

**St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church of the San Fernando Valley**  
**a Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America**  
**16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys, California; 91406** [stmichaelvannuys.org](http://stmichaelvannuys.org)

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# **The Sixth Sunday of Pascha**

## **Commemoration of the Blind Man**

### **Equal-to-the-Apostles, Constantine and Helen**

Constantine, Prince of Murom, and his sons Michael and Theodore, the Wonderworkers

**Sunday, May 21, 2023**

**Tone 5; Eothinon 8**

### **Apolytikion for the Resurrection (Tone 5)**

Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

### **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 Pascha (Tone 8)**

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades, and didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

## **Daily Readings**

THE EPISTLE (for Saints Constantine and Helen)

*Their voice has gone out into all the earth.  
The heavens declare the glory of God.*

### **The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (26:1, 12-20)**

In those days, King Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: “I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round me and those who journeyed with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you

persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.’ And I said, ‘Who art Thou, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and bear witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance.”

THE GOSPEL (for the Sixth Sunday of Pascha)

**The Reading of the Holy Gospel is according to St. John  
(9:1-38)**

At that time, when Jesus was passing, He saw a man blind from his birth. And His Disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him Who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” As He said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man’s eyes with the clay, saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” [which means Sent]. So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, “Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?” Some said, “It is he”; others said, “No, but he is like him.” He said, “I am the man.” They said to him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” He answered, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash’; so I went and washed and received my sight.” They said to him, “Where is He?” He said, “I do not know.” They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I

washed, and I see.” Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for He does not keep the Sabbath.” But others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, “What do you say about Him, since He has opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.” The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” His parents answered, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if any one should confess Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age, ask him.” So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become His disciples?” And they reviled him, saying, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He comes from.” The man answered, “Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him He said, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” He answered, “And Who is He, Sir, that I may believe in Him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen Him, and it is He who speaks to you.” He said, “Lord, I believe”; and he worshiped Him.

## **The Synaxarion**

On May 21 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate Constantine, Prince of Murom, and his sons Michael and Theodore, the

Wonderworkers; and the holy, glorious, God-crowned and great Sovereigns Constantine and Helen, the Equals to the Apostles.

**Verses**

As the Sovereigns had the earthly crown in common,  
So have they now in common the crown celestial.  
On the twenty-first died Constantine with his mother.

Before a great battle, a brilliant Cross appeared to Constantine in the sky during the day, completely adorned with stars and written on the Cross were these words: "By this Sign Conquer." Astonished, the emperor ordered a large cross to be forged similar to the one that appeared to him; and that it be carried before the army. By the power of the Cross he achieved a glorious victory over the larger enemy. Immediately after that, Constantine issued the famous Edict of Milan in 313 to halt the persecution of Christians. When a discord began in the Church because of the heretic Arius, the emperor convened the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea in 325, where the heresy was condemned and Orthodoxy confirmed. Helen, the pious mother of the emperor, visited Jerusalem, discovered the Honorable Cross of the Lord, built the Church of the Resurrection on Golgotha and other churches throughout the Holy Land. This holy woman presented herself to the Lord in her eightieth year in 327. Emperor Constantine died ten years later at age 65.

On this day, the sixth Sunday of Pascha, we celebrate the miracle wrought by our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ upon the man who was blind from his birth.

**Verses**

O Light of Light most perfect, and Light-provider,  
On the blind from birth, O Word, eyes Thou bestowest.

The Savior met this man, born blind and incurable after every human effort, while leaving the Temple on the Sabbath. Saints John Chrysostom, Basil the Great and Irenaeus teach that the man was born without eyeballs. Jesus spat into the dirt, made clay, rubbed it in his eye sockets and told him to wash in the pool of Siloam, a famous water spring in Jerusalem. The Savior did not send him there because his eye sockets were filled with clay, nor did the pool have healing power, but instead to test his faith and obedience. Jesus fashioned the eyes of the blind man from the dirt as God fashioned man from the dirt. The blind

man proclaimed that Jesus healed him, but this confession caused him to be cast out by the enemies of the truth. Even his own parents would not defend him. However, the blind man followed Jesus from that moment forward.

By Thine infinite mercy, O Christ our God, Giver of light, have mercy on us. Amen.

## LITURGICAL CALENDAR

*NOTE: There is **no** fasting for the forty-day period:  
from Easter to the Feast of the Ascension (May 25<sup>th</sup>)*

### **Great Feast of the Ascension**

Great Vespers, Wednesday, May 24 at 5 p.m.

