

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

His Eminence, Metropolitan SABA, of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of North America www.antiochian.org
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The Thirty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost and the Fourteenth Sunday of Luke

The Holy Prophet Zephaniah; Martyrs Agapios, Seleukos and Mamas;
Venerable Theodoulos, Eparch of Constantinople; Venerable Theodoulos of Cyprus

Sunday, December 03, 2023

Tone 1; Eothinon 4

Apolytikion of the Resurrection (Tone 1)

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

Apolytikion of 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)

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 Thirty-sixth Sunday after Pentecost)

*Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us.
Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.*

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (5:8-19)

Brethren, walk as children of light—for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true—and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead

expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

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 3 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the Holy Prophet Zephaniah.

Verses

He that aforesaid cried to Zion: Rejoice greatly,
Rejoiceth in God's presence, even Zephaniah.

On the third, illustrious Zephaniah gave up the spirit.

A native of Mount Sarabatha, from the tribe of Simeon, Zephaniah lived and prophesied in the seventh century before Christ, at the time of Josiah the pious king of Judah. Zephaniah was a contemporary of the

Prophet Jeremiah. Having great humility and a pure mind raised to God, he was found worthy of discerning the future. He prophesied the day of the wrath of God and the punishment of Gaza, Ashkalon, Ashdod, Ekron, Nineveh, Jerusalem and Egypt. He saw Jerusalem as a “filthy and polluted... oppressing city. Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have polluted the sanctuary; they have done violence to the Law (Zeph. 3:1-4). Foreseeing the advent of the Messiah, he enthusiastically exclaimed: Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem (Zeph. 3:14). This seer of mysteries entered into rest at his birthplace to await the General Resurrection and his reward from God.

On this day, we also commemorate the Martyrs Agapios, Seleukos and Mamas; Venerable Theodoulos, Eparch of Constantinople; and Venerable Theodoulos of Cyprus. By the intercessions of Thy saints, O Christ our 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 those who are members of the Orthodox Church and who have prepared themselves with 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 is being offered this morning in loving memory of Gloria Nassif (+4 December, 2014), by her children and their families. Memory eternal.

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

for the repose of Jack Samara (+18 November, 2023),
the cousin of Ousama Zabaneh. Memory eternal.

For the repose of the newly-departed Ed Corey (+18 November, 2023),
beloved husband of Joy Corey. Memory eternal.

for the repose of the newly-departed Elena Bahou (+29 November), the
beloved daughter (age 25) of Father Antony, Khouriye Dina Bahou and
Subdeacon Elias Bahou of St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church
(San Diego, California). Memory eternal.

for the repose of the newly-departed Leigh Kassiane Trenham (+29 November, 2023), the beloved mother of the V. Rev. Josiah Trenham, Pastor of St. Andrew Antiochian Orthodox Church (Riverside, California).
Memory eternal.

for the well being and good health of Alice Prewett who is hospitalized.

Amira Boutari extends her appreciation for the many expressions of love and the Spiritual Bouquet memorial gifts to St. Michael Church received at the Funeral of her beloved husband, Dr. Samir Boutari (+2 November, 2023). Memory eternal.

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), Thomas Anthony Zraick (12/03), Alexander Worotko (12/4), Noah Michael Ajalat (12/5), Michael Mas (12/5), Marcia O'Dea (12/7), George John Khouri III (12/8), Stephanie Slatko (12/8), Jill Zraick Phipps (12/9), Amira Boutari (12/11), Ibrahim Wassef (12/11), Colin Michael Phipps (12/12), Natalia Artashesyan (12/13), 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), Peter Wang (12/21), Afath Khleif (12/22), Linda Khouri (12/22), Mark Nassief (12/22), Evelyn Hannah (12/23), Christine Nasr (12/23), James Thomas (12/23), Logan Gary David Obenhaus (12/24), Milad Sayegh (25), Teddy Hage (12/26), Ned Toomey (12/26), Hannah Heyam Madain (12/27), 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	Yvonne Tibshraeny, +11 Dec. 2012
Francis Boyer, Dec., 1960	Angel Kheir, +12 Dec., 2012
Nicole Saadeh, +31 Dec.	Issa Gazie Ababseh, +6 Dec. 2013
Antone Saadeh, +21 Dec.	Alsace George, +22 Dec., 2013
Charles Malouf +20 Dec., 1973	Gloria Nassif, +04 Dec. 2014
Albert Elias Gillet, +6 Dec., 1978	Edward Chaffin Sr., +19 Dec. 2014
Mary Anne Mansur, +19 Dec., 1979	Fred Safady, +24 Dec. 2014

