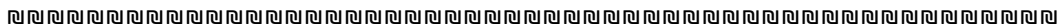




Sunday Bulletin September 17, 2017
Greek Orthodox Church of the
Annunciation

4121 O'Hara Drive Vestal, NY 13850
 Phone: (607) 797-0824 Fax: (607) 797-0824
<http://www.annunciationvestal.ny.goarch.org>
Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis, Presiding Priest-
Proistamenos



Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. Plagal Second Mode. Psalm 27.9,1.
O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.
Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 2:16-20

Brethren, knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Gospel Reading Mark 8:34-38; 9:1

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

Message from Fr. Michael:

Dear Beloved Faithful:

It is 1 AM, in the stillness of the night that these three typing fingers seek divine intervention and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and Presbyteria snoring on the couch next to me. The cat has snuggled up next to me perhaps also seeking to see if the Holy Spirit will Grace us at this writing. It is often the peaceful quietness of the night that motivates us to speak to God. The blaring noise of the day often distracts us from directing our thoughts to the Divine. While we sleep, God is perpetually awake. As the Good Shepherd, He sits on the hill (Heaven) and watches over His entire flock on earth. All He asks is for you to follow His Ten Commandments, to deny yourself, and take up your cross and follow Him. The cat next me is probably thinking, "When are you going to sleep?" My answer to her is: "After I have fed the Lord's sheep." Are you still with me?

We celebrated the Exhultation/Elevation of the Lord's lifesaving precious Cross last week. The church was, by no means filled to capacity. However, it was spiritually tranquil and filled with the sweet fragrance of fresh basil and incense. Those who were present received a special gift from God. They witnessed the elevation of the Cross, once an instrument of death, and now a symbol of eternal life! This is the road sign we must follow if we wish to journey to everlasting life. Great! Now the cat is now snoring! A cacophony of snores! Lord have mercy.

We must live our lives for God. We must place God in the driver's seat. The road sign is the precious Cross. Do we ignore the sign and get ourselves lost for eternity? Or do we follow it and allow it to guide us to Author of life, our Lord and God? May the Holy Trinity protect and guide you always. It is 2 AM now. I will pray for you and then go to sleep. Oh good! The snoring has ceased by all parties! Let us take up our Cross and follow Him. May the recent celebration of the elevation of the Lord's Holy Cross motivate and elevate us to prayer and self-sacrifice to give God His due honor, worship, and glory.

Prayerfully in His service, avoiding the temptation of somnolence, I remain
Your spiritual travel guide,

+Fr. Michael

Sophia & her three daughters: Faith, Hope, and Love



These Saints were from Italy and contested for the Faith about the year 126, during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. Faith was twelve years old, Hope, ten, and Love, nine; each was tormented and then beheaded, from the eldest to the youngest. Their mother Sophia mourned at their grave for three days, where she also fell asleep in peace; because of her courageous endurance in the face of her daughters' sufferings, she is also counted a martyr. The name Sophia means "wisdom" in Greek; as for her daughters' names, Faith, Hope, and Love (Charity), they are Pistis, Elpis, and Agape in Greek, and Vera, Nadezhda, and Lyubov in Russian.

Apolytikion of Martyrs Sophia, Pistis, Elpis & Agape Fourth Tone

O Lord Jesus, unto Thee Thy lamb doth cry with a great voice: O my Bridegroom, Thee I love; and seeking Thee, I now contest, and with Thy baptism am crucified and buried. I suffer for Thy sake, that I may reign with Thee; for Thy sake I die, that I may live in Thee: accept me offered out of longing to Thee as a spotless sacrifice. Lord, save our souls through her intercessions, since Thou art great in mercy.

Kontakion of Martyrs Sophia, Pistis, Elpis & Agape First Tone

Since Faith and Hope and Love were in truth sacred branches of ven'erable Sophia, the namesake of wisdom by grace they have shown all men that Greek wisdom is foolishness, and in contest they proved to be prizewinning victors; wherefore, they received a crown that never shall perish from Christ God, the Lord of all.

Herakleides & Myron, Bishops of Crete

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.

It is with sadness that I share with you the passing of a faithful giant of our Holy Annunciation Church community. Mr. Nicholas Packs fell asleep in the Lord for all eternity this past week. Nick was a cofounder of our Vestal church site. He was one of the "Patriarchs" of our Annunciation Church whose personal sacrifice and hard work helped to create the beautiful church that we have today. May his memory truly be eternal! Calling hours will be at the Allen Memorial Home today from 2-5 pm. The Trisagion service will be at 4 pm. His funeral service will be tomorrow, Monday, September 18th, at 11 am at our beloved Church. May God bless and comfort the Packs and Karedes families. May God also bless you.

+Fr. Michael

Annual Church Golf Tournament/Golf Outing (The Pastichio Open)
September 24th, 2017 - Endwell Greens 1:30 pm start. Dinner to follow at Riverdale Banquet House. \$80/Golfer and \$320 foursome/team. All are invited to sign up.

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.