

## **The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost and the Fourteenth Sunday of Luke**

The Holy Prophet Nahum; the Venerable Philaret the Almsgiver of Amnia;  
Martyr Ananias the Persian; Theoklitos, Archbishop of Lakedaemonia

**Sunday, December 1, 2019**

**Tone 7; Eothinon 2**

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

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

### **Apolytikion 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-fourth Sunday after Pentecost)

*The Lord will give strength to His people.*

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

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

Brethren, Christ is our peace, Who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile

us both to God in one body through the Cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And He came and preached peace to you, who were far off, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in Whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in Whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

THE GOSPEL (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 1 in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the holy and glorious Prophet Nahum.

***Verses***

Longing doth draw me to anoint with the myrrh of discourse  
Nahum the Elkoshite, who hath yielded up his spirit.  
On the first, Nahum was conveyed out of life.

Nahum was born of the tribe of Simeon in a place called Elkosh on the far side of the Jordan. He lived about seven hundred years before Christ

and prophesied the destruction of Nineveh about two hundred years after the Prophet Jonah had warned the Ninevites. Because of Jonah's preaching, the Ninevites had repented, and God had spared them and not destroyed them. In time, however, they forgot God's mercy and again became corrupt. The Prophet Nahum prophesied their destruction, and since there was no repentance, God did not spare them. The entire city was destroyed by earthquake, flood and fire, so that its location is no longer known. The Prophet Nahum lived for forty-five years and entered into rest in the Lord, leaving us a small book of his true prophecies.

On this day, we also commemorate the Venerable Philaret the Almsgiver of Amnia; Martyr Ananias the Persian; and Theoklitos, archbishop of Lakedaemonia. By their intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

#### **A Note Regarding Holy Communion**

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

## **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 Bassem (+30 November, 2018); also remembering all who have fallen asleep in the Lord from the Azzam, Hallak, Abughazaleh, Tannous, Karam and Ababseh families. Prayers are also offered for the well being of the whole family, especially our aunt Laila.

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

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

for the speedy recovery and continued health of Emile Skaff.

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), Rana Azzam (12/18), Daphne Thabet (12/19), George Saade (12/20), John Tambouras (12/20), Linda Khouri (12/22), Afath Khleif (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 Abdenmour (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 departed 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        | Gloria Nassif, +04 Dec. 2014      |
| Marie Abdou, +10 Dec., 1995        | Edward Chaffin Sr., +19 Dec. 2014 |
| Anton Abdelahad, +25 Dec., 1995    | Fred Safady, +24 Dec. 2014        |
| Grace Haggar, +30 Dec., 1995       | Blanche Barghash, +29 Dec. 2014   |
| Nicholas Satel, +28 Dec., 1997     | Laila El-Darzi, +8 Dec., 2015     |
| Alice Meena, +10 Dec., 1999        | Mike Glissen, +15 Dec., 2015      |

|                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Wydea Haddad, +26 Dec., 1999        | Mona Latif, +17 Dec., 2015        |
| John Black, +1 Dec., 1999           | Philip G. Deeb, Sr., +1 Dec. 2016 |
| Haradu Woldetatious, +2 Dec., 2002  | Tommy Schmidt, +15 Dec., 2016     |
| Charles Homsy, +2 Dec. 2002         | Claudine Lakah +25 Dec., 2016     |
| V. Rev. John Reinhold, +9 Dec. 2003 | Mary Vogel +30 Dec., 2016         |
| Annette Mittry, +26 Dec. 2003       | William Christopher +31 Dec. 2016 |
| Minnie Abdun-Nur, +23 Dec. 2004     | Lillian B. Meena, +6 Dec. 2017    |
| Mike Sarchizian, +6 Dec. 2006       | James T. Peck, +10 Dec. 2017      |
| Ileen M. Shaheen, +21 Dec. 2006     | Claire Azzam, +12 Dec. 2017       |
| Shehadeh Moujaes, +22 Dec., 2006    | Gladys Najjar, +12 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.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Christmas Toy Collection

We are again be collecting new toys for the children of prisoners. The toys should not include guns or require batteries. We especially need sports items: soccer balls, basketballs, and games for the children. All financial contributions should be turned in no later than Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, and all toys should be at the church by the date of our Christmas Program – December 15<sup>th</sup>. All toys and clothing will be distributed by the Archdiocese Prison Ministry with the assistance of our parish in Palmdale and we welcome your contributions.

### Teen SOYO Raffle

Tickets for our Annual Teen SOYO Holiday Raffle are available each Sunday until the date of the drawing, Sunday, December 15, 2019, during our Church School Christmas Program. Proceeds from the raffle will help Teen SOYO sponsor the Special Olympics at the Antiochian Village and our St. Michael Teen Program.