Woldemichael Kidane +12 Dec. 1982	Blanche Barghash, +29 Dec. 2014
Saliba Kassis, +30 Dec., 1987	Laila El-Darzi, +8 Dec., 2015
Michael G. Hayek, +2 Dec., 1990	Mike Glissen, +15 Dec., 2015
Katherine Zaki, +1 Dec., 1993	Mona Latif, +17 Dec., 2015
George S. Nasser, +24 Dec., 1993	Philip G. Deeb, Sr., +1 Dec. 2016
Faraj Azzam, +20 Dec., 1994	Tommy Schmidt, +15 Dec., 2016
Marie Abdou, +10 Dec., 1995	Claudine Lakah +25 Dec., 2016
Anton Abdelahad, +25 Dec., 1995	Mary Vogel +30 Dec., 2016
Grace Haggar, +30 Dec., 1995	William Christopher +31 Dec. 2016
Nicholas Satel, +28 Dec., 1997	Lillian B. Meena, +6 Dec. 2017
Alice Meena, +10 Dec., 1999	James T. Peck, +10 Dec. 2017
Wydea Haddad, +26 Dec., 1999	Claire Azzam, +12 Dec. 2017
John Black, +1 Dec., 1999	Gladys Najjar, +12 Dec. 2017
Haradu Woldetatiuous, +2 Dec., 2002	Eugene Ferns, +6 Dec. 2019
Charles Homsy, +2 Dec. 2002	Odette George, +16 Dec. 2020
V. Rev. John Reinhold, +9 Dec. 2003	Emile Bitar, +19 Dec. 2019
Annette Mittry, +26 Dec. 2003	Adele Bahbah, +5 Dec. 2020
Minnie Abdun-Nur, +23 Dec. 2004	Eugene Ferns, +6 Dec. 2020
Mike Sarchizian, +6 Dec. 2006	Adele Turk, +7 Dec. 2020
Ileen M. Shaheen, +21 Dec. 2006	Vadni Beyrouiti, +9 Dec. 2020
Shehadeh Moujaes, +22 Dec., 2006	Elyas Alber, +13 Dec. 2020
Hani Sweis, +26 Dec., 2006	Odette George, +16 Dec. 2020
Margaret Nassief, +1 Dec., 2007	Lila Awad, +27 Dec. 2020
Tamam Mitchell, +16 Dec., 2007	Nicholas Nassir, +28 Dec., 2020
Bahat Bicker, +8 Dec. 2008	Elena Radulescu, +21 Dec., 2021
Bradley Abraham, +8 Dec. 2010	Georgette Al-Adaas, +25 Dec. 2021
Yusra Rabadi, +19 Dec. 2010	David Castro, +29 Dec., 2021
Mary Wassef, +7 Dec., 2011	Millie Castro, +30 Dec., 2021
Rodney Khalil, +10 Dec. 2011	Archpriest Nicholas Neyman +13
Nicholas Soffa, +9 Dec. 2012	Emily Apostolou +7 Dec., 2021
	Conner Owens +11 Dec., 2021

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.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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.]

Feast of St. Barbara the Great Martyr and St. John of Damascus at The Monastery of St. Barbara in Santa Paula

Sunday, December 3rd, Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Monday, December 4th, Orthros, 8:30 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

The Feast of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church (Northridge)

Tuesday, December 5th Great Vespers, 7 p.m.

The Twenty-seventh Sunday after Pentecost and The Tenth Sunday of Luke

Saturday, December 9th, Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 10th, Orthros, 8:30 a.m., Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m.

GLOSSARY: Apolytikion (ah-poh-lee-tee-key-on); *plural*, Apolytikia: A brief poem in accentual metre, expressing the theme of a feast. Kontakion (kon-tah-kee-on); *plural*, Kontakia: A special kind of Troparion that expresses the teaching of a Feast. It summarizes and applies the meaning of a feast of day. Orthros (*Or*-thros): The word literally means *early morning*. It is the name of the service, which by some has been called *Matins*, and still by others, *Lauds*, though it does not correspond exactly to either of the Western Services. Eothinon (ee-oh-thee-non): meaning – *pertaining to the dawn*. They are the eleven assigned readings of the Gospel during the Orthros Service, pertaining to the eleven appearances of our Lord to His Disciples after the Resurrection. Synaxis (see-nax-sees) “the gathering or coming together” as it pertains to a celebration of a commemoration or feast. Following a major Feast a “Synaxis” commemorates the “co-stars” of the Feast, i.e., following the Feast of the Presentation of Christ (Ss. Simeon and Anna), following the Feast of the Birth of Christ (the Holy Virgin Mary), following the Feast of Holy Theophany (St. John the Baptist), etc. Synaxarion (see-nax-sah-ree-on) the summary of a Feast, describing a historical significance and meaning of a commemoration.

