



Sunday Bulletin November 19, 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 Letter to the Ephesians 2:14-22**

Brethren, Christ is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

**Gospel Reading      Luke 12:16-21**

The Lord said this parable: "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." As he said these things, he cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

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

Dearly Beloved Faithful in the Lord:

On Tuesday, November 21st, is the feast of the entrance of the Theotokos into the Jerusalem Temple. She was escorted by her parents, Joachim and Anna to be raised among the virgins in service to the Lord. This was a rather common occurrence in those days. Many parents brought their children, especially the first born, to the temple to introduce them to God.

On that day, however, the child was led to the "Holy of Holies." This was one of the Temple's three main courts, the other two being the court of the people and the court of the priests. Only the High Priest alone was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, the Temple's mystical inner chamber, once a year. Yet according to tradition, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, receives Mary, takes her by the hand, and guides her to the most sacred part of the Temple. Thus Mary herself is to become the living sanctuary of Jesus, as she would bear Him in her stainless womb.

Mary enters the Temple to prepare herself to carry the body of Christ. She, herself, is the Temple of the Living God. Mary is the "Heavenly Tabernacle" according to the feast's Kontakion. The Word of God becomes flesh in her womb and dwells among us. To bring us to salvation, God assumed human form, which was achieved through the Virgin Mary. Believers consequently proclaim, "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you." This feast celebrates that we, too, are Temples of God. Each individual is the Lord's house. He lives and dwells in and among us. "...For we are the temple of the living God; as God said: 'I will live with them and move among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people.'" (II Corinthians 6: 6)

The scene found in most icons depicting this blessed event takes place in the inner court of the Temple. Joachim and Anna escort the child, Mary, to the steps, where Zacharias stands. Mary stretches her hand to the priest, who reaches to receive it and guide her to the Holy of Holies. She is reflected as a child only in stature, as she has a profound wisdom and purity. The figures of the high priest and the holy family are at the forefront of the image, as the presentation to the Temple is the main event. In some icons of the Entrance of the Theotokos, the Virgin Mary is portrayed in the upper left corner, seated in the Temple's Holy of Holies.

Beloved brothers and sisters, we must have the same innocent faith that the Theotokos child had when she came to the temple with innocence and an open heart. Consider today our day of presentation to the Holy Temple of God, and that today is the first day of the rest of our lives dedicated to God. We, too, come to this Holy dwelling place to be like the Theotokos and be brought to salvation. On behalf of the Parish Council, the chanters, choir, Altar servers, and Sunday School and Greek School staff and students, and myself, we wish you and your families and a blessed Thanksgiving holiday!

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, and the intercession of the Theotokos, Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon us and save us, I remain

In His service, prayerfully yours,

+Fr. Michael

# Saints and Feasts Commemorated

## Obadiah the Prophet



The Divine Scriptures do not tell us with any certainty when the Prophet Obadiah lived nor what was his homeland. Thus, some say that he is that Obadiah who was Ahab's steward, who, because of Jezebel's wrath, hid one hundred prophets in a cave and fed them with bread and water (III Kings 18:4), and that he later became a disciple of Elias the Prophet about 903 B.C. But others surmise from the words of the same prophetic book that he is somewhat later than Joel (celebrated on Oct. 19). He is also called Obdiu, or Abdiu, or Obadiah; his name means "servant of God." His book of prophecy, which consists of only one chapter, is ranked fourth

among the minor Prophets.

## 9th Sunday of Luke

### Martyr Barlaam of Caesarea

Saint Barlaam, who was from a certain village near Antioch in Syria, was advanced in years and a husbandman by occupation. Because of his confession of Christ, he was brought before the judge, who had him scourged with whips and then scraped with iron claws. Since this could not break his constancy, he was forcibly haled to the idols' temple, and live coals with incense were placed in his right hand. The judge thought that he would cast them down because of the pain, thus seeming to have offered a sacrifice of incense to the idols. But Saint Barlaam stood unmoving until his hand was thoroughly burned by the coals; he fell to the ground, and so gave up his soul into the hands of the Lord. He contested in martyrdom during the reign of Diocletian (284-305). Saint Basil the Great and Saint John Chrysostom both gave homilies in his honour.

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

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

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION WILL BE HELD 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.

Sunday, December 17th  
Orthros 9:00 am  
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am  
Christmas Sunday School Children's Pageant to follow

Sunday before Christmas (Forefeast of the Nativity): Sunday, December 24th  
Orthros 9:00 am  
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am (Liturgy of St. Basil)

Monday, December 25th: The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)  
Orthros 9:00 am  
Divine Liturgy 10:00 am (Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom)

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). Oath of office will be administered to Parish Council members.

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.

## Wisdom of the Fathers

I cannot be silent about the story of Hesychius the Horebite. He passed his life in complete negligence, without paying the least attention to his soul. Then he became extremely ill, and for an hour he left his body.

### **St. John Climacus**

Ladder of Divine Ascent. Step 6: On Remembrance of Death, 6th Century

And when he came to himself, he begged us all to leave him immediately. And he built up the door of his cell, and he stayed in it for twelve years without ever uttering a word to anyone, and without eating anything but bread and water.

### **St. John Climacus**

Ladder of Divine Ascent. Step 6: On Remembrance of Death, 6th 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.*