**Parish Council Dinner Meeting – Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m.**

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

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

**Holy Bread Offering List**

Dec 08 - Salim El-Darzi

Dec 15 - open

Dec 22 - open

Dec 24 and 25 - open

Dec 29 - open

**Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar**

Dec 08 - open

Dec 15 - Church School Christmas Buffet

The Khouri/Lewin Families

Dec 22 - the Meena family

Dec 29 - open

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

**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, Tuesday at 4 p.m.**

**Wednesday, December 4 - Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.**

**The Feast of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker – December 6<sup>th</sup>**

Great Vespers, St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church (Northridge) on

Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

**Hierarchical Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral**

**Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.**

**The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost**

**and the Tenth Sunday of Luke**

Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

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

## Fall Food Collection

We are assisting a local food pantry ("Loaves and Fishes") in their new location in Van Nuys. Please phone Cindy Tamoush at: 818-345-4363 if you are able to participate in our Thanksgiving and/or Christmas food collection. Here are ways that you may choose to participate:

1. If you'd like me to shop for you, write a check out to: "St. Michael Church," earmarked: "Holiday Food Collection" (tax deductible)
2. You may purchase grocery script in any amount. Don't forget to use your Ralph's Reward Card that will help St. Michael benefit from your purchase.
3. Due to the lack of space, Loaves and Fishes is requested any of the following items: personal care items, deodorant soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, sanitary napkins and disposable razors, large disposable diapers, men and women's socks, bottled water, and any store gift cards in \$5 or \$10 denominations. Please do not provide us with clothing or household items.

**All food items must be delivered to our church kitchen by Sunday, December 22.**

Thank you for your support,

Cindy Tamoush  
Charity Coordinator

## For Planning Ahead

This year the Feast of the Holy Nativity (Christmas) falls on a Wednesday. The weekend of the The Sunday Before Christmas will include Vespers on Saturday, December 21st at 5 p.m., Orthros at 8:45 a.m. and Liturgy at 10 a.m. on Sunday, December 22nd. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil for the Pre-Feast will be served following the Ninth Royal Hour, beginning at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Eve). The Festal Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom will be celebrated on Christmas Day (Wednesday), December 25th at 10 a.m., preceded by Orthros and the Christmas canon at 8:30 a.m.

## 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 21<sup>st</sup> – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> – 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**

Tuesday, December 24<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Eve and *Paramon*)

The Ninth Royal Hour, 3 p.m. Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great\* – 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Day)

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

[There is **no** fasting from December 25<sup>th</sup> to January 4<sup>th</sup>]

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

Tuesday, December 31<sup>st</sup> (New Year’s Eve) – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

with prayers for the New Year

Wednesday, January 1<sup>st</sup> (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 3<sup>rd</sup> - The Prayers of The Royal Hours, 6 a.m., 9 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m.

Saturday, January 4<sup>th</sup> - The Eve of Forefeast (*Paramon*) – [observed as a strict fast day]

Great Vespers of the Forefeast (*Paramon*)

Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup> - Orthros, 9 a.m., The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom\* 10 a.m. followed by the service of The Great Blessing of the Waters

Great Vespers of Holy Theophany, 5 p.m.

Monday, January 6<sup>th</sup> — Festal Orthros, 8:30 a.m. immediately followed by  
The Festal Divine Liturgy

\* *Services with Holy Communion*



## **Christmas Party on the Fifth Day of Christmas**

A “Potluck” (no fast) Christmas Party is planned at the home of Alice Prewett and her son Scott on the Fifth Day of Christmas, Sunday, December 26th following the Divine Liturgy. It will be a great time of fellowship. Please RSVP to Father Timothy at your earliest convenience at: [frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org](mailto:frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org)

## **Cathedral “Kicks Off” Debutante Ball Event Fundraising**

St. Nicholas Cathedral is hosting the 57th “Sweetheart Ball,” scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 2020 at the Universal Hilton in Universal City. The event is being co-chaired by Rose Samore and Georgette Malouf. Some of our teens are participants in this biennial event. Program Book Sponsorships are being solicited and is a lovely way to honor our young women. The form is available on the narthex bulletin board. The deadline is February 21, 2020. Checks are payable to: “St. Nicholas Ladies Society.” Tickets for the event and more information is available by contacting: Tania Matar at 818-903-0953 or by e-mail at: [<taniamatta@sbcglobal.net>](mailto:taniamatta@sbcglobal.net).

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

“Sex Education in Public Schools: What Parents Should Know”  
Half-day Seminar by Dr. Keith Buhler, Saturday, December 7;  
1:30 to 4:15 p.m., St. Simeon Mission (Santa Clarita)

Church School Christmas Program Rehearsal - Saturday, December 7  
with lunch and the visit of St. Nicholas, 10 a.m.

