



### ***Message from Fr. Michael...***

Dearly Beloved Faithful in the Lord:

In today's Holy Gospel reading, on the 12th Sunday of Matthew, we heard the young man ask our Lord: "What good thing shall I do that I might have eternal life." This is a question which I am sure we have all thought about from time to time. It is not that any one thing could be done to inherit eternal life. Brothers and sisters, it is a compilation of many things that we must do to come close to viewing "The Pearly Gates." The Lord told him "Thou shalt do not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." However, the young man told the Lord that he already abides by those commandments. The Lord directed him to follow, seeing that he was serious, and also told him to sell his possessions and to give them to the poor.

In this manner, he would be laying up treasures in Heaven. However, the man became sorrowful as he had great possessions. The Lord knew it was difficult for a man of wealth to do this. However, if one is serious about obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven, then these possessions of wealth which are prone to acquiring dust, corrosion, rust, and envy are ones which will stay behind on earth long after we have passed from this life. Remember the altruism: There are no luggage racks on hearses! "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." Our soul's rightful place is with God.

Blessed Theophylact once stated that a rich person was one who has funds, property, and houses, and he gives to no one. His method of acquisition of these things are by way stealing them from the poor. Therefore he should be regarded as a thief. However, a steward is an individual who has substance. It does not mean that a steward does not have money, property, or a house. However, a steward is one who possesses mercy and compassion while distributing these things to the poor. Essentially, such an individual is one who shares good fortune with the less fortunate. Such an individual is also a good steward of wealth. Tithing is often the subject of many Christian dominations. Many people cringe at the idea of doing this.

A person who tithes is one who is obedient to his faith. Tithing is a commandment directed by our Lord. The Lord told us to do this! Therefore, we are to do this! What do we need to do to inherit eternal life? There you go! He has told us to do all the above. When we baptize an infant, even the baby gives stewardship to God when wisps of hair from the head of the scalp are shorn for presentation to God as the very first gift given by the newly illuminated child. It reminds us that we are in total service to the Lord from the time of our baptism to the time of our passing from this life. At the end of our life, we commit our body (which is the temple of the soul) back to God's earth so that the soul may be received in Heaven. Depriving the Lord of our good stewardship, whether it be through faith and prayer that is owed to Him or monetary stewardship that is owed to Him, or failure to render charity to the poor and less fortunate, or failure to donate our time to the service of the Lord's Church are all acts which unfortunately pull us away from receiving His grace. We belong to God! We are all His property. We shall live for Him or not live at all! Living without God is not living at all. God is watching and is all merciful!

Seeking to inherit eternal life, while guiding my flock, I remain

Prayerfully in His service,

+Fr. Michael

## September 8



### Introduction

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on September 8 each year. The Feast commemorates the birth of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

### Background

The birth and early life of the Virgin Mary is not recorded in the Gospels or other books of the New Testament, however this information can be found in a work dating from the second century known as the Book of James or Protevangelion.

According to the story found in this book, Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, were childless for many years. They remained faithful to God, but their prayers for a child were unanswered. One day, when Joachim came to the temple to make an offering, he was turned away by the High Priest who chastised him for his lack of children. To hide his shame, Joachim retreated to the hill country to live among the shepherds and their flocks.

As Joachim was praying, his wife Anna was praying at the same time at their house in Jerusalem. An angel appeared to both of them and announced that Anna would have a child whose name would be known throughout the world. Anna promised to offer her child as a gift to the Lord. Joachim returned home, and in due time Anna bore a daughter, Mary.

# Saints and Feasts Commemorated

## 12th Sunday of Matthew

### Babylas the Holy Martyr

Saint Babylas was the twelfth Bishop of Antioch, being the successor of Zebinus (or Zebinas); he was beheaded during the reign of Decius, in the year 250, and at his own



request was buried in the chains with which he was bound. The Emperor Gallus (reigned 351-354) built a church in his honour at Daphne, a suburb of Antioch, to put an end to the demonic oracles at the nearby temple of Apollo. When Julian the Apostate came in 362 to consult the oracle about his campaign against the Persians, the oracle (that is, the demon within it) remained dumb until at last, answering Julian's many sacrifices and supplications, it told him, "The dead prevent me from speaking." It told Julian to dig up the bones and move them. Julian, then, in the words of Saint John Chrysostom, "leaving all the other dead, moved only that Martyr." He commanded the Christians to take away Saint Babylas' bones, which they did with great solemnity and triumph. When this had been done, a

thunderbolt fell from heaven destroying with fire the shrine of Apollo, which Julian did not dare rebuild. Saint John Chrysostom preached a sermon on this within a generation after.

### Moses the Prophet & Godseer

The Prophet Moses-whose name means "one who draws forth," or "is drawn from," that is, from the water-was the pinnacle of the lovers of wisdom, the supremely wise lawgiver, the most ancient historian of all. He was of the tribe of Levi, the son of Amram and Jochabed (Num. 26:59). He was born in Egypt in the seventeenth century before Christ. While yet a babe of three months, he was placed in a basket made of papyrus and covered with pitch, and cast into the streams of the Nile for fear of Pharaoh's decree to the mid-wives of the Hebrews, that all the male children of the Hebrews be put to death. He was taken up from the river by Pharaoh's daughter, became her adopted son, and was reared and dwelt in the King's palace for forty years. Afterward, when he was some sixty years old, he fled to Madian, where, on Mount Horeb, he saw the vision of the burning bush. Thus he was ordained by God to lead Israel and bring it out of the land of Egypt. He led Israel through the Red Sea as it were dry land and governed the people for forty years. He wrought many signs and wonders, and wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, which are called the Pentateuch. When he reached the land of Moab, he ascended Mount Nabau, on the peak called Phasga, and there, by divine command, he reposed in the sixteenth century before Christ, having lived for some 120 years. The first two Odes of the Old Testament, "Let us sing to the Lord" and "Attend, O heaven, and I will speak," were written by him. Of these hymns, the first was chanted by the shore of the Red Sea as soon as the Israelites had crossed it; the second, in the land of Moab, a few days before his repose. The Holy High Priest Aaron was the elder brother of the Holy Prophet Moses. He was appointed by God to serve as the spokesman of Moses before the people, and also before Pharaoh, in Egypt. Afterwards, in the wilderness, he was called to the ministry of the high priesthood, as narrated in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers in the Old Testament. The name Aaron means "enlightened."

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Theodore Kermidas (son of John and Cassie) Ted Simon, Maria Lambrinos, Steve Anastos, Angelo Romas, and Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon. 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 Memorial Service for Fotini Halkias. May her memory be eternal! Our prayers and best wishes go out to her family and friends**

## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

Rise from love of the world and love of pleasure. Put care aside, strip your mind, refuse your body. Prayer, after all, is a turning away from the world, visible and invisible. What have I in heaven? Nothing except simply to cling always to You in undistracted prayer. Wealth pleases some, glory others, possessions others, but what I want is to cling to God and to put the hopes of my dispassion in Him (cf. Ps. 72:25, 28).

### **St. John Climacus**

Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 28: On Prayer; Paulist Press pg. 277, 6th century  
Spiritual delight is not enjoyment found in things that exists outside the soul.

### **St. Isaac of Syria**

Unknown, 7th century

*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.*