



*Sunday Bulletin January 22, 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. Grave Mode. Psalm 28.11,1.**

**The Lord will give strength to his people.**

**Verse: Bring to the Lord, O sons of God, bring to the Lord honor and glory.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 4:9-15**

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and suffer reproach, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress.

## **Gospel Reading    Luke 19:1-10**

At that time, Jesus was passing through Jericho. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

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

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

In today's Holy Gospel reading, we heard the story of Zacchaeus who was a tax collector who had, in the past, defrauded people during the collection of taxes. He sat out to see our Lord as our Lord's notariety had spread throughout the land. Zacchaeus was a man of short stature and could not see the Lord as a great crowd had gathered around Him. In his zeal to see Jesus, Zacchaeus climbed a Sycamore tree. Jesus saw him gazing down from the tree and commanded him to come down. After Zacchaeus came down from the tree, our Lord went to his house. After they arrived at Zacchaeus' home, Zacchaeus stated that he would restore all of the money that had been wrongly collected and that he would restore it four fold. As a result of his contrition of heart, the Lord stated that salvation had come to Zacchaeus' house.

The message today is the same one our Lord gave us recently in the Gospel reading of two weeks ago, which we heard when our Lord began his public ministry, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17) From this reading, we learned that repentance must be worked out in order to receive the reward of salvation.

As Zacchaeus sought out the Lord, he had to be honest about the manner in which he was living his life. Without such honesty, we would not be able to assess that there is a problem with our own manner of living. Once we exhibit such honesty, we are faced with the dilemma: do we want to find a solution, or do we stay with the status quo?

Zacchaeus chose to take action to change the manner in which he lived. He was remorseful and could see that he had been living a dishonest life. He realized that left to his own, he would continue along the path leading to darkness. Brothers and sisters, we are also to follow this path to salvation by being remorseful of our sins and prayerful. This will lead us on a bright path toward eternal life. Zacchaeus sought to ask for God's help. Zacchaeus' action was to climb the tree so that could see his salvation our Lord. As it says in the Gospel of St. Matthew, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7:7). We are also to seek God's help if we are to be saved! We are to climb the tree as did Zacchaeus and look for the Lord. Climbing the tree is sometimes a struggle for us as many worldly temptations block our ability to ascend the tree...the tree of life. Our Lord is the tree of life! Jesus told Zaccaeus to come down from the tree and to come to Him. Thus our Lord opened the door of repentance for him. Upon arrival to his home, Zacchaeus confessed his wrongdoings. These wrongdoings were his sins. We are to follow this example and confess our sins to the Lord. Sins are a burden that weigh down the soul. They are like cement blocks tied to our feet when we are tossed into the lake. How are we to survive? We must rid ourselves of such heavy burdens so that we may live with the Lord in our lives. Having humility allows us to rid ourselves of such heavy burdens of sin. Repentance is the ultimate form of humility. In Psalms 55:22, we read, "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain you: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

Beloved brothers and sisters, we are to confess our sins and take action to remedy and make things right in our spiritual life. We can be remorseful of our actions, but it is meaningless unless we make an attempt to restore things back to the manner in which they were before our sin. Only through repentance, prayer, and fasting can we undo the wrongs of our lives. These are the tools for removing the burden of sin in our lives.

Ascending the tree to see the Lord, I remain  
Yours in His service, prayerfully,

+Fr. Michael

## Saints and Feasts Commemorated



### The Righteous Martyr Anastasius of Persia

Saint Anastasius was a Persian by race, the son of a Magus, and a soldier in the Persian army in the days of Chosroes II, King of Persia, and Heraclius, Emperor of New Rome. The Saint's Persian name was Magundat. When Chosroes captured Jerusalem in the year 614 and took the Precious Cross away captive, Magundat heard the report of the miracles that came to pass through the Cross of our salvation. Being of a prudent mind, perplexed that an instrument of torture should be so highly honored by the Christians, yet seized with longing to learn their Faith, he diligently sought out instruction in the whole divine dispensation of Christ: His Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection. When he learned what he sought to know, his soul was filled with wonder and joy. Withdrawing to the Holy City, he was baptized by Saint

Modestus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and became a monk, receiving the new name of Anastasius.

As he read the lives of the Saints and the accounts of the holy Martyrs, his heart was kindled with love for them to such a degree that he prayed to be counted worthy of a martyr's end like unto theirs. Finally, unable to contain his longing, he left his monastery. Encountering certain Persian Magi at Caesarea, he rebuked them for their delusion. Since Palestine was still held in the captivity of the Persians, he was taken before the Persian ruler, questioned, beaten, and imprisoned. He was then taken with other captives to Persia, where, after many tortures, refusing to espouse again the error of his fathers, he was hanged up by one hand, strangled with a noose, and beheaded. The translation of his holy relics is celebrated on the 24th of this month.

### 15th Sunday of Luke

### Joseph the Sanctified

**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, Angelo Romas, Dino and Diamando Maniates, Mitry Ganim, 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.

### Aghiasmo (Holy Water):

Is available for everyone (Orthodox faithful only) to take home: However, it is limited to two bottles per family (one for each husband and one for each wife to share with their family)! Please do not take extra bottles for anyone outside of the nuclear family. Aghiasmo is available throughout the year so if anyone is not in church they may come to church at a later date to receive this.

**Hint:** It is very easy to replenish your supply of holy water as all you need is a drop or two of holy water placed in a small empty bottle and you may reconstitute the bottle by filling it with tap water.

### **Philoptochos News:**

There will be a general Philoptochos meeting today during the Coffee Hour Fellowship.

### **Altar Servers needed:**

Any boys (7 years or older in age) interested in serving regularly in the altar as altar servers please see Fr. Michael.

### **March 25th Celebration Weekend (patronal feast weekend of our Church):**

**Friday, March 24th:** Great Vespers on the Eve of the feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos at 7 pm

**Saturday, March 25th:** Feast of the Annunciation: Orthros at 9 am  
Divine Liturgy at 10 am

**Sunday, March 26th:** Orthros at 9 am Divine Liturgy at 10 am

**March 25th Poems and Speeches** will be conducted by our children on Sunday March 26th during the Coffee Hour

### **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](http://YouthSafetyPlatform.goarch.org) website and register.

### **Wisdom of the Fathers**

For Christ's presence is like that of some life-giving, scented balsam which restores health, enriches life and gives savor to the soul, the thoughts, the words of a man. In brief, distance from Christ means corruption and death, and closeness to Him means salvation and life.

### **Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic**

Prolog, 4 February

Christ is the salvation that comes, and Zacchaeus is the house to which He comes.

### **Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic**

Prolog, 4 February

*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.*