Young Adult “Ugly Sweater Party” - Saturday, December 7  
(pot luck dinner at the home of Subdeacon Richard Ajalat)

St. Nicholas (Cathedral) Day Luncheon - Sunday, December 8, 2019,  
1 p.m. in the Heritage Ballroom;  
\$35/adults; \$20/children 16 years and under

“Breaking the Twin Shackles: Overcoming Anger and Despair in Spiritual  
Struggle - December 13-15; St. Andrew Church  
[4700 Canyon Crest Dr., Riverside, 92507]

Advent Retreat (St. Michael Church, Whittier) with Fr. Patrick Reardon  
“Prayer and the Word of God,” Saturday, December 14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
RSVP at: [StMichaelWhittier@gmail.com](mailto:StMichaelWhittier@gmail.com); [www.stmichaelwhittier.org](http://www.stmichaelwhittier.org)

50th Anniversary Church School Christmas Program  
and Lenten buffet at the end of Liturgy, Sunday, December 15

Teen Christmas Caroling Event - Saturday, December 21, 2019

The Feast of the Holy Nativity (Christmas) - Wednesday, December 25  
Christmas Eve Liturgy (Paramon), 3:30 p.m.; Christmas Day, 10 a.m.

St. Mark Men's Club New Year's Party - Tuesday, December 31, 2019  
St. Mark Hall [17840 Sky Park Circle; Irvine; 92614] \$75/person,  
\$45/under 15 occupying a seat (no babysitting); RSVP by 12/15

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

16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, California 91406-4622

Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and all North America

V. Rev. Timothy Baclig, Pastor  
[pastor@stmichaelvannuys.com](mailto:pastor@stmichaelvannuys.com)

Church Telephone: 818/994-2313  
[www.stmichaelvannuys.com](http://www.stmichaelvannuys.com)

*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 2020 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 takes place each year. Nor can we adequately pay for our ongoing property maintenance without the shared responsibility and the help of volunteers of our membership. Our parish is able to provide its clergy and facilities, the prayer services of the church and its Sacraments because of our faithful parishioners who help to financially support the salaries and the operational costs of our church property.

for, in this, our 50th Anniversary year as a parish. We look forward, by God's grace, for continued growth in the future. We are also very grateful for the commitments of those who have provided us with contributions to complete the construction of our new church sanctuary. We encourage others who have not done so to prayerfully consider doing the same. One of our goals is to remain debt free. The New Year will include the second phase of our project that includes completing the interior of our new temple. Additional information will be provided at our Annual Parish Meeting at the end of January.

May you and your family enjoy a blessed Thanksgiving holiday with God's continued blessings as we prepare to celebrate the Feast of our Lord's birth.

In Christ,

Subdeacon Richard Tamoush

Stewardship Chair

## **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 as a regular contributor of the parish. The Pastor's living expenses and allowances are included the Annual Budget of the parish that will be presented at our Annual Meeting on January 26.

### **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: \$21,775 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 2020 Pledge Form is provided in our church narthex.**

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.

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**PASTORAL SERMON**  
**The Fourteenth Sunday of Luke**  
**By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig**  
**December 1, 2019**

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 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, by 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]

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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

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### **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 withdraw

ing 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.

Finally: The IRS allows you to deduct state income tax and property tax on your federal income tax return to lower your tax bill. Before the tax laws changed, there was no limit to how much taxpayers could deduct for state and local taxes. Beginning in tax year 2018, the deduction has been capped at \$10,000 for all state and local income, property, and sales taxes combined.

By contrast, contributions to charitable organizations, including St. Michael Church, have a much higher limit -- they may be deducted up to 50% of a person's adjusted gross income. While we do not expect any parishioner to make a contribution of 50% of their adjusted gross income, the high deduction limit offers an attractive alternative to the \$10,000 cap on deductions for state and local income, property and sales taxes paid by parishioners. Please consider this tax benefit when planning your giving to the Church Building Fund.

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](mailto:ronaldzraick@yahoo.com)>.



Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost  
and the Fourteenth Sunday of Luke

The Holy Prophet Nahum; Venerable Philaret the Almsgiver of Amnia;  
Martyr Ananias the Persian; Theoklitos, archbishop of Lakedaemonia

طروبارية القيامة على اللحن السابع  
حطّمت بصليبك الموت وفتحت للصل الفردوس، وحوّلت نوح حاملات الطيب، وأمرت  
رسلك أن يكرزوا بأنك قد قُمت أيها المسيح الإله مانحاً العالم الرحمة العظمى.

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة باللحن الرابع  
أيها المتقدمون على الأجناد السماويين، نتوسّل إليكم نحن غير المستحقّين، حتّى أنكم  
بطلباتكم تكتنوفوننا بظلّ أجنحة مجدكم غير الهیولي، حافظين إيانا نحن الجائين  
والصارخين بغير فتور، أنقذونا من الشدائد، بما أنكم رؤساء مراتب القوّات العلوية.