St. Michael Christmas Program

The Prince of Peace

Dec 10th, 2023 | 11:30AM Following Liturgy
Lenten Meal to Follow



FOR PARENTS OF PARTICIPANTS

Final Rehearsal on Sat, Dec 9th, 2023

Contact Cooper Rowe for your child to participate
superintendent@stmichaelvannuys.org

ST. MICHAEL CHURCH

TOY DRIVE

Give the gift of giving. This year we are collecting toys for the children at Elizabeth House. Please donate new unwrapped toys for ages 0 - 12 yrs.



Accepting Donation Through
DECEMBER 17TH

CHURCH HALL
16643 Vanowen Street
Van Nuys, California 91406
UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE

If you have any questions please email Brittney Ajalat at
blajalat@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Offering Options

Your church offering may be made on-line via our website “Donation” tab or by mailing your check to the church at: 16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys, California; 91406. Mailing your check to the church will save our church a 3% service charge. Other options for your contributions include: a) automatic bill pay; b) recurring automatic withdrawal, both of which may be arranged with your bank. You may contact us for assistance with any of these options; especially when information of our bank routing and account numbers are needed.

Building Funds Capital Funds Campaign

As we nearing the end of 2023, we should begin thinking of our tax benefits when filing our Tax Return for this year. One of the few benefits the IRS has left us is Charitable Contributions. We ask that you prayerfully consider donating to the St. Michael Church Building Fund. There is still much to complete in our new Temple and additional Sponsorships available. There are many ways to donate which include a direct donation, donating stocks or securities or matching donations to name just a few. Please contact Ron Zraick, the committee chairman at ronaldzraick@gmail.com with any questions you may have.

Sanctuary Chairs Available for Sponsorships

Sponsorships of the solid oak upholstered seats are available: \$300/chair, or \$3,000 for a “gang-tied” row of ten that form a pew. Each seat includes a book pocket (front and back) beneath the seat, and a vinyl kneeler. Twelve custom high chairs are also available for choir sponsorship seating (\$350).



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

16643 Vanowen Street, Van Nuys, California 91406-4622
Metropolitan SABA, Archbishop of New York and all North America

Dear Parishioners & Friends of St. Michael,

St. Michael continues to support Loaves & Fishes, a local pantry serving the impoverished areas in Van Nuys and throughout the San Fernando Valley areas. **The drop-off date is: Sunday, December 17th.** A cart marked Food Collection will be placed in the kitchen for your donations.

Should you be able to participate in our Thanksgiving and/or Christmas food collection the following are suggested:

1. Personal care items: socks, deodorant soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, disposable razors.
2. Baby items: infant formula, diapers (size 4-5), pull-ups (size 5 or larger)
3. Bottle water, canned food items (preferably with pull-up tabs), i.e., tuna, chicken, baked beans, fruit, vegetables, chili soups, pasta/ravioli, peanut butter, Ensure, Carnation Instant Breakfast, coffee/tea.
4. Monetary donation: Write a check made out to "St. Michael Church," earmarked "Holiday Food Collection" and place it in the narthex offering box (a tax incentive).
5. If you are doing your own shopping at Ralph's or Food-4-Less stores, don't forget to use your Ralphs Reward Card to help St. Michael Church to benefit from your purchases. We are also receiving grocery store gift cards.

You may contact me, Cindy Tamoush, at: 818-917-4847 or cindy.tamoush@gmail.com, should you have any questions. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours in Christ,

Cindy Tamoush

Charity Coordinator

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

2024 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 _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

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 28th.

Our 2024 Pledge Form is included with this bulletin and is also available on our parish website at: <https://www.stmichaelvannuys.org/donate/> Hard copies are also available at the entrance of the church.

The form may be completed and returned to the Church Office at: 16643 Vanowen Street; Van Nuys; California; 91406.

