean that we must be militarily strong. On the other hand, praying for peace may also mean, perhaps, being more aggressive in our commitment to negotiating.

When asking God for something or petitioning Him with a personal request it also helps to remember that we are called as God's children to respond to others as we expect God to hear and respond to us. This pattern was established by our Lord Himself when He taught us to pray: *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us...* (Matthew 6:13)

Do we consider those who offend and sin against us when we call upon God's forgiveness? Do we ever perceive how we might act in a way that we become a stumbling block for someone, and yet expect God to keep us free from all temptation? Are we active in ways to help others who face

perils and misfortune, as we expect God to defend and protect us from all evil?

Prayer

O Christ, our God, Who in all times and places are worshipped and glorified, both in heaven and on earth, long-suffering, generous in mercy and rich in compassion, Who loves the righteous and is merciful to the sinner, Who calls all to repentance through the promise of blessings to come: Receive, O Lord, at this very hour our prayers and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls, purify our bodies, set our minds aright, cleanse our thoughts, and deliver us from affliction and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels, so that guided and guarded by them, we may attain to the oneness of the Faith and to the knowledge of Your glory, O Thou Who art blessed unto ages of ages. A-men. [a prayer of Compline]

Offerings for Festal flowers for Christmas and Holy Theophany are currently being received “in memory of” or “for the health of” persons you request prayer for. Just complete the form below and turn it in to the Church Office.

Enclosed is my offering of \$ _____ for the for the “health and salvation” and/or “in memory of”

your name

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>.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST AND THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE

THE HOLY PROPHET HABAKKUK; MARTYR HABIB THE NEW;
MARTYR MYROPE OF CHIOS; VENERABLE JOHN, HERACLEMON, THEOPHILOS AND
ANDREW OF EGYPT; MARTYR STEPHEN UROSH, THE SERBIAN KING;
VENERABLE IOANNIKIOS OF DEVITCH

طروبارية القيامة باللحن الثاني

عندما انحدرت إلى الموت، أيها الحياة الذي لا يموت، حينئذ أمتّ الجحيم ببرق لاهوتك،
وعندما أقتت الأموات من تحت الثرى، صرخ نحوك جميع القوات السماويين: أيها
المسيح الإله المعطي الحياة، المجد لك.

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة باللحن الرابع

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

قنداق تقدمة الميلاد على اللحن الثالث

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

الرسالة

الرسالة للأحد السابع والعشرين العنصرة

قُوْنِي وَتَسْبِحِي الرَّبَّ. أَدَباً أَدَبِي الرَّبَّ

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولْسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ أَفَسُسِ (17-6:10)

يا إخوة، تَقَوُّوا فِي الرَّبِّ وَفِي عِزَّةِ قُدْرَتِهِ * الْبَسُوا سِلَاحَ اللَّهِ الْكَامِلِ لِتَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَقْفُوا
ضِدَّ مَكَايِدِ إِبْلِيسَ * فَإِنَّ مُصَارَعَتَنَا لَيْسَتْ ضِدَّ دَمٍ وَلَحْمٍ، بَلْ ضِدَّ الرَّئَاسَاتِ، ضِدَّ
السَّلَاطِينِ، ضِدَّ وُلَاةِ الْعَالَمِ، عَالَمِ ظُلْمَةٍ هَذَا الدَّهْرِ، ضِدَّ أَجْنَادِ الشَّرِّ الرَّوْحِيَّةِ فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ * فَلذَلِكَ أَحْمِلُوا سِلَاحَ اللَّهِ الْكَامِلِ لِتَسْتَطِيعُوا الْمَقَاوِمَةَ فِي الْيَوْمِ الشَّرِيرِ، حَتَّى
إِذَا تَمَمْتُمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ تَثْبُتُونَ * فَاثْبُتُوا إِذَنْ مُنْطِقِينَ أَحْقَاءَكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ، وَلَا يَسِينُ دِرْعَ الْبِرِّ *
وَأَنْعَلُوا أَقْدَامَكُمْ بِاسْتِعْدَادِ إِنْجِيلِ السَّلَامِ * وَاحْمِلُوا عِلَاوَةً عَلَى كُلِّ ذَلِكَ تُرْسَ الْإِيمَانِ
الَّذِي بِهِ تَقْدِرُونَ أَنْ تَطْفِئُوا جَمِيعَ سِهَامِ الشَّرِيرِ الْمُلْتَهَبَةِ * وَاتَّخِذُوا خُوذةَ الْخَالِصِ وَسَيْفِ
الرُّوحِ الَّذِي هُوَ الْكَلِمَةُ .

الإنجيل

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس لوقا

في ذلك الزمان، واقترَبَ مِنْ أَرِيحَا ، وَكَانَ رَجُلٌ أَعْمَى جَالِسًا عَلَى جَانِبِ الطَّرِيقِ
يَسْتَعْطِي. فَلَمَّا سَمِعَ صَوْتَ جَمْعٍ يَمُرُّ بِالْمَكَانِ، اسْتَخْبَرَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ مَا عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ.
فَأخْبَرُوهُ أَنَّ يَسُوعَ النَّاصِرِيَّ مَارٌّ مِنْ هُنَاكَ. فَأَخَذَ يَصِيحُ فَيَقُولُ: "رُحْمَاكَ يَا يَسُوعَ ابْنَ
دَاوُدَ!" فَانْتَهَرَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسِيرُونَ فِي الْمُقَدَّمَةِ لَيْسُكَتَ. فَصَاحَ أَشَدَّ الصِّيَاحِ قَالًا: "رُحْمَاكَ يَا
ابْنَ دَاوُدَ!" فَوَقَّفَ يَسُوعَ وَأَمَرَ بِأَنْ يُؤْتِيَ بِهِ. فَلَمَّا دَنَا سَأَلَهُ: "مَاذَا تُرِيدُ أَنْ أَصْنَعُ لَكَ؟"
فَقَالَ: "يَا رَبِّ، أَنْ أَبْصِرَ." فَقَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: "أَبْصِرْ، إِيْمَانُكَ خَلَّصَكَ!" فَأَبْصَرَ مِنْ وَقْتِهِ
وَتَبِعَهُ وَهُوَ يُمَجِّدُ اللَّهَ، وَرَأَى الشَّعْبَ بِأَجْمَعِهِ مَا جَرَى فَسَبَّحَ اللَّهَ.

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

إن مفهومنا لتناول القربان يعنى عمومية المشاركة فيه لذوى العقيدة الواحدة، الا 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 الذى يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس). رجاء مراجعة الكاهن. إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضوا
فى الكنيسة الارثوذكسية.