Thursday, May 25: Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

### **Sunday of the After-Feast of the Ascension**

### **Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council**

Great Vespers – Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 5 p.m.

Orthros – Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

### **Memorial Day Services at Three Area Cemeteries**

Monday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. at St. Nicholas Memorial Gardens  
(Valhalla Cemetery; No. Hollywood)

'Ain Arab — Forest Lawn Memorial Park (Glendale) 11:30 a.m.

Douma Section — Forest Lawn Memorial Park (No. Hollywood) 1 p.m.

### **The Great Feast of Pentecost**

Great Vespers, Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5 p.m.

Orthros – Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

[Note: The week of June 5-9 is a fast free week]

**The Apostles' Fast** - Monday, June 12 to Wednesday, June 28

**The Feast of Ss. Peter & Paul** - Thursday, June 29

### **For Planning Ahead**

**The Great Feast of Pentecost** (fifty days after the Feast of the Resurrection) is celebrated this year on Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. There is no fasting during the week

following Pentecost. **The Sunday of All Saints** is celebrated on the Sunday following Pentecost (June 11th). On Monday, June 12, we observe **The Fast of the Holy Apostles**. The period of this fast varies from year to year, depending on the date of Easter. The traditional fasting discipline includes: no meat, poultry, eggs, cheese, milk or other dairy products, fish, wine and olive oil on Monday, with *catalysis* (allowance) for wine and olive oil on Tuesday (some also permit fish on Tuesday). The Fast prepares us for the celebration of the **Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul**, Patrons of the Patriarchate of Antioch, celebrated on Thursday, June 29th. Having rejoiced for the fifty days following Pascha (Easter), the Apostles began to prepare for their departure from Jerusalem to spread Christ's message. According to Holy Tradition, as part of their preparation, they began to fast with prayer to ask God to strengthen their resolve and to be with them in their missionary undertakings.

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## OFFERINGS

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

for the healing and speedy recovery of Kathy Zraick

for the continued health of Sharon Katerelos

for the continued health of Pamela Kushida

for the continued health of Father Mark Townsend

for the newly-departed servant of God, Lorraine Zain (+13 May, 2023), beloved mother of Archpriest, Thomas Zain, Vicar General of the Antiochian Archdiocese. Memory eternal.

for the one-year memorial of the servant of God, Robert H. Laham (+25 May, 2022) of St. George Church (Boston); former Treasurer of the Antiochian Archdiocese and long-standing member of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees. Memory eternal.

for the one-year memorial of servant of God, Angeliki Keiser (+21 May, 2022), beloved Khouriye of the late Archpriest Michael Keiser. Memory eternal.

*Then the following dialogue is said between the priest and the faithful:*

Priest: Christ is risen!

**People: Truly, He is risen!** [repeated in various languages]

Al Maseeah qam! **Haq qan qam!** (*Arabic*)

Christos Anesti! **Alithos Anesti!** (*Greek*)

Kristos voskrese! **Voistinu voskrese!** (*Slavonic*)

Kristo esta resusitado! **Verdaderamente resusitado!** (*Spanish*)

Khristi ungal! **Vertet ungal!** (*Albanian*)

Le Christ est ressuscite! **En verite il est ressuscite** (*French*)

Kristos Inviat! **Adervaret inviat!** (*Romanian*)

Ua ala hou ‘o Kristo! **Ua ala ‘I ‘o no ‘oia!** (*Hawaiian*)

Christus is opgestaan! **Hij is waarlijk opgestaan!** (*Dutch*)

Kristus ist Auferstanden! **Sicherlich ist Auferstanden!** (*German*)

Khristus Zmartvikstau! **Zaiste Zmartvikstau!** (*Polish*)

Christos harjav i merelotz! **Orhniale harutjun Christosi!** (*Armenian*)

Kristos Tensiah! **Be-a-man Ten-si-a!** (*Tigrigna*)

Massih Miyayat! **Hatman Miyayat** (*Farsi*)

Kristo azukidde! **Kituufu azukidde** (*Luganda*)

Ha Mashiyach qam! **Ken hoo qam!** (*Hebrew*)

Yeshu Christo Wierthayairnaytoo! **Sathamyetoom Yeshu Christo wierthayairnaytoo!**  
(*Malayalam*)

Mesiah jee utha hei! **Such mei jee mutha hei!** (*Hindu*)

Kristo samawa, yomi gaimashta! **Hontoni yomi gaimashta!** (*Japanese*)

Priest: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by Death, and upon those in the tombs... **People: Bestowing life!**



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

16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, California 91406-4622

His Eminence, Metropolitan SABA, Archbishop of New York and all North America

V. Rev. Timothy Baclig, Pastor  
ftimothy@stmichaelvanuys.org

Church Telephone: 818/994-2313  
www.stmichaelvanuys.org

May 13, 2023

Beloved in Christ,

Christ is risen! **المسيح قام! Χριστος ανέστη! Χριστος Воскресе! Cristo ha resucitado!**  
Hristos a înviat!

