



*Message from Fr. Michael....*

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

I hope and pray everyone is enjoying the beautiful warm weather and the great outdoors! God's wonderful creation of nature gives us a glimpse of peace and tranquility here on earth. Perhaps nature is glimpse of a little piece of Heaven? Enjoy the serenity of the Lord's creation.

In today's Holy Gospel reading of St. Matthew, we read about the story of the two men possessed by demons. Interestingly, this gospel reading appears to us three times during the ecclesiastical year. This means that our Holy Fathers of the Church wanted to place emphasis on that fact that man is vulnerable to possession by evil. One of most common ways, the man falls to the influence of evil is by demonic self-love, i.e. a love that one's life on earth and a life with only the cares of this world and that such a life is more important than a life of faith, a life of prayer, and life of being in total communion with our Lord. Such a self-reliant life is a life vulnerable to possession. Such a life is seen in a person who will do anything to survive his or earthly life. They would even compromise their faith and make deals with Satan in an effort to continue their life down a path of eternal darkness. Demons love people who embrace them. On the other hand, God loves EVERYONE! The gospel message is a message of healing. God reminds that He is there to heal us and take away all evil as long as we turn to Him for Vo-eethyia....., i.e. as long as we turn to Him for Help!

Another kind of self-love exists and is the good kind. This the kind of love where we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. In order to be able to successfully love our neighbor, we must truly love ourselves. We must not be ashamed of ourselves. If we are faithless and know it, we are ashamed and really do not love ourselves. So, we try to compensate for this by going further down the road into darkness by rationalizing that having faith is silly and that Church is unimportant to us. In such cases, we continue down such a dark road until we come to the edge of a cliff! What do we do then? Do we fall into the abyss? We must, brothers and sisters, make ourselves worthy of love. In doing so, we will live in God's grace under His tender mercy and care. When we pray, God will give us the answers and will teach us how to be worthy of love. Only then, may we have true love of ourselves and love our neighbors as ourselves.

May the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and ever-present Holy Spirit, through the intercession of our all Immaculate mother of God, Theotokos, and ever Virgin Mary, and through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, keep us on the path of love and free of evil possession. May our Triune God continue to bless us and guide us throughout our lives, while healing us of every infirmity, through His infinite love. With pastoral blessings and every prayer, I remain.

Yours in His service,

+Fr. Michael  
Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis

## **The Holy Hieromartyr Pancratius, Bishop of Tauromenium in Sicily**

This Saint, who was a contemporary of the Apostles, had Antioch as his homeland, where he was guided to the Faith of Christ by Peter, the Chief of the Apostles. Later, he came to Sicily, where he brought many to the Faith, and was finally put to death by the pagans.

### **July 10**

#### **Deposition of the Precious Robe of Our Lord Jesus Christ in Moscow**

After the Crucifixion of our Lord, His most precious robe was obtained by lot by a certain Elioz, a Georgian soldier who took part in the execution. He in turn brought it to Georgia where it remained until that land was overrun by the Persians. Shah Abbas, seeking to establish good relations with Tsar Michael Feodorovich, sent the Robe to Moscow as a gift for the Tsar and Patriarch Philaret. This took place in March of 1625, and was appointed to be celebrated on this day in July.

### **July 11**



#### **The All-Praised Olga, Equal-to-the-Apostles, Princess of Kiev**

Saint Olga, renowned for her wisdom and sobriety, in her youth became the wife of Igor, Great Prince of Kiev, who ruled during the tenth century. After her husband's death, she herself ruled capably, and was finally moved to accept the Faith of Christ. She traveled to Constantinople to receive Holy Baptism. The Emperor, seeing her outward beauty and inward greatness, asked her to marry him.

She said she could not do this before she was baptized; she furthermore asked him to be her Godfather at the font, which he agreed to do. After she was baptized (receiving the name of Helen), the Emperor repeated his proposal of marriage. She answered that now he was her father, through holy Baptism, and that not even among the heathen was it heard of a man marrying his daughter. Gracefully accepting to be outwitted by her, he sent her back to her land with priests and sacred texts and holy icons. Although her son Svyatoslav remained a pagan, she planted the seed of faith in her grandson Vladimir (see July 15). She reposed in peace in 969.

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, and Presbyteria Magdalena Michalopoulos. 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.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy today, we will have a 40 day blessing for Maria (Papastrat) Rizzo and the Churching of Eleni Rizzo, daughter of Kyle (Foti) and Maria Rizzo. Congratulations to all!

**\*\*SUMMER IS HERE\*\***

Please be advised that the 2 air conditioning units in the front of the church will be set at 70 degrees and **will remain on throughout the services** for the remainder of the summer season. This is the same temperature the church heat is set at during the winter months. The two units in the back may be turned off as the need arises; the units in the front will remain on and will not be altered. **Please do not interrupt the services regarding the front units.** The altar area contains hot spotlights, candles, burning charcoal, and other sources of heat which make it exceptionally warm when combined with the vestments worn. Parishioners are welcome to bring a sweater if there are any concerns.

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.