

The Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost and the Tenth Sunday of Luke

The Consecration of the Church of the Holy Resurrection in Jerusalem

Sunday, December 8, 2019

Tone 8; Eothinon 3

Apolytikion for the Resurrection (Tone 8)

From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, 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 for the Preparation of Christ's Nativity (Tone 3)

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child Who before the ages is God.

Daily Readings

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

*Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.
God is known in Judah; His Name is great in Israel.*

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (4:1-7)

Brethren, I, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to

your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, Who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

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 8 in the Holy Orthodox Church we prepare to celebrate the Conception of the Theotokos by St. Anna, and we commemorate our righteous Father Patapios of Thebes in Egypt.

Verses

Having patently forsaken the earth's corruptible pathways,
Thou patterest, O Patapios, where the feet of the meek do patter.

On the eighth, O Patapios, thou trodest green pasture.

Patapios abhorred the vanity of this world and withdrew into the wilderness of Egypt. There he devoted himself to a life of asceticism, cleansing his heart of all earthly desires and thoughts for the sake of God's love. However, when his virtues became known among the people,

they came to him for solace in their sufferings. Fearing the praise of men, which darkens the minds of men and separates them from God, Patapios fled this wilderness to Constantinople, thinking he could hide himself more easily in a big city; but a light cannot be hidden. A child, blind from birth, was led by God's providence to Patapios. He besought the saint to pray to God that he be given his sight to look upon God's creation and praise Him all the more. Patapios, having compassion on the suffering child, prayed to God, and the child's sight was restored. This miracle revealed God's chosen one, and people rushed to him for healing, comfort and instruction. Patapios performed many other miracles, all through prayer in the name of Christ and by the sign of the Cross. In great old age, he peacefully entered the Heavenly Kingdom in the seventh century.

On this day, we also commemorate Sophronios, bishop of Cyprus; Apostles Sosthenes, Apollos, Crispos, Caesar and Epaphroditos of the Seventy; and Martyr Parthenios of Chios. 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

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

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

for Deacon Andrew Andrews being ordained to the Holy Priesthood today
at St. Nicholas Cathedral (Los Angeles). AXIOS!

for "Aunt Mae Salem" (+3 December, 2019) of New Kensington, Pennsylvania, the mother of Father John Salem (Pastor of St. Elijah Church; Oklahoma City), and Mother Melania of Holy Assumption

Monastery (Calistoga, California); beloved to the countless Antiochian Village staff she welcomed in her home and dining room table.
Memory eternal. (with love by Charmaine Darmour)

for the speedy recovery and continued health of Samir Boutari.

by Ousama F. Zabaneh for the newly-departed servant of God and mother-in-law, Colette Daccache (+1 December, 2019);
his beloved parents: Fouad & Rita Zabaneh;
and beloved wife, Anna Zabaneh. Memory eternal.

* 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)

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

Commemorating the Hieromartyr Eleutherios, Bishop of Illyria
The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ

Saturday, December 14th, Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 15th, 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: Joe Ayoub. Serving as ushers are: Constantine Nasr, Carolyn Sadd, Bobbi Monsue and Don Meena. For more information on The Order visit their website: www.orderofstignatius.org.

Christmas Toy Collection

We are 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 today, Sunday, December 8th, and all toys should be at the church by the date of our Christmas Program, next Sunday, December 15th. 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, next 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 – Tomorrow, December 9th, 6 p.m.

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

Write a Note to a Military Veteran

Frieda Kabbash will have Christmas cards available during the coffee hour today for your voluntary help in writing a personal message to our retired veterans. We would appreciate your support.

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 next Sunday, December 22.

Thank you for your support,

Cindy Tamoush

Charity Coordinator

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

Holy Bread Offering List

Dec 15 - open

Dec 22 - Ron & Kathy Zraick

Dec 24 and 25 - open

Dec 29 - the Srour family

Jan 04 - (ForeFeast of Theophany) open

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Dec 15 - Church School Christmas Buffet

The Khouri/Lewin Families

Dec 22 - the Meena family

Dec 29 - open

Jan 04 - reserved

Please contact Fr. Timothy (818/219-3761; pastor@stmichaelvanuys.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.

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 21st – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 22nd – 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 24th (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 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)

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

with prayers for the New Year

Wednesday, 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 3rd - The Prayers of The Royal Hours, 6 a.m., 9 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m.

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

Great Vespers of the Forefeast (*Paramon*)

Sunday, January 5th - 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 6th — Festal Orthros, 8:30 a.m. immediately followed by
The Festal Divine Liturgy

* *Services with Holy Communion*

YOU ARE INVITED: ALL Women of St Michael

Join us THIS Tuesday, 12/9/19 - 6 p.m.

Yuletide Potluck Dinner

Let us come together in fellowship as Sisters in Christ

For further information contact:

Charmaine Darmour cdarmour@sbcglobal.net or 714-287-1266

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 24th (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.