If you plan to attend this year's Parish Life Conference, now is the time to complete your plans for your participation. This year's Conference is hosted by St. Luke Church (Anaheim, California); June 28 to July 2, 2023 at the Irvine Marriott. Our newly enthroned Archbishop, Metropolitan SABA will be present to preside at this year's Conference.

For your convenience, here are the Conference links:

Hotel Reservations: <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1668116546354&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

On-line Registration: [https://antiochianevents.com/la\\_event](https://antiochianevents.com/la_event)

Conference Schedule: [https://antiochianevents.com/la\\_schedule](https://antiochianevents.com/la_schedule)

May you and your family members enjoy a safe and healthy summer.

Father Timothy Baclig  
Pastor

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Weekly Bible Study - Tuesday Evenings at 7 p.m.**

Join us this Tuesday evening, May 23rd, at 7 p.m. for our weekly Bible Study. We will continue our study of the Book of Exodus. A link to the Zoom meeting will be sent out on Tuesday. Sessions are recorded for those unable to attend who may also request the link to the study.

## **“Saturday of Souls” - June 3, 2023**

Each Saturday is the day of the week dedicated to the departed souls. There are also specific Saturdays of which a special Memorial Liturgy is prescribed for the departed. One of these Saturdays is the day before the Great Feast of Pentecost (“Trinity Saturday”), this year, on June 3.

Other Saturdays when a memorial Liturgy is specifically prescribed includes the Saturday of Meat Fare (before Lent), the second, third and fourth Saturdays of Great Lent, and the Saturday prior to the Feast of St. Demetrios (October 26). For a complete explanation and historical outline of the commemoration of the departed souls and the commemoration of the departed souls on Saturday, see an article by Hieromonk Job (Gumerov); go to: <https://orthochristian.com/52107.html>

The following is an excerpt of the article: “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he ceased from all His works which God began to do (Gen. 2:3). Saturday (Sabbath) for the Jews was a day of festive rest. Christ’s resurrection placed the beginning of the new Israel: a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9). The resurrection day of the Savior of the World became the seventh, festive day that completes the week. Sunday [in Russian, *voskresenie*, meaning “resurrection”) is a day of prayer in church at Divine Liturgy and pious rest. From a day of earthly rest, Saturday became a symbol of joyous rest in the Kingdom of Heaven: There remains therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his (Hebrews 4:9–10). This is where the custom, fixed by the Church Typicon, came from of having special services on Saturday for the commemoration of the dead. The establishment of the universal ancestral Meat Fare Saturday dates back to the first century of Christianity. In the Synaxarion for this day (*The Lenten Triodion*) it says that the holy fathers established, *having received it from the holy Apostles*, that on this day should be commemorated *all people from the ages who have reposed in faith and piety*. This day was chosen because Meat Fare week reminds us of the future Last Judgment. On the eve of this day, Saturday, as if preceding the Last Judgment, the Church prays especially for all of its

reposed children, begging the Lord to have mercy on them and make them partakers of blessed eternal life.

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## Upcoming Events

[Note: You may now access our Google Parish Calendar to your personal calendar. Here is the link: <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/1?cid=YWRtaW5Ac3RtaWN0YWVsdmFubnV5cy5vcmc>]

**St. Michael 30th Annual Golf Classic** — Monday, May 22, 2023  
Wood Ranch Golf Club; Simi Valley

**Memorial Day Services** - Monday, May 29  
St. Nicholas Memorial Park (Valhalla); 9:30 a.m.  
*'Ain Arab* - Forest Lawn; Glendale; 11 a.m.  
*Douma Section* - Forest Lawn; Hollywood Hills; 12:30 p.m.  
Eternal Valley Memorial Park - Santa Clarita; 12:30 p.m.