قنداق تقدمة الميلاد على اللحن الثالث  
اليوم العذراء تأتي إلى المغارة، لتلد الكلمة الذي قبل الدهور، ولادة لا تُفسّر، ولا  
يُنطقُ بها، فافرحي أيتها المسكونة إذا سمعت، ومجّدي مع الملائكة والرعاة، الظاهر  
بمشيئته طفلاً جديداً، وهو الإله قبل الدهور.

## الرسالة

عَجِيبٌ هُوَ اللَّهُ فِي قَدِيسِيهِ.  
قَدِّمُوا لِلرَّبِّ يَا أَبْنَاءَ اللَّهِ. قَدِّمُوا لِلرَّبِّ مَجْداً وَكَرَامَةً.

فَصُلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولْسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ أَفَسُسَ (22:2-14)  
يا إخوة، إِنَّ الْمَسِيحَ هُوَ سَلامُنَا، هُوَ جَعَلَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ وَاحِداً وَنَقَضَ فِي جَسَدِهِ  
حَائِطَ السِّيَاحِ الْحَاجِزِ، أَيِ الْعَدَاوَةِ\* وَأَبْطَلَ نَامُوسَ الْوَصَايَا فِي فَرَائِضِهِ

لِيَخْلُقَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ فِي نَفْسِهِ إِنْسَاناً وَاحِداً جَدِيداً بِإِجْرَائِهِ السَّلَامِ\* وَيُصَالِحَ كِلَيْهِمَا فِي جَسَدٍ وَاحِدٍ مَعَ اللَّهِ فِي الصَّلِيبِ، يَقْتُلِهِ الْعَدَاوَةُ فِي نَفْسِهِ\* فَجَاءَ وَبَشَرَكُمْ بِالسَّلَامِ، الْبَعِيدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَرِيبِينَ\* لِأَنَّ بِهِ لَنَا كَلِيئاً التَّوَصُّلِ إِلَى الْآبِ فِي رُوحٍ وَاحِدٍ\* فَلَسْتُمْ غُرَبَاءَ بَعْدُ وَنُزَلَاءَ، بَلْ مُوَاطِنِي الْقَدِيسِينَ وَأَهْلَ بَيْتِ اللَّهِ\* وَقَدْ بُنِيتُمْ عَلَى أَسَاسِ الرِّبْلِ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَحَجَرُ الزَّاوِيَةِ هُوَ يَسُوعُ الْمَسِيحُ نَفْسُهُ\* الَّذِي بِهِ يُنْسَقُ الْبُنْيَانُ كُلُّهُ، فَيَنْمُو هَيْكَلًا مُقَدَّساً فِي الرَّبِّ\* وَفِيهِ أَنْتُمْ أَيْضاً تُبْنُونَ مَعاً مَسْكِنًا لِلَّهِ فِي الرُّوحِ.

## الإنجيل

### فصل شريف من بشارة القديس لوقا

في ذلك الزمان، واقْتَرَبَ مِنْ أَرِيحَا ، وَكَانَ رَجُلٌ أَعْمَى جَالِساً عَلَى جَانِبِ الطَّرِيقِ يَسْتَعْطِي. فَلَمَّا سَمِعَ صَوْتَ جَمْعٍ يَمُرُّ بِالْمَكَانِ، اسْتَخْبَرَ عَنْ ذَلِكَ مَا عَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ. فَأَخْبَرُوهُ أَنَّ يَسُوعَ النَّاصِرِيَّ مَارٌّ مِنْ هُنَاكَ. فَأَخَذَ يَصِيحُ فَيَقُولُ: "رُحْمَاكَ يَا يَسُوعَ ابْنَ دَاوُدَ!" فَانْتَهَرَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسِيرُونَ فِي الْمَقَدِّمَةِ لِيَسْكُتَ. فَصَاحَ أَشَدَّ الصَّيَاحِ قَالاً: "رُحْمَاكَ يَا ابْنَ دَاوُدَ!" فَوَقَّفَ يَسُوعَ وَأَمَرَ بِأَنْ يُؤْتِيَ بِهِ. فَلَمَّا دَنَا سَأَلَهُ: "مَاذَا تُرِيدُ أَنْ أَصْنَعَ لَكَ؟" فَقَالَ: "يَا رَبِّ، أَنْ أَبْصِرَ." فَقَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: "أَبْصِرْ، إِيْمَانُكَ خَلَّصَكَ!" فَأَبْصَرَ مِنْ وَقْتِهِ وَتَبِعَهُ وَهُوَ يُمَجِّدُ اللَّهَ، وَرَأَى الشَّعْبُ بِاجْمَعِهِ 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 عضواً فى الكنيسة الارثوذكسية.