



Sunday Bulletin August 21, 2016 *Greek Orthodox Church of the* *Annunciation*

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Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis, Presiding Priest-Proistamenos

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### **Epistle Reading**

**The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 3:9-17**

BRETHREN, we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder. I laid a foundation, and another man is building upon it. Let each man take care how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw - each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

### **Gospel Reading      Matthew 14:22-34**

At that time, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they entered the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

*Message from Fr. Michael....*

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

In today's Gospel reading, we hear how our Lord came to His disciples walking on the water in the midst of a storm. The Apostle Peter through faith joined our Lord on the water. Then Saint Peter became distracted and fearful by the storm and cried out "Lord, save me!" (Matthew 14:30) Our Lord reached out and caught him and said "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31) In this Gospel we see the power of faith. We learned that if we have faith we can perform miraculous things. All are possible with faith! Our Lord reminded us of this when he stated, "If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." (Matthew 17:20) and again "Truly I say unto you, If you have faith, and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say unto this mountain, be removed, and be cast into the sea; it shall be done." (Matthew 21:21) When we have faith we embark on a spiritual path that leads to God. That path may appear dangerous as we heard when Saint Peter got out of the boat and walked on water in the midst of a storm. If we have any doubt as we walk this spiritual path then the troubles and cares of this world overwhelm us. We become preoccupied with the storms that are around us because we lose our focus on God. This is what happened to Saint Peter when he began to sink. He lost his focus on the Messiah, our Lord, and placed his focus on the storm around him. When he did this he lost the grace that was given to him when he stepped out of the boat in faith. For it was grace that allowed him to walk upon the water. This should remind us as our Lord said "without me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) When we lose our focus on the Lord and get caught up in the storm of temptations around us we are given a choice to make. That choice is, do we place our trust in the Lord to help us or do we allow the temptations to overcome us. This is the same choice that Saint Peter was confronted with as he was sinking in the water. When we are in this situation we can do two things the first is call out as Peter did "Lord, save me!" (Matthew 14:30) or "curse God, and die." (Job 2:9) as Job's wife told him in the midst of his afflictions.

If we choose to follow Saint Peter's example and cry out "Lord, save me!" (Matthew 14:30) then we will find that the Savior is ready to reach out His hand and pull us out of the storm of temptations just like he did for Saint Peter in the Gospel. This example shows us that the Lord is always there for us. If we know that the Lord is there for us then why do we doubt? It is because we are fainthearted and spiritually weak. Spiritual weakness causes us not to place our trust in the Lord.

There are many examples for us in the scripture that show us that we should rejoice in the Lord and trust in Him when we are in our greatest affliction. When we are in great affliction we should remember how Abraham was free of doubt when he took his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice and how God saved him. (Genesis 22:1-18) Remember how Jonah glorified God in the belly of the whale and was saved. (Jonah 2:7) Remember how the Three Holy Children sang the glories of God in the fiery furnace and were saved (Daniel 3:19-26) Remember how Daniel was saved in the lion's den (Daniel 6:16-23) Remember how the Blessed Job praised God in his affliction. (Job 2:7-10) With the remembrance these examples we should not be given over to despair but should be strengthened in our faith that the Lord will save us so that we can say as the Blessed King David said "In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid...." (Psalm 56:11-13).

Come all ye faithful and let us place our trust in the Lord, and He will save us!  
Prayerfully walking on the water with you to reach our Savior, I remain

Yours in His service,

+Fr. Michael

## Afterfeast of the Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary



### 9th Sunday of Matthew

#### The Holy Apostle Thaddaeus



The Apostle Thaddaeus was from Edessa, a Jew by race. When he came to Jerusalem, he became a disciple of Christ, and after His Ascension he returned to Edessa. There he catechized and baptized Abgar (see Aug. 16). Having preached in Mesopotamia, he ended his life in martyrdom. Though some call him one of the Twelve, whom Matthew calls "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus" (Matt. 10:3), Eusebius says that he is one of the Seventy: "After [Christ's] Resurrection from the dead, and His ascent into Heaven, Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles, inspired by God, sent Thaddaeus, one of the seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa as a preacher and evangelist of Christ's teaching" (Eccl. Hist. 1: 13).

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Michalena (Skiadas) Sukenik, Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon, Presbytera Magdalena Michalopoulos, Henry Nussbaum, and Sam Kashou. Please notify Fr. Michael if you have anyone else who should be included for special prayers. May they be under the grace and tender watch of our Lord.

**MEMORIAL SERVICE:** At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy today, we will have a 3 year Memorial Service for **Esther (Efstathia) Paul Conomikes**, who was a long term member of our church and choir director. She was the mother of **Alexandra (Susie) Rozboril, the late Frank Yacalis, Steve Yacalis, and John Yacalis**. May her memory truly be eternal! Our prayers and best wishes go out to her family.

10 year Memorial Service for **Kostantinos Antonopoulos**, husband of **Fanny (Fotini) Antonopoulos**. May his memory be eternal. Our prayers and best wishes go out to Fanny and her family.

Also at the conclusion of Divine Services today we will have a Trisagion service for **Frank Yacalis**, brother of Alexandra (Susie) Rozboril, Steve Yacalis, John Yacalis, and half-brother of Vasili Yacalis. May his memory be eternal!

***If you wish to request a Memorial Service, Trisagion Service, or a sacramental service such as a Baptism, Confirmation, or Marriage PLEASE always go through the Priest first. Please contact Fr. Michael (home phone 795-1474) and not the Parish Council or Parish Council officers as they do not schedule these. Thank you for your cooperation in doing so.***

*Please note: There will be no coffee hour for the remainder of August 2016 due to the lack of volunteers and assistance. Please consider volunteering for our coffee hour in September so that we may continue this.*

*The next Parish Council meeting will be on Thursday, September 15 at 6:45 pm.*

PASTICHIO OPEN 2016 GOLF TOURNAMENT. Captain and crew, shotgun start at 1:30 pm. \$80 per golfer - \$320 per team. Register as a team or as an individual, golf will include buffet Greek dinner, prizes will be awarded for longest drive, closest to the pin, and skins game. Sunday, September 18, 2016 at Traditions at the Glen, 4101 Watson Blvd., Johnson City, New York. Deadline to register is September 10, 2016. Contact at Jim 343-1601 or John at 343-0090 to reserve your spot.

Junior Choir Retreat, September 6th from 5:30 - 7:30 pm. Snacks will be served. All children ages 5 - 14, are invited, boys are welcome to attend. Learn about Choir hymns, St. Romanos, the Melodist.

Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "ANTIDORON" (blessed bread) which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast" that followed worship in the early Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. We hope that you will return often to worship with us, to grow in Christ and in our Orthodox Faith. For any spiritual, religious, or sacramental matters, please contact Fr. Michael (607) 795-1474. For any building, facility or church property issues, please contact Parish Council President Steve Anastos, (607) 296-9799. Deadline for suggestions for the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.