**Honoring our High School Graduates** — Sunday, June 11

**Diocesan Parish Life Conference** hosted by St. Luke Church  
(Garden Grove) June 28 to July 2, 2023; Irvine Marriott; [www.lapl.org](http://www.lapl.org)

**St. Michael Vacation Bible School (VBS)**  
Monday-Friday, July 10-14, 2023; Ages Kindergarten to 5th Grade

**56th Biennial Antiochian Archdiocese Convention** hosted by  
St. George Church (Phoenix, Arizona); July 23-30, 2023  
Go to: [www.ac2023az.org](http://www.ac2023az.org)

## Raies-Murr Educational Trust Scholarship

Only members, in good standing of St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church (Van Nuys) or St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Cathedral (Los Angeles) and who have been accepted to or are currently enrolled in a **publicly supported** (not private) institution of higher learning, including eligible **publicly supported** vocational, technical and trade schools, are eligible to apply for a Raies-Murr Scholarship. Applications can be obtained by e-mailing Mallory Murr at: <RaiesMurrScholarship@gmail.com>. The applications must be returned by July 24, 2023.

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

**Holy Bread Offering List**

**Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar**

May 25 (Holy Ascension) - open

May 28 - Teen SOYO

Jun 04 - (Pentecost) open

Please contact Fr. Timothy (818/219-3761; [frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org](mailto:frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org)) to sign-up to offer Holy Bread or host the coffee hour.

**30th St. Michael Golf Classic — Monday, May 22, 2023**

The St. Michael 30th Anniversary Golf Tournament and Banquet will take place on Monday, May 22, 2023. One of the enjoyable events is the Golf Ball Raffle. The Raffle Grand Prize is a surprise TRIP! We have begun soliciting parishioners for donations of \$50 cash/check, \$50 gift cards, or a gift item with a \$50 value or more — used to purchase additional raffle prizes. Your gifts or donations may be brought or mailed to the church. Please contact DeAnne Abraham (661) 259-7897 or Samia Habib (818) 919-3870 should you have questions. The deadline for all donations is: Sunday May 14, 2023. Looking forward to another glorious day in the sun!

Also, Bobbi Monsue is collecting photographs of our Golf Classic from the past 30 years. If you have a photo or photos to add to our display, please contact her at: [bobbi\\_monsue@att.net](mailto:bobbi_monsue@att.net) or visit her in the bookstore.

**Camp Counselors Needed**

Camp St. Nicholas needs qualified male counselors. The commitment is for four (4) weeks, beginning with training in July and continuing to the end of the third session and recap. Applicants must be 18 years of age and may apply directly at: <https://events.circuitree.com/av/HR/Application> For answers to questions or more information contact Father Andrew Andrews, Camp Director, at: 925-323-6787.

**Sponsorships of Sanctuary Items**

Sponsorships or dedications of items and iconography of our new church sanctuary are available. Please contact Father Timothy for more information and questions at: [frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org](mailto:frtimothy@stmichaelvannuys.org)

## Thank you!

Our Antiochian Women extend thanks to all who contributed to our “Undies Sundays” campaign for those in need & served by our local community pantry Loaves & Fishes. Stay tuned for “Sock-tober” coming this Fall. Underwear & socks are 2 of the items in greatest need by those served by homeless shelters and neighborhood pantries.



## Our 2023 Pledge Form Provided with this Bulletin

As a committed member of St. Michael Church, please complete a new 2023 form. An annual “Fair Share Contribution” is paid by St. Michael Church to the Archdiocese (\$50/adult; \$35/17 years of age or under). Everyone’s financial situation is subject to changes from year to year. In the same way, our parish depends upon the financial pledge commitments of its members in order to meet its monthly expenses. Hard copies will be mailed to you by request.

**St. Michael Antiochian Orthodox Church**  
**16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406 Phone: 818-994-2313**  
**Website: www.stmichaelvannuys.org**

**2023 CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT FORM**

**1. All enrolled members must first fulfill a fair share contribution that is paid 100% by St. Michael Church to the Archdiocese annually (this does not include your family pledge obligation BELOW).**

Total number of baptized Orthodox persons (age 18 & above) in your household \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 each \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of baptized Orthodox persons (age 17 & under) in your household \_\_\_\_\_ \$35 each \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print all names with information in the section below)

**2. In gratitude of God’s blessings, I / we pledge to contribute St. Michael Church expenses.**

A total annual amount of: \_\_\_\_ (see Treasure self-assessment chart)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ weekly    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ monthly    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ quarterly    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ semi-annually    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ annually

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How do you wish to pay? We accept personal checks or credit card payments. (See below)**

- a. You may write a check to “St. Michael Church” and mail it to the Church Office. (see address above)
- b. You may process an “automatic bill pay” with your bank that will mail a recurring monthly hard-copy earmarked check to St. Michael Church.
- c. You may pay by credit card using our website donation page (a 3% processing fee will apply) at: <https://www.stmichaelvannuys.org/donate/> and we will be immediately notified.
- d. You may arrange for a recurring monthly automatic withdrawal from your bank account using our church bank routing number and bank account.