Upcoming Events

[Note: You may now access our Google Parish Calendar to your personal calendar.

Simply go to: <https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/1?cid=YWRtaW5Ac3RtaWN0YWVsdmFubnV5cy5vcmcj>

Church School Christmas Program and Lenten Lunch

Sunday, December 10; Christmas cookies and free-will offering received

Parish Council Dinner Meeting — Monday, December 11, 2023
at the home of Michael & Mary Ann Mitchell

Christmas Caroling Teen Event — Saturday, December 16, 2023
2 to 7 p.m., confirm with: Cooper Rowe Youth Director
superintendent@stmichaelvannuys.org

A Conversation with Michael Baclig, President of the Antiochian Men of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast; Saturday, December 23rd, 3 p.m. (before Vespers)

Sixth Installation of Iconography (The altar *Platytera*)
December 27 to January 4



Save the Date!

Join us for the Consecration of our new church, presided by His Eminence, Metropolitan SABA; Saturday-Sunday, October 5-6, 2024.

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

Holy Bread Offering List

Dec 12 - open
Dec 17 - Ron & Kathy Zraick
Dec 24 - open
Dec 25 - open

Coffee Hour Hosts Calendar

Church School Lenten Lunch

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

SCHEDULE OF FESTAL SERVICES

[The Sacrament of Confession with Absolution is available by appointment or up until 15 minutes prior to the services.]

The Sunday before The Holy Nativity

“The Sunday of the Genealogy”

Saturday, December 16th – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 17th – Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m.

The Royal Hours of the Holy Nativity

[observed as a day of strict fasting (dry eating)]

Friday, December 22nd – The First Hour, 6 a.m., The Third Hour, 9 a.m.,
The Sixth Hour, 12 noon, The Ninth Hour, 3 p.m. (in-person and Live-streamed)

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD, AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

Saturday, December 23rd - Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 24th (Christmas Eve and *Paramon*)

Orthros, 8:30 a.m. followed by The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, 10 a.m.

Great Vespers of the Holy Nativity – 5 p.m.

Monday, December 25th (Christmas Day)

Orthros and the Christmas Canon, 8:30 a.m. followed by

The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great,* 10 a.m.

[There is **no** fasting from December 25th to January 4th]

The Sunday after The Feast of The Holy Nativity

Saturday, December 30th – Great Vespers, 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 31st – Orthros, 8:45 a.m., Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m.

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

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

with prayers for the New Year

Monday, January 1st (New Year's Day) – Orthros, 8:45 a.m.;

Divine Liturgy,* 10 a.m., with prayers for the New Year

The Royal Hours of the Holy Theophany

[observed as a day of strict fasting (dry eating)]

Friday, January 5th – The First Hour, 6 a.m., The Third Hour, 9 a.m.,
The Sixth Hour, 12 noon, The Ninth Hour, 3 p.m. (in-person and Live-streamed)

THE GREAT FEAST OF HOLY THEOPHANY (EPIPHANY)

Friday, January 5th — following The Ninth Royal Hour (3 p.m.),

The Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great,* 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 6th – Festal Orthros, 8:30 a.m. with
“The Great Sanctification of Water,” immediately followed by followed by
The Festal Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* 10 a.m.

** Services with Holy Communion*

PASTORAL SERMON
The Fourteenth Sunday of Luke
By V. Rev. Timothy Baclig
December 3, 2023

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

All too often, while we may know what we want for ourselves, we may not always know what is best for us. The Holy Apostle Paul spoke of this in his letter to the Corinthians when he said: *Everything is permissible for me but not everything is beneficial.* (I Corinthians 6:12). We make personal choices each and every day of our lives. We also teach our children the importance of making good choices, to have good judgment, and to be responsible for their decisions. However, as much as we try, some things are not easily learned except by experience and at times, 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 and without accepting any personal responsibility.

