



Sunday Bulletin January 31, 2016
Greek Orthodox Church of the
Annunciation

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Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis, Presiding Priest-Proistamenos



Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. Grave Mode. Psalm 28.11,1.

The Lord will give strength to his people.

Verse: Bring to the Lord, O sons of God, bring to the Lord honor and glory.

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 4:9-15

TIMOTHY, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress.

Gospel Reading Luke 19:1-10

At that time, Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaios; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaios, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaios stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

Message from Fr. Michael....

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

In today's Holy Gospel reading, we heard the story of Zacchaeus who was a tax collector who had, in the past, defrauded people during the collection of taxes. He sat out to see our Lord as our Lord's notariety had spread throughout the land. Zacchaeus was a man of short stature and could not see the Lord as a great crowd had gathered around Him. In his zeal to see Jesus, Zacchaeus climbed a Sycamore tree. Jesus saw him gazing down from the tree and commanded him to come down. After Zacchaeus came down from the tree, our Lord went to his house. After they arrived at Zacchaeus' home, Zacchaeus stated that he would restore all of the money that had been wrongly collected and that he would restore it four fold. As a result of his contrition of heart, the Lord stated that salvation had come to Zacchaeus' house.

The message today is the same one our Lord gave us recently in the Gospel reading of two weeks ago, which we heard when our Lord began his public ministry, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17) From this reading, we learned that repentance must be worked out in order to receive the reward of salvation.

As Zacchaeus sought out the Lord, he had to be honest about the manner in which he was living his life. Without such honesty, we would not be able to assess that there is a problem with our own manner of living. Once we exhibit such honesty, we are faced with the dilemma: do we want to find a solution, or do we stay with the status quo?

Zacchaeus chose to take action to change the manner in which he lived. He was remorseful and could see that he had been living a dishonest life. He realized that left to his own, he would continue along the path leading to darkness. Brothers and sisters, we are also to follow this path to salvation by being remorseful of our sins and prayerful. This will lead us on a bright path toward eternal life. Zacchaeus sought to ask for God's help. Zacchaeus' action was to climb the tree so that could see his salvation our Lord. As it says in the Gospel of St. Matthew, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7:7). We are also to seek God's help if we are to be saved! We are to climb the tree as did Zacchaeus and look for the Lord. Climbing the tree is sometimes a struggle for us as many wordly temptations block our ability to ascend the tree...the tree of life. Our Lord is the tree of life! Jesus told Zaccaeus to come down from the tree and to come to Him. Thus our Lord opened the door of repentance for him. Upon arrival to his home, Zacchaeus confessed his wrongdoings. These wrongdoings were his sins. We are to follow this example and confess our sins to the Lord. Sins are a burden that weigh down the soul. They are like cement blocks tied to our feet and can weigh us when we are tossed into the lake. How are we to survive? We must rid ourselves of such heavy burdens so that we may live with the Lord in our lives. Having humility allows us to rid ourselves of such heavy burdens of sin. Repentance is the ultimate form of humility. In Psalms 55:22, we read, "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain you: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

Beloved brothers and sisters, we are to confess our sins and take action to remedy and make things right in our spiritual life. We can be remorseful of our actions, but it is meaningless unless we make an attempt to restore things back to the manner in which they were before our sin. Only through repentance, prayer, and fasting can we undo the wrongs of our lives. These are the tools for removing the burden of sin in our lives.

Ascending the tree to see the Lord, I remain
Yours in His service, prayerfully,

+Fr. Michael

Dear Reverend Fathers and GOYA Advisors:

Greetings in Christ!

I just want to remind you all about the upcoming annual GOYA (Pre) Lenten Retreat.

DATE: Saturday, February 27, 2016

TIME: 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

LOCATION: Annunciation Church and The Strong National Museum of Play - Rochester, NY

- 1) The retreat is open to all GOYAns in the Upstate NY area!
- 2) Thanks to the Annunciation Church and the Friends of the Metropolis, the retreat (food, museum entry) is FREE for all who attend!
- 3) We will begin at The Strong - National Museum of Play in Rochester... There, we will have sessions about the role of fun and fasting in our everyday lives as Orthodox Christians. We will also have lunch and time to check out the museum. Then, we will head back to the church (5 min drive) for Vespers and a wrap up.
- 4) Please be advised. Parishes must provide one adult for every 5 youth from your parish group. Priests should NOT be counted as chaperones if they are attending. This is the policy from the museum. If your parish cannot provide the appropriate ratio of staff:youth, contact Eva (youth@detroit.goarch.org).

After the retreat, all are welcome to stay for the Annunciation Apokreatiko Dinner/Dance (optional):

TIME: 6:30 pm

LOCATION: Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

COST: \$10 for under 21, \$25 for Adults

There will be a link to RSVP for the dance.

A “swanky poster” from the extra swanky designer, Niko Tzetzis, is coming soon!

More information will be coming soon!

Thank you!

In Christ,
Eva

Eva Kokinos-Konstantakos
Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries

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, Helen Economides, and Henry Nussbaum. 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.

ANNUNCIATION CHURCH MEGA WEEKEND:

Hockey Sunday School fellowship night: Friday, February 19, 2016. Details below, see Jackie Buchta.

MIDWINTER VALENTINE'S DANCE at our Church Fellowship hall: Saturday, February 20, 2016. See Steve Anastos for details.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING in our Church Fellowship hall at the conclusion of Divine services on Sunday, February 21, 2016.

Parish Council members are reminded that your dues must be paid by **March 31**; for all other members, you are strongly encouraged to have your dues paid no later than **June 30**. Please submit your payment to Sophia Papastratis or Steve Anastos. **Single rate is \$200/year, which is for one member; family rate is \$400 which means more than one member of a family, such as husband and wife.** Children under the age of 18 are not included in these rates. Anyone with financial concerns regarding their dues is encouraged to speak with Fr. Michael or Steve Anastos.

Binghamton Senators Hockey: All current/active Sunday School students and teachers are invited to attend a hockey game between the Binghamton Senators and the St. John Ice Caps on Friday, February 19, 2016. This will be free of charge for all current Sunday School students and teachers; all other church members are invited to attend at a cost of \$15 per person. Please sign up for this trip with Jackie Buchta by February 1, 2016 so that we can purchase the tickets in advance.

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.