**Note: Each donation to St. Michael Church should be earmarked, i.e., “Building Fund,” “Pledge,” etc.**

**Print names of baptized Orthodox persons in your household.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Age**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**SAVE THE  
DATE!**

**10-14  
JULY**



**SUPER SAINTS**  
LITTLE LIGHT OF CHRIST

**VACATION  
BIBLE  
SCHOOL**



**9am-12pm**  
PRE-K  
THROUGH 5TH

**ST. MICHAEL ANTIOCHIAN  
ORTHODOX CHURCH**

16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, CA 91406

**MORE INFO TO COME!**



**Pastor's Sermon**  
**Sunday of the Blind man**  
by V. Rev. Timothy Baclig  
May 21, 2023

Today is the Sunday prior to the Feast of the Ascension that will be celebrated in our church with the Divine Liturgy this Thursday, June 24th at 10 a.m. The eve of the Feast of the Ascension is the conclusion of the festal season of Easter and is the “Leave-taking of Pascha.” A Great Vespers will be held at 5 p.m. that will conclude the Paschal liturgical cycle, when the image of the crucified Christ will return to the Holy Cross. Each Sunday, since Holy Pascha, we have been reading lessons from the Gospel of St. John, beginning with chapter one on the night of Easter.

Today's Gospel lesson is remarkable: The Healing of the Man Born Blind was among the lessons read on the Saturday night of Easter, at the time when Christian catechumens were baptized. It was chosen for the purpose of focusing upon the themes of the Feast of the Resurrection, namely: washing, illumination, healing, faith, conversion and salvation. The uniqueness of this miracle, chosen among the baptismal lessons is that it highlights Christ's work in unity with the Father as a “new creation.” The unusual miracle that dumbfounded many was unique because it is about a man whose choice was not to be blind. He was born blind and the Lord worked a miracle.

All of us, like the blind man in today's lesson, have contemplated at one point in our life: who we are. We have perhaps tried to understand something about what God intends for us to do – why we were born of a particular lineage, have certain predetermined traits, characteristics, dispositions, abilities or disabilities. In all honesty, we don't have all of the answers in this life. You and I are not God, and may have to consider it a matter of “luck.” That is to say, live with “the cards that we have been dealt.”

In a hymn from last the Saturday Vespers service we heard these words: *The blind man thought to himself and said: I wonder if I was born blind due to the sin of my parents? Have I become an example of the faithlessness of the Gentiles? I cannot stop asking: When is the night, when is the day? ...I have never seen the*



*sun shining, nor have I seen my Creator in any form whatsoever. I beseech Thee, O Christ God, to look upon me and have mercy upon me.*

You may recall that in the Gospel last week, the paralytic had been paralyzed for 38 years, sat at the edge of the pool – the pool that... and when the Lord saw him he said, “Do you want to be healed?” At the end of the lesson we are told that on another occasion the Lord found the man at the Temple and admonished him to stop sinning in order that nothing worse would happen to him. In contrast to the lesson we hear today, the paralytic’s illness we understood to be tied and related to sins he committed. This was not the case for the blind man.

Today’s Gospel lesson is found within the full context of a section of St. John’s Gospel where our Lord is teaching in the Jerusalem Temple courts during the Feast of Tabernacles – following the Feast of the Passover. On the final and most important day of the Feast, the Lord boldly declared that **He is the only source of living or life-creating water** (7:37-38); that He is **“the light of the world** (8:12); that He was **sent by the Father** (8:16); **that the Jews who failed to recognize him were not the true descendants of Abraham** (8:39). And then if that was not enough to anger His audience, at the end of chapter eight in St. John’s Gospel, we hear Him state that **“Before Abraham was, I AM”** (8:58). This statement infuriated his listeners that they began stoning him because He used the name of God for Himself; the name of God that was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai. Upon leaving the Temple, Jesus immediately performs the miracle that demonstrates the truth of all that He claimed to be: He causes a man who was born blind to see, and imparts something even greater: *spiritual sight*.

St. John tells us that “as Jesus passed by, He saw a man that was blind from birth” (v. 1). Note that the man was not brought to Jesus. Nor did the man approach Jesus asking for mercy. It is clear that in this case Jesus took the initiative. The dialogue that follows between the Disciples and Jesus (vs. 2-3), clears up a misconception that was a common superstition of that time: the belief that the man’s blindness was a judgment upon him for the sins of his parents or the result of his own sins.

