



*Sunday Bulletin January 29, 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. Plagal Fourth Mode. Psalm 75.11,1.**

**Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.**

**Verse: God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians 6:16-18;  
7:1**

Brethren, you are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

## **Gospel Reading     Matthew 15:21-28**

At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

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

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

This upcoming Thursday, February 2nd, is the feast day of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple. To many, this Presentation of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Temple is viewed as a family ceremony. Probably some viewed this ceremony as a rite of passage, perhaps, or an event for the proud new parents. For Orthodox Christians, who read the Gospel with eyes of faith, the Fortieth-Day Blessing of Our Lord is regarded as a great Feast. This feast marks an important event in the course of our salvation. Judaic Law of that time had decreed that the firstborn son who opened His mother's womb was to be brought to the Lord on the fortieth day in a solemn act of worship, to be sanctified unto God as His special possession (Exodus 13:2, Leviticus 12).

Therefore, in adhering to this ancient commandment, the Virgin Mary and Joseph brought their child Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem. They sought to comply with this law. However, to the surprise of those in attendance, they had the opportunity to view a transformation of the very nature of worship itself. At the blessed Theophany of our Lord, when the Lord entered into the Jordan, a tributary of the Dead Sea, He transformed the nature of the waters, into a medium of blessing and new life by His Baptism. Simultaneously, He transformed all the waters of earth. At this great Feast, our Lord transformed the nature of worship through His ritualistic worship of the Old Covenant, signaling the revelation of grace upon grace. Through this He came to the worship of the New Covenant in His blood. The aged eyes of Simeon witnessed the transformation as the Christ-child. Through the Lord's presentation in the Temple, He blessed and established the basics of Christian eucharistic worship. Simeon declared, "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word, for mine eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples" (Luke 2:29-31).

During that time, the faithful worshipped through the offering of sacrifices as an expression of fear. These offerings were a small portion of one's possessions. These offerings were considered substitutes for their souls. Through the fires of sacrifice, the faithful sought atonement of their sins. In the same manner, on this day the humble new parents from Bethlehem brought an offering of two turtle doves (Luke 2:24) to the God of Israel. But something happened on that day that marked the end of the era of animal sacrifice and the start of New Covenant worship. From henceforth we shall say with blatant truth, "Thine Own of Thine Own we offer to Thee." For the offering unto God will be God Himself in the flesh, and the broken body and spilt blood will belong to the Lord alone, who in His own person establishes the reconciliation of God and man.

Therefore, one can see that the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple was the Lord being brought to eventually serve as the sacrificial Lamb for the many. Like Simeon, every Orthodox priest receives Christ into his hands in the form of the amnos which represents the Lamb of God. He receives this Gift at the hour of his ordination, when the Church, who is the Mother of us all, by the hand of her hierarchs. Thus the bishop places into the newly ordained priest's hands the bread that is consecrated to be the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like Simeon, therefore, every priest bears up Christ within the holy place, with voice lifted up to bless the Most High God (see Luke 2:28). And like Simeon, the priest comes forth again from the holy place to give Christ back to the Church, to distribute His all-pure Body and Blood to the faithful, for the forgiveness of sins and for life everlasting. At the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple, the righteous Simeon saw the revelation of God's plan of salvation in the face of the forty-day old baby Jesus in his arms. He foresaw the end of blood sacrifices on altars. Like Simeon, at the end of our life's calling, may we be inspired to say, "My eyes, Lord, have seen your salvation. I have seen your light to the nations. I have seen the glory of your people . . . their consolation, and their redemption." May Christ our True God, who condescended to be carried in the arms of the righteous Simeon for our salvation, bless and strengthen you, and may He always remember you in His kingdom, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

May our eyes be so amazed like those of the righteous Simeon to see the countenance of our Lord and may we be truly inspired by His awesome presence!

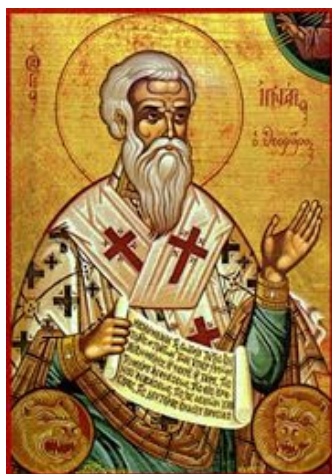
Prayerfully, in His service,

+Fr. Michael

## Saints and Feasts Commemorated

### Sunday of the Canaanite

### Removal of the Relics of Ignatius the God-bearer



Saint Ignatius was a disciple of Saint John the Theologian, and a successor of the Apostles, and he became the second Bishop of Antioch, after Evodus. He wrote many epistles to the faithful, strengthening them in their confession, and preserving for us the teachings of the holy Apostles. Brought to Rome under Trajan, he was surrendered to lions to be eaten, and so finished the course of martyrdom about the year 107. The remnants of his bones were carefully gathered by the faithful and brought to Antioch. He is called God-bearer, as one who bare God within himself and was aflame in heart with love for Him. Therefore, in his Epistle to the Romans (ch. 4), imploring their love not to attempt to deliver him from his longed-for martyrdom, he said, "I am the wheat of God, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found to be the pure bread of God." Saint John Chrysostom has a homily in honour of the translation of the Saint's relics (PG 50:587).

### Ignatius and Nicandrus of Sinai

**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.

**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**

She had a great perfection of faith. She had no uncertainty about His divine majesty. She had no small measure of the virtue of patience. Yet the pitying Physician of the pitiful disdained her petitions. He kept her waiting for answer in order to demonstrate to us the perseverance of this woman that we can always imitate. She had the characteristics of constancy and humility. She willingly embraced the indignity she received, and even confirmed the Lord's statement. This woman rightly signifies the faith and devotion of the Church gathered from the nations

**Saint Bede**

Hom. I. 22, In Lent, Homilies on the Gospels, Bk. One, 216, 217.

He kept her waiting for an answer in order to declare that the minds of His disciples should also be merciful. As human beings they were ashamed of the clamor of the woman as she pursued them publicly, but He Himself knew the character of His mercy.

**St. Bede**

Hom. I. 22, In Lent, Homilies on the Gospels, Bk. One, 216

*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.*