



Sunday Bulletin December 10, 2023 *Greek Orthodox Church of the* *Annunciation*

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**Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis, Presiding Priest-
Proistamenos**

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### **Epistle Reading**

**Prokeimenon. Second Mode. Psalm 117.14,18.**

**The Lord is my strength and my song.**

**Verse: The Lord has chastened me sorely.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:10-17**

Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

### **Gospel Reading**

**Luke 13:10-17**

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

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

Dearly Beloved Faithful in the Lord:

In today's Holy Gospel reading, we heard that the Lord rebuked the synagogue leader. We heard the foolish words of the synagogue leader. We note that there is no time Prescribed for mercy. All time that God gives us is for mercy. God grants us an understanding of the workings of the world. And we know when we should show mercy. There is no time when man should put some law ahead of showing mercy.

As the woman was bent, crippled, and deformed, she could not straighten herself up. There is a great meaning to that condition that the woman had. It is significant that the Lord heals her on the Sabbath day. Our Lord was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and this was a habit of His. We preach on the Sabbath as many holy things as we can. We need to continually be feeding ourselves with holiness. It is unfortunate that we do not spend the entire day speaking of holy things.

The purpose of the weekend and our gathering together on Saturday and Sunday is to glorify God and worship Him. We hope that by partaking of His mysteries, we will achieve enlightenment. Such an experience also allows us to taste something of the sweetness of the Church's theology. Our worship services are inspired by the Holy Spirit. If we listen carefully and pray, we can hear God breathing on us: we can hear God in His services. Saturday and Sunday are consecrated to our remembrance of Him. It is sad that we do not take the time to remember the Lord every day. We become distracted by the pleasures of life. If we endeavor to give God attention on Saturday and Sunday, He will enlighten us.

When we break bread together, we will be empowered to taste of the heavenly bread. God straightens us up with His teachings. We are cured then of our infirmity. We must be willing to commit to the struggle. It is through such struggle that we will be cured and saved. It is not enough just to receive Holy Communion if we have not struggled. To derive any benefit from this heavenly food, we must have struggled. Struggle involves attending church services regularly, reading the Holy Bible regularly, and practicing denial of self by denial of worldly pleasures. During our struggle, God will help us. Some of our brethren grow old and fat and they are wicked. Some are young and die in virtue. Some struggle and never seem to be able to overcome the problems of life. Others seem to have a relatively easy time of it. God knows for each of us what our position in life should be for the best way of attaining salvation. But this woman was bent and crooked, so the crookedness indicates that she was suffering because of her sins. She suffered for eighteen years. And she came to the temple, and she was hoping to be cured.

The idea that Christ gives us spiritual food and about true defilement is the same principle about whether or not one should heal on the Sabbath day. One should indeed heal on the Sabbath day! One should heal on any day. One should show mercy on any day. We are not to be hypocrites. Hypocrisy is sinful. We must confess it. We must be rid of it. In fact, society is full of hypocrisy and runs on hypocrisy. It is a lie as it is the thing that makes us try to look like something we are not. It is not being genuine. It is not being honest with God. It is not being honest with our neighbor. It is not being honest with ourselves! We must, in the eyes of God, be genuine to ourselves and to Him. We must not make false promises. Let us not be hypocrites. Let us ask God to enlighten us. We must be willing to fall down before Christ and ask for His forgiveness. Only then, dear brothers and sisters, may we be straightened up and saved. May we continue to break bread together, share the common struggle, and give God the glory!

Prayerfully, I remain  
In His service, prayerfully yours,

+Fr. Michael

# Saints and Feasts Commemorated

## 10th Sunday of Luke

### Thomas the Righteous of Bithynia

### Menas, Hermogenes, & Eugraphos, Martyrs of Alexandria



Saint Menas, according to the Synaxaristes, had Athens as his homeland. He was a military officer, an educated man and skilled in speech, wherefore he was surnamed Kallikelados ("most eloquent"); Eugraphus was his scribe. Both had Christian parents. The Emperor Maximinus (he was the successor of Alexander Severus, and reigned from 235 to 238) sent Saint Menas to Alexandria to employ his eloquence to end a certain strife among the citizens. Saint Menas, having accomplished this, also employed his eloquence to strengthen the Christians in their faith, which when Maximinus heard, he sent Hermogenes, who was an eparch born to unbelievers to turn Menas away from Christ. But Hermogenes rather came to the Faith of Christ because of the miracles wrought by Saint Menas.

Saints Menas, Eugraphus, and Hermogenes received the crown of martyrdom in the year 235.

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Demetrios Pappastratis (father of George Pappastratis), Angelo Romas Persa Nizamis, Mitry Ganim, Ted Simon, 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.

### **ATTENTION ALL YOUTH WORKERS**

Whether it be teaching our youth to Greek dance or conducting Sunday School or Greek lessons or working with our Youth of our Parish IN ANY CAPACITY, The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit have mandated that everyone working with the Youth must complete a background check and online Youth Safety training through Sterling. Please contact the Metropolis of Detroit and speak with the Metropolis Youth Director about details at (248) 823-2411. Please go on the [YouthSafetyPlatform.goarch.org](https://youthsafetyplatform.goarch.org) website and register.

### **SCHEDULE OF CHRISTMAS SERVICES FOR 2023 CHRISTMAS SEASON**

Sunday, December 17th

Orthros 9:00 am

Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Christmas Sunday School Children's Pageant to follow

Sunday before Nativity (Forefeast of the Nativity): Sunday, December 24th

Orthros 9:00 am

Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Service of Great Vespers 5:00 pm

Monday, December 25th: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Orthros 9:00 am

Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Liturgy of St. Basil

Sunday, December 31st, 2023: The eve of the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord and the eve of the feast day of St. Basil the Great

Orthros 9:00 am

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 am

(These feasts will be celebrated by anticipation on this date as there will be NO services on Monday, January 1st, 2024).

Saturday, January 6th, 2024: Feast of Holy Theophany

Orthros 8:45 am

Divine Liturgy 9:45 am

The Great Blessing of the Waters is to be celebrated at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy on this day.

Sunday, January 7th, 2024: Feast of St. John the Baptist

Orthros 9:00 am

Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

Oath of Office will be administered to the new incoming Parish Council members at the conclusion of Divine services. Then elections will be held amongst the members for officers.

# Wisdom of the Fathers

The Savior Himself is He Whom we are asked to put on. It is one and the same thing to say, 'Put on the whole armor of God,' and 'Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.' Our belt is truth and our breastplate is righteousness. The Savior is also called both 'truth' and 'righteousness.' On this principle He is also to be understood as the 'Gospel of peace.' He is Himself the 'shield of faith' and the helmet of salvation. He is the 'sword of the Spirit,' because He is the Word of God, living and efficacious, the utterance of which is stronger than any helmet and sharp on both sides.

## **St. Jerome**

Unknown, 5th century

So great an evil is envy. For not against strangers only, but even against our own, is it ever warring.

## **St. John Chrysostom**

Homily 40 on Matthew 12, 4th 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.*