In first century Palestine, the opinion of certain Epicurean philosophers was very prevalent. The Epicureans believed that the soul had a pre-existence, and that

any sins committed in this pre-existent state then descended in an immaterial manner into the body. Jesus, rejected such a belief and clearly stated, **“Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him” (John 9:3).**

The belief of the Epicureans reminds me of some today who enjoy captivating people’s attention, going around talking about their own interpretation or superstition of what they believe God’s will is; especially when people are in search for answers that are never easy, if even possible to find.

If you or I feel the need or have the desire to pray for someone, we should do just that and never presume to know what God’s will is. There are times when things of prayer are best never to be discussed with others. If God motivates you to pray for someone, do that. Don’t talk about it. Remember your conversation is with God. You and I should never presume to know more than we do. One who prays should not go witch hunting. Nor should you or I take upon ourselves burdens which is not ours to carry. You and I are and will be accountable to God for what are our own responsibilities.

In today’s lesson the followers of Christ were admonished to make use of the day in working out their salvation, for the *night of their death* will come when they will no longer be able to work. In verses 4 and 5 of today’s lesson we hear Jesus say: *I must work the works of Him who sent me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* The Son of God is the light of the world. His work on coming into the world is to enlighten every man (John 1:9). He must do this “while it is day”, that is, as long as He is in the world (9:5). The “night comes, when no man can work” is that time when Christ will be delivered up by sinful men who prefer darkness, and He will go away. [Remember that later in the Gospel, at the time of Jesus’ betrayal, it was night, and at His crucifixion, “darkness fell over the whole earth” (Luke 23:44).]

Just prior to performing the miracle, the Gospel records that Jesus spat on the ground and made clay of spittle, then anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay (recall the creation of Man in the Book of Genesis) and sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam. This instruction made by Jesus was not without purpose.

First, remember that Jesus had been at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. Part of that feast involved bringing a large urn of water from Siloam on the first seven days – but not the eighth day, for the rites of purification. These rites were a figure of the true purification, which is in Christ. St. John Chrysostom comments that Jesus intended to prove that He was not estranged from the Law and Old Covenant. Further, the significance of using water from Siloam was to commemorate the Hebrews wandering in the desert when water miraculously came out of the rock of Horeb, when by God’s command, it was struck by Moses (Exodus 17:1-6).

The remainder of St. John’s Gospel speaks of the blind man’s spiritual healing. This part of the miracle can be best summarized by the church’s Wednesday morning ode of the canon: *When Thou didst open the eyes of him who could not see the perceptible light, Thou didst enlighten the eyes of his soul as well. Thou didst move him to glorify thee, for he had come to know Thee as the Creator, who out of compassion did appear as a mortal man.* The blind man goes from his knowledge of experiencing the physical miracle to a complete conviction about Jesus as the divine Son of God.

What follows is poetically described further in last Monday’s morning hymn: *Blindness [came upon] those who supposedly had eyes that saw, for darkness seized their minds and souls and enshrouded their thoughts when they beheld the man who was blind regain [his] sight.* The Apostle Paul quotes the Law and the Prophets in writing the Romans to describe God’s own doing. He first quotes Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 29:10 – *God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.* And then quoting David’s prophesy: *May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever (Psalm 69:22, 23).* This, the Apostle goes on to say was accomplished by God in order that those who were not Jews would be saved (Romans 11:11), and also that those who considered themselves “chosen” might be made envious.

The dialogue heard between the blind man and the Pharisees that follows, not only confirm the healing. What happens is that the blind man affirms his faith and conviction in declaring that the One who gave him sight does the will of God

and did something never done before: “He opened the eyes of one born blind” (vs. 30-32). He has “to be of God” (v. 33).

In conclusion, we have heard about a man whose choice was not to be blind. He was born blind and the Lord healed him dumbfounding many, some who willfully chose to be blind; those who could not accept the truth, having great difficulty with what they witnessed and heard. Their minds rejected what is difficult for them to acknowledge. Third, and perhaps, the most shocking of all, we heard about God who prevented some from seeing and understanding. For it was God’s purpose that those who were perceived as the ones condemned and outside of the promise would not be excluded but those who were “chosen” and ultimately saved.

### Prayer

O Christ our God, who by Thy pure touch did lighten the eyes of the man born blind, illumine our souls eyes making us sons of the day amidst a world of darkness. Illumine our hearts, O Master who loves mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind to understand and to practice your message of forgiveness that has been at the heart of this Paschal season. Implant in us also the fear of Thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all fleshly desires, we man enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well pleasing unto Thee. For Thou art the Illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thine unoriginate Father and Thine all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. A-men.

