



Sunday Bulletin December 3, 2023
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. First Mode. Psalm 32.22,1.

Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 5:8-19

Brethren, walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

Gospel Reading Luke 18:35-43

At that time, as Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Message from Fr. Michael...

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

Many of the Sunday Gospel lessons center around miracles of healing. The Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest physician with his miracles of healing. Miracles have also been seen with being performed by many of the saints as well. The performance of miracles teach the faithful about spirituality and who God really is.

In today's Gospel, we heard the story of a blind man, who despite his handicap of no sight, absorbed immediately that he was in the presence of the Son of God, and that God could heal his infirmity.

The Jews of that time, such as Moses followers who lived for the letter of the Law and not the spirit of the Law, did not accept the Messiah. They were "know it alls" and thought they understood God's Law but were blinded by their pride and ignorance. However, the blind man immediately understood that he was in the presence of God. We learn from this lesson that we do not have to rely on our senses to understand God.

In the Old Testament, Prophet Elias ascended a mountain to meet God, "a great and strong wind came in contact with the mountains and broke the rocks into many pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice" (3 Kingdoms 19:11-12), and that was the voice of God, the voice that speaks that is easily recognized without the need of any of our senses and simply understood by the purity of the heart. In the same manner, we refer to the sacraments of the Church as mysteries, *μυστήρια*, which translates as secrets. The voice of God enters the heart through the awakening of our spiritual senses. This is accomplished through humility and prayer. What oxygen is to our lungs, prayer is to our souls. Similarly, without prayer we die. In the writings of St. Paul we are told to "pray without ceasing". As we breathe constantly to stay alive, analogously we are to pray constantly to spiritually stay alive.

The manner in which prayer can be carried out, as constantly as breathing, the fathers of the Church recommend that we accomplish this through the prayer of this blind man: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me". We, of course, say the prayer in a broader context by saying "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." This is the Jesus Prayer. We are to recite the Jesus Prayer constantly throughout the day and each day of our life. In the writings of St Paul, we learn that the name Jesus is "the name above every name" (Philippians 2:9) and that "whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Colossians 3:17)

Let us breathe through spirituality, i.e. prayer. The Lord will continue to open our eyes that we may see His Divine Light.

Prayerfully wearing eyeglasses and following Him, I remain
Your fervent supplicant,

+Fr. Michael

Saints and Feasts Commemorated

14th Sunday of Luke

The Holy Prophet Sophonias (Zephaniah)



This Prophet, who is ninth in order among the minor Prophets, was the son of Chusi (Cushi), from the tribe of Levi, or according to some, the great-grandson of King Hezekias. He prophesied in the years of Josias, who reigned in the years 641-610 before Christ. His book of prophecy is divided into three chapters. His name means "Yah has concealed."

December 3

Our Righteous Father John, Bishop and Hesychast

Plagal of the Fourth Tone

You are a guide of Orthodoxy, a teacher of piety and modesty, a luminary of the world, the God inspired pride of monastics. O wise John, you have enlightened everyone by your teachings. You are the harp of the Spirit. Intercede to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

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, Mity 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 website and register.

40 DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY, We will have a 40 Day Memorial service for Alexandra Papastratis, mother of Sophia, Maria, and Dina. May her memory be eternal! Our prayers and best wishes go out to her family and friends. PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION WILL BE HELD TODAY, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023 at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone in financial good standing with the Church is encouraged to vote.

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.

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.