



*Sunday Bulletin March 12, 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 Second Mode. Psalm 27.9,1.**  
**O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.**  
**Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 1:10-14; 2:1-3**

IN THE BEGINNING, Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end." But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet?" Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.

### **Gospel Reading            Mark 2:1-12**

At that time, Jesus entered Capernaum and it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is a blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"- he said to the paralytic-"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

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

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

Welcome to the Second Sunday of Lent. We commemorate St. Gregory Palamas as this day celebrates the condemnation of his enemies. This Sunday also provides the vindication of the teachings of the Church. This a second triumph of Orthodoxy! This Sunday teaches that Man can become divine through the grace of the Holy Spirit and we call this process Theosis. As we reflect upon our spiritual struggles as we pass deeper into the Lenten period, we are reminded of what the Lord said, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is a blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-he said to the paralytic-"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home."

In a gospel passage, we heard the Lord echo beautiful words of encouragement and healing to the paralytic. Of course, the scribes, who were hypocrites, sought to challenge the Lord and question Him. The Son of Man, the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, etc. is the Lord our God who walked in this earth in the form of a human being. This was God in the flesh! Who are we to question God, the author of life, the creator of mankind, and the One who takest away the sins of the world? How dare any of us do this! It is unquestioning obedience to our Lord will allow us entry into His Kingdom.

My brothers and sisters, we are the paralytics! We are the ones who need healing. We are paralyzed through our sinful ways on earth. We now ask the Lord to raise us up and to heal us. To do this, we must be willing to obediently follow Him. We must be willing to "put away our earthly cares that we may receive the King of all," as we hear in the Divine Liturgy when the Cherubic Hymn is being sung. The Lord has been telling us, in a way, for quite some time to "Rise, take up your pallet and walk?" He tells us this through the teachings of His priests. His clergy constantly remind the flock, of our Lord, to fast, pray, and to regularly receive Holy Communion. We are charged with the responsibility to keep our lives holy. Only then can we be raised up to walk in the righteous path of salvation. Fast, Pray, and Give are the important three words of this Great Lenten period. When we have fasted, prayed, and have been charitable, we will receive God's abundant mercy. Only then will we be able to loose the bounds of spiritual paralysis and take up our pallet and walk toward Him! May our Lord continually heal us and keep us in His grace up until the time He calls us! Wishing you a prayerful Lenten journey, I remain

With pastoral love,

+Fr. Michael

## **Saints and Feasts Commemorated**

### **Symeon the New Theologian**

Saint Symeon became a monk of the Studite Monastery as a young man, under the guidance of the elder Symeon the Pious. Afterwards he struggled at the Monastery of Saint Mamas in Constantinople, of which he became abbot. After enduring many trials and afflictions in his life of piety, he reposed in 1022. Marvelling at the heights of prayer and holiness to which he attained, and the loftiness of the teachings of his life and writings, the church calls him "the New Theologian." Only to two others, John the Evangelist and Gregory, Patriarch of Constantinople, has the church given the name "Theologian." Saint Symeon reposed on March 12, but since this always falls in the Great Fast, his feast is kept today.



March 12

### **Paul Aurelian, Bishop of Brittany**

### **Phineas, grandson of Prophet Aaron**

### **Philoptochos Event Today**

At the conclusion of Divine Services today, the Philoptochos will be hosting a fundraiser luncheon in our Fellowship Hall. All proceeds/donations will be given to the Turkish and Syrian victims of the recent earthquake catastrophe which affected those people. Please help support this event by attending this worthy event.

### **Chrismation Service Today**

Today, prior to the distribution of Holy Communion, we will have the Chrismation of Kevin Joseph Smith, fiance' of Marina Resciniti, to the Orthodox Faith. We congratulate Joseph on his Chrismation to Orthodoxy and prayerfully welcome him! Our best wishes go to his parents, Carl Edward Smith and JoAnn Marie Brown. Also best wishes go out to the entire Smith and Resciniti families. Axios! Orthodox Sponsors: George Papastratis and Kyle (Fotis) Rizzo.