**EOTHINON 8**

الايوثينا 8

**tone 5**

اللحن 5

**SIXTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA  
COMMEMORATION OF THE BLIND MAN  
EQUALS-TO-THE-APOSTLES CONSTANTINE AND HELEN  
CONSTANTINE, PRINCE OF MUROM, AND HIS SONS MICHAEL  
AND THEODORE, THE WONDERWORKERS**

طروبارية القيامة على اللحن الخامس

لنسخ نحن المؤمنين ونسجد للكلمة، المساوي للآب والروح في الأزلية وعدم الابتداء،  
المولود من العذراء لخلصنا، لأنه سرٌّ أن يصعد بالجسد على الصليب ويحمل الموت،  
وينهض الموتى بقيامته المجيدة.

### أبوليتيكيون للقديسين قسطنطين وهيلانة باللحن الثامن

يا ربُّ إنَّ قسطنطينَ الذي هُوَ رسولُكَ في الملوكِ، لما شاهدَ رَسْمَ صليبيكَ في السَّماءِ  
عياناً. ويمثابة بولس قبل الدعوة ليس من البشر، أودع بيدك المدينة المتملكة، فأنقذها  
بالسلامة كل حين، بشفاعاتِ والدةِ الإله، يا محبَّ البشرِ وحدك.

### طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة باللحن الرابع

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

### قنداق القيامة على اللحن الثامن

ولئن نزلت إلى القبر يا من لا يموت، إلا أنك درست قوة الجحيم، وقمت غالباً، أيها المسيح  
الإله. وللنسوة الحاملات الطيب قلت افرحن واهباً لرسلك السلام يا مانح الواقعين القيام.

## الرسالة

إلى كل الأرض خرج صوته.  
السماوات تذيع مجد الله.

### فصل من أعمال الرسل القديسين الأطهار.

في تلك الأيام قال الملك أغريبيا ليولس: «مأذون لك أن تتكلم عن نفسك». فحينئذ  
بسط بولس يده وطفق يحدِّث. «لما انطلقت وأنا على ذلك إلى دمشق، بسطان  
وتوكيل من رؤساء الكهنة، رأيت في نصف النهار على الطريق أيها الملك، نوراً من  
السَّماء يفوق لمعان الشمس، قد أبرق حولي وحول السائرين معي. فسقطنا  
جميعاً على الأرض، وسمعت صوتاً يكلمني ويقول باللغة العبرانية: شاول، شاول!  
لماذا تضطهدني؟ إنه لصعب عليك أن تزفس المناخس. فقلت: من أنت يارب؟ فقال:  
أنا يسوع الذي أنت تضطهده. ولكن قم وقف على قدميك، فإني لهذا ظهرت لك،

لأنتخبك خادماً وشاهداً بما رأيت وبما سَأْتَرَأَى لَكَ فِيهِ، وَأَنَا أَنْجَبُكَ مِنَ الشَّعْبِ  
وَمِنَ الْأُمَّمِ الَّذِينَ أَنَا الْآنَ مُرْسِلُكَ إِلَيْهِمْ، لِتَفْتَحَ عُيُونَهُمْ فَيَرْجِعُوا مِنَ الظُّلْمَةِ إِلَى  
النُّورِ، وَمِنَ سُلْطَانِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِلَى اللَّهِ، حَتَّى يَنَالُوا مَغْفِرَةَ الْخَطَايَا وَحِطًّا بَيْنَ  
الْمُقَدَّسِينَ بِالْإِيمَانِ الَّذِي بِي. «فَمَنْ نَمَّ إِلَيْهَا الْمَلِكُ أَعْرَبِيًّا مَا عَصَيْتُ الرُّؤْيَا السَّمَاوِيَّةَ،  
بَلْ بَشَّرْتُ الَّذِينَ فِي دِمَشْقَ أَوَّلًا، وَأُورُشَلِيمَ وَأَرْضَ الْيَهُودِيَّةِ كُلِّهَا، ثُمَّ الْأُمَّمَ أَيْضًا،  
بِأَنْ يَتُوبُوا وَيَرْجِعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ عَامِلِينَ أَعْمَالًا تَلِيْقُ بِالتَّوْبَةِ.