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]

EOTHINON 4

الايوثينا 4

STONE 1

اللحن 1

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

**THE HOLY PROPHET ZEPHANIAH; MARTYRS AGAPIOS, SELEUKOS AND MAMAS;
VENERABLE THEODOULOS, EPARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE;
VENERABLE THEODOULOS OF CYPRUS**

أبوليتيكيون القيامة باللحن الأول

إِنَّ الْحَجَرَ لَمَّا خُتِمَ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ، وَجَسَدَكَ الطَّاهِرَ حُفِظَ مِنَ الْجُنْدِ، قُمْتَ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّالِثِ أَيُّهَا
الْمُخَلَّصُ، مَانِحاً الْعَالَمَ الْحَيَاةَ. لِذَلِكَ قُوَّاتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ، هَتُّفُوا إِلَيْكَ يَا وَاهِبَ الْحَيَاةِ: الْمَجْدُ
لِقِيَامَتِكَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ، الْمَجْدُ لِلْمَلِكِ، الْمَجْدُ لِتَدْبِيرِكَ، يَا مُحِبَّ الْبَشَرِ وَحَدَّكَ

طروبارية رؤساء الملائكة باللحن الرابع

أَيُّهَا الْمَتَقَدِّمُونَ عَلَى الْأَجْنَادِ السَّمَاوِيِّينَ، نَتَوَسَّلُ إِلَيْكُمْ نَحْنُ غَيْرِ الْمَسْتَحَقِّينَ، حَتَّى أَنْكُمْ
بَطْلِبَاتِكُمْ تَكْتَنُوفُونَا بِظُلِّ أَجْنَحَةِ مَجْدِكُمْ غَيْرِ الْهَيُولِيِّ، حَافِظِينَ إِيَّانَا نَحْنُ الْجَائِئِينَ
وَالصَّارِحِينَ بِغَيْرِ فِتْنَةٍ، أَنْقَذُونَا مِنَ الشَّدَائِدِ، بِمَا أَنْكُمْ رُؤَسَاءُ مَرَاتِبِ الْقُوَّاتِ الْعُلُويَّةِ.

قِنْدَاقُ تَقْدِيمَةِ الْمِيلَادِ بِاللْحَنِ الثَّالِثِ

اليوم العذراء تأتي إلى المغارة لتلد الكلمة الذي قبل الدهور، ولادة لا تُفسر ولا يُنطق بها، فأفرجني أيها المسكونة إذا سمعت، ومجدي مع الملائكة والرعاة، الذي سيظهر بمشيئته طفلاً جديداً وهو إلها الذي قبل الدهور.

الرسالة

(للأحد السادس والعشرين بعد العنصرة)

لتكن يا رب رحمتك علينا، ابتهجوا أيها الصديقون بالرب.

فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى أهل أفسس.

يا إخوة، أسلكوا كأولاد للنور (فإن ثمر الروح هو في كل صلاح وبرٍ وحق) مختبرين ما هو مرضي لدي الرب. ولا تشتركوا في أعمال الظلمة غير المثمرة بل بالأحرى وبخوا عليها. فإن الأفعال التي يفعلونها سرّاً يقبح ذكرها أيضاً. لكن كل ما يوبخ عليه يعلن بالنور. فإن كل ما يعلن هو نور. ولذلك يقول استيقظ أيها النائم وقم من بين الأموات فيضياء لك المسيح. فانظروا إذن أن تسلكوا بحذر لا كجهلاء بل كحكماء. مفتدين الوقت فإن الأيام شريرة. فلذلك لا تكونوا أغبياء بل افهموا ما مشيئة الرب. ولا تسكروا بالخمير التي فيها الدعارة بل امتلئوا بالروح. مكلمين بعضكم بعضاً بمزامير وتسابيح وأغاني روحية مرنمين ومرتلين في قلوبكم للرب.

الإنجيل

(للأحد الرابع عشر من لوقا)

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس لوقا الإنجيلي البشير والتلميذ الطاهر.

في ذلك الزمان، فيما يسوع بالقرب من أريحا، كان أعمي جالساً على الطريق يستعطي. فلما سمع الجمع مجتازاً، سأل ما عسى أن يكون هذا، فأخبروه أن يسوع الناصري مجتازاً. فصرخ قائلاً: "يا يسوع ابن داود، ارحمني!" فأنتهره المتقدمون ليسكت، أما هو فصرخ أكثر كثيراً: "يا ابن داود، ارحمني!" فوقف يسوع وأمر أن يُقدم إليه. ولما اقترب سأله قائلاً: "ماذا تريد أن أفعل بك؟" فقال: "يا سيد، أن أبصر." فقال له يسوع: "أبصر؛ إيمانك قد شفاك." وفي الحال أبصر، وتبعه وهو يمجّد الله. وجميع الشعب إذ رأوا سبّحوا الله.

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 فى الخبز المقدس الذى يوزع عند إنتهاء مراسيم القداس.) رجاء مراجعة الكاهن. إذا رغبت أن تصبح عضواً فى الكنيسة الارثوذكسية