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 29th 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

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

An Interfaith Forum on Faith, Our Community and Homelessness

Thursday, December 12; 6:45 to 8:30 p.m.,

Congregational Church of Chatsworth [20440 Lassen Street, Chatsworth]

“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; 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

A Day Retreat for Orthodox Moms - Saturday, January 11
at St. Luke Church (Garden Grove); Minimum donation: \$25
Speakers: Father Nicholas and Khourye Jan Speier

Annual Meeting of the Voting Membership - Sunday, January 26

Archdiocese Winter Sacred Music Institute - February 20-23; hosted by
St. Michael Church (Van Nuys, California)

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>.

Pastor's Sermon

The Tenth Sunday of Luke

by V. Rev. Timothy Baclig

December 8, 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 Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

and The Tenth Sunday of Luke

Forefeast of the Conception of the Theotokos; Venerable Patapios of Thebes;
Sophronios, bishop of Cyprus; Apostles Sosthenes, Apollos, Crispos,
Caesar & Epaphroditos of the Seventy

طروبارية القيامة على اللحن الثامن

انحدرت من العلوّ يا متحنن، وقبلت الدفنَ ذا الثلاثةِ الأيامِ، لكي تُعِنِّقنا من الآلامِ، فيا
حياتنا وقيامتنا يا ربَّ المجدِّ لك.

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة باللحن الرابع

أيها المتقدمون على الأجناد السماويين، نتوسلُّ إليكم نحن غيرَ المستحقين، حتَّى أنكم
بطلباتكم تكتنوفوننا بظلِّ أجنحةِ مجدكم غيرِ الهيولي، حافظين إيانا نحنُ الجائين
والصارخين بغيرِ فتور، أنقدونا من الشدائد، بما أنكم رؤساءً مراتبِ القواتِ العلوية.

قنداق تقدمة الميلاد على اللحن الثالث

اليومَ العذراءُ تأتي إلى المغارةِ، لتلدَ الكلمةَ الذي قبلَ الدهورِ، ولادةً لا تُفسَّر، ولا
يُنطقُ بها، فافرحي أيتها المسكونةُ إذا سمعتِ، ومجدي مع الملائكةِ والرعاةِ الظاهرِ
بمشيئتهِ طفلاً جديداً، وهو الإلهُ قبلَ الدهورِ.

الرسالة

إِلَهْنَا الرَّبُّ وَأَوْفُوا صَلَّوْا

يَهُودَا أَرْضِ فِي مَعْرُوفُ اللَّهِ

(4:1-7) أَفَسُسِ أَهْلِ إِلِي الرِّسُولِ بُولْسِ الْقَدِيسِ رِسَالَةَ مِنْ فَصْلِ

الَّتِي لِلدَّعْوَةِ يَحِقُّ كَمَا تَسْلُكُوا أَنْ الرَّبِّ فِي الْأَسِيرِ أَنَا إِلَيْكُمْ أَطْلُبُ، إِخْوَةَ يَا
*بِالْحُبَّةِ بَعْضًا بَعْضُكُمْ مُحْتَمِلِينَ، أَنَاةً وَبِطُولٍ وَوَدَاعَةً تَوَاضِعَ بِكُلِّ *بِهَا دُعَيْتُمْ

وَرُوحٌ وَاحِدٌ جَسَدٌ فَايْنَكُمْ * السَّلَامُ بِرِبَاطِ الرُّوحِ وَحِدَةٍ حِفْظٍ فِي وَمُجْتَهِدِينَ
وَمَعْمُودِيَّةٍ، وَاحِدٌ وَإِيمَانٌ، وَاحِدٌ رَبٌّ * الْوَاحِدُ دَعَاؤُكُمْ رَجَاءٌ إِلَى دُعَايَتِكُمْ كَمَا، وَاحِدٌ
وَلِكُلِّ * جَمِيعِكُمْ وَفِي وَبِالْجَمِيعِ الْجَمِيعِ فَوْقَ هُوَ، وَاحِدٌ لِلْجَمِيعِ أَبٌ وَإِلَهُ * وَاحِدَةٌ
الْمَسِيحِ مَوْهَبَةٌ مِقْدَارٍ عَلَى النِّعْمَةِ أُعْطِيَتْ مِنَّا وَاحِدٌ

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: "أنت معافاة من مرضك. ووضعت يديه عليها، فانتصبت في الحال ومجّدت 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 يحلّ كلّ واحدٍ منكم رباط ثوره أو حماره في السبت من المذود ويأخذه ليسقيه؟ وهذه ابنة إبراهيم ربّطها الشيطان من ثماني عشرة سنة، أما كان ينبغي أن تُحلّ من رباطها يوم السبت؟" ولما قال هذا، خزي جميع معارضيه، وفرح الجمع بكلّ الأعمال المجيدة التي كان يعملها

ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

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

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.

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 60% of a person's adjusted gross income. While we do not expect any parishioner to make a contribution of 60% 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>.

**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@stmichaelvanuys.com

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

(II Corinthians 9:8)

Dear Members of St. Michael,

We are soon approaching the end of the calendar year and our Parish Council is preparing to provide us with our 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.

We are again asking everyone to prayerfully consider making a reasonable annual financial pledge to our parish for the New Year. We have much to be thankful for, in 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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