## الإنجيل

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارَةِ القديسِ يوحنا

في ذلك الزمان، بينما يسوع سائر، رأى أعمى منذ مولده. فسأله تلاميذه: "يا معلم، من  
أخطأ؟ أهذا الرجل أم والداه، حتى ولد أعمى؟" فأجاب يسوع: "لا هذا أخطأ ولا والداه،  
لكنه ولد أعمى حتى تظهر فيه أعمال الله. علينا ما دام النهار، أن نعمل أعمال الذي  
أرسلني. الليل أت، ولا يقدر أحد أن يعمل فيه. ما دمت في العالم فأنا نور العالم. قال هذا  
وتقل في التراب، وجبل من تفالته طينا، وطلّى به عيني الأعمى وقال له: "إذهب واغتسل  
في بركة سلوام (أي الرسول)، فذهب واغتسل فعاد بصيرا. فتساءل الجيران والذين  
عرفوه متسولا من قبل: "أما هو الذي كان يقعد ليستعطي؟" وقال غيرهم: "هذا هو."  
وقال آخرون: "لا، بل يشبهه!" وكان الرجل نفسه يقول: "أنا هو!" فقالوا له: "كيف  
انفتحت عيناك؟" فأجاب: "هذا الرجل الذي اسمه يسوع جبل طينا، وطلّى عيني وقال لي:  
إذهب واغتسل في بركة سلوام. فذهبت واغتسلت، فأبصرت." فقالوا له: "أين هو؟" قال:  
"لا أدري." فأخذوا الرجل الذي كان أعمى إلى الفريسيين، وكان اليوم الذي جبل فيه  
يسوع الطين وفتح عيني الأعمى يوم سبت. فسأله الفريسيون أيضا كيف أبصرت،  
فأجابهم: "طلّى عيني بالطين، فلما اغتسلت أبصرت." فقال بعض الفريسيين: "هذا  
الرجل ليس من الله، لانه لا يراعي السبت." قال آخرون: "كيف يستطيع خاطئ أن يعمل  
مثل هذه الأعمال؟" فوقع الخلاف بينهم. وقالوا أيضا للأعمى: "أنت تقول إنه فتح  
عينيك، فماذا تقول فيه؟" فأجاب: "إنه نبي!" فلم يصدق اليهود أن الرجل كان أعمى  
فأبصر، فاستدعوا والديه وسألوهما: "أهذا هو ابنكما الذي ولد أعمى كما تقولان؟ وكيف  
يبصر الآن؟" فأجاب والداه: "نحن نعلم يقينا أن هذا ابننا، وأنه ولد أعمى. أما كيف يبصر  
الآن، فلا نعلم، ولا نعرف من فتح عينيه، أسألوه وهو يجيبكم عن نفسه، لانه بلغ سن  
الرشد." قال والداه هذا لخوفهما من اليهود، لان هؤلاء اتفقوا على أن يطردوا من المجمع

كل من يعترف بأن يسوع هو المسيح. " لذلك قال والداه: "اسألوه لانه بلغ سن الرشد." وعاد الفريسيون فدعوا الرجل الذي كان أعمى وقالوا له: "مجد الله! نحن نعرف أن هذا الرجل خاطئ." فأجاب: "أنا لا أعرف إن كان خاطئاً، ولكني أعرف أنني كنت أعمى وأنا الآن أبصر." فقالوا له: "ماذا صنع لك؟ وكيف فتح عينيك؟" أجابهم: "قلت لكم ولم تسمعوا لي، فلماذا تريدون أن تسمعوه ثانية؟ أتريدون أنتم أيضاً أن تصيروا تلاميذه؟" فاشتموه، وقالوا له: "أنت تلميذه، أما نحن فتلاميذ موسى. نحن نعرف أن الله كلم موسى، أما هذا فلا نعرف من أين هو؟" فأجابهم الرجل: "عجبا كيف يفتح عيني ولا تعرفون من أين هو؟ نحن نعلم أن الله لا يستجيب للخاطئين. بل لمن يخافه ويعمل بمشيئته. ولم يسمع أحد يوماً أن إنساناً فتح عيني من ولد أعمى. ولو لم يكن هذا الرجل من الله، لما قدر أن يعمل شيئاً." فقالوا له: "أتعلمنا وأنت قد ولدت كلك في الخطيئة؟" ثم طردوه. فسمع يسوع أنهم طردوه، فلقبه وقال له: "أتؤمن أنت بابن الله؟" أجاب: "ومن هو، يا سيدي، حتى أو من به!" فقال له يسوع: "أنت رأيته وهو الذي يكلمك!" قال: "أو من يا رب!" وسجد له.

### ملاحظة بخصوص تناول القربان المقدس

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