### **Memorial Service Today**

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy today, we will have a 40 day Memorial Service for Nicholas Constantine Pappas (beloved son of our Parish Council President Nicholas Pappas), 14 year anniversary Memorial Service for Constantine (Gus) Pappas (beloved father and grandfather) and 7 year anniversary Memorial Service for Melissa Anne Pappas (beloved wife of Nicholas Pappas). May their memory be eternal! Our prayers and best wishes go out to the entire Pappas family!

### **Salutation Services/Akathysts to the Theotokos:**

- Friday, March 17, 2023 at 6:30 pm 3rd Friday of Lent
- Friday, March 24, 2023 Vespers on the Eve of the Annunciation at 6:30 pm
- Friday, March 31, 2023 at 6:30 pm 5th Friday of Lent Service of The Akathyst Hymn

### **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 6:30 pm
- Saturday, March 25th: Feast of the Annunciation: Orthros at 9 am Divine Liturgy at 10 am
- Sunday, March 26th: Orthros at 9 am and 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 website and register.

## **2023 Church Schedule of Special Services and Holy Week Schedule for the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation**

- Saturday of Lazarus, April 8, 2023: (Holy Trinity Church Binghamton)  
Divine Liturgy 10 am
- The making of Palm crosses will be at the Annunciation Church at 12 noon in Vestal
- Palm Sunday, April 9, 2023: Orthros 9 am and Divine Liturgy 10 am
- Palm Sunday evening, April 9, 2023: Service of the Nymphios/Bridegroom matins 6:00 pm
- Holy Monday, April 10, 2023: Service of the Bridegroom matins 7:00 pm
- Holy Tuesday, April 11, 2023: Service of the Nymphios/Bridegroom matins 6:30 pm
- Holy Wednesday, April 12, 2023: Service of the Sacrament of Holy Unction 6:30 pm
- Holy Thursday morning, April 13, 2023: Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 9:30 am
- Holy Thursday evening, April 13, 2023: Service of the Holy Passions of our Lord and the 12 Gospels 6:00 pm
- Holy Friday morning, April 14, 2023: Service of the Royal Hours 9:00 am  
(All are invited to assist in the flower decoration of the Epitaphios at the conclusion of this service. Fr. Michael will provide written excuses for school absences for those children who spend the day at the church.
- Holy Friday afternoon, April 14, 2023: Service of Great Vespers of the Apokathelosis (The un-nailing of our Lord from the cross) 3 pm
- Holy Friday evening, April 14, 2023: Service of the Lamentations matins 6:30 pm
- Holy Saturday morning, April 15, 2023: Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great (The First Resurrection of our Lord raising Adam and eve from the dead) 9:30 am
- Holy Saturday night, April 15/16, 2023: Matins of the Pascha 11:00 pm  
'O Come and Receive Ye the Light...' 11:45 pm  
Reading of the Gospel of the Resurrection of our Lord 12 am midnight followed by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
- Easter Sunday (Pascha), April 16, 2023: Vespers service of Agape (The Gospel will be read in multiple languages. Please see Fr. Michael if you are interested in reading the Gospel in ANY other language besides Greek and English) 11 am

## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

Take up your bed. Carry the very mat that once carried you. Change places, so that what was the proof of your sickness may now give testimony to your soundness. Your bed of pain becomes the sign of healing, its very weight the measure of the strength that has been restored to you.

### **St. Peter Chrysologus**

Homily 50.6. Taken from: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Vol. 2: Mark. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2005, p. 27.

Now Matthew indeed saith, that "they brought him," but the others, that they also broke up the roof, and let him down. And they put the sick man before Christ, saying nothing, but committing the whole to Him.

### **St. John Chrysostom**

Homily 29 on Matthew 9, 1. B#54, pp. 195, 196, 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.*