



*Sunday Bulletin October 2, 2016*  
*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. 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 Second Letter to the Corinthians 4:6-15**

Brethren, it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believed, and so we speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

## **Gospel Reading Luke 6:31-36**

The Lord said, "And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

Message from Fr. Michael....

Dearly Beloved in the Lord:

In order to get the full meaning of the message today, reread the gospel lesson for today: Luke 6:31-36

The Lord said, "And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

Today's gospel reading, from the 2nd Sunday of Luke, is from Luke 6. It comes from Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount. He comes down from the mountain onto a plain and encounters a larger group of disciples and a great multitude. He first goes on to heal the sick and cast out demons. Then it says earlier in verse 19, "And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came forth from Him and healed them all.

How is it humanly possible to do that? It's not. It is only divinely possible. We have to look to God's love for us, to look at what He suffered for us and be willing to suffer similarly, and love as He loved. Only then can we begin to be able to truly love those who persecute us. We need to empathize with them as Christ does, to pray for their salvation and their sanctification.

God wants us to try to understand Him fully and completely. Ultimately we cannot do this rationally, but only mystically, in the spirit, in the heart of our soul. The heart of today's gospel conveys the idea that God expects us to love above and beyond basic fairness. The Lord expects us to love even when it's not fair, when we will in all likelihood not get treated nearly as well as we treat others. The Lord would like us to learn to be merciful, to show mercy not because it's going to come back to us but because it's what God wants us to do. God wants us to show mercy because He showed us mercy, suffered and died for us on the Cross so that we could be forgiven of our sins. And when we ask for forgiveness from God, we are forgiven.

The closer we move toward the Lord, the more we are able to see our spiritual imperfections we may see the greater need for us to ask for God's mercy. For example, when we wear dirty clothes as we move away from the Light in total darkness, we will likely be totally unaware of how bad we look. As we get closer to the light, we become more and more aware of how nasty looking our clothes really look. When we are really, really close to the Light of God, even the smallest little stain looks like and feels like a totally filthy, dirty outfit that covers us from head to toe.

Brothers and sisters, draw near to the light of God, seek to love even your enemies, be merciful, and God will take care of your dry cleaning for you.

In His service, prayerfully,  
+Fr. Michael

## The Holy Hieromartyr Cyprian and the Virgin Martyr Justina



Saint Justina who was from Damascus, lived in virginity for the sake of Christ. Saint Cyprian, who was from Antioch, began as an initiate of magic and worshipper of the demons. A certain foolish young man who had been smitten with Justina's beauty hired Cyprian to draw her to love him; when Cyprian had wed every demonic device he knew, and had failed, being repulsed by the power of Christ Whom Justina invoked, he understood the weakness of the demons and came to know the truth. Delivered from demonic delusion, he came to Christ and burned all his books of magic, was baptized, and later ascended the episcopal throne in his country. Later, he and Justina were arrested by the Count of Damascus, and having endured many torments at his hands, they were sent finally to Diocletian in Nicomedia, where they were beheaded about the year 304.

October 2

### Apolytikion of Martyrs Cyprian and Justina in the Fourth Tone

As a sharer of the ways and a successor to the throne of the Apostles, O inspired of God, thou foundest discipline to be a means of ascent to divine vision. Wherefore, having rightly divided the word of truth, thou didst also contest for the Faith even unto blood, O Hieromartyr Cyprian. Intercede with Christ our God that our souls be saved.

### Kontakion of Martyrs Cyprian and Justina in the First Tone

When thou, O godly-minded one, hadst been converted from magic art to knowledge of God, thou becamest a most skilful healer for the whole world, O wise Cyprian, granting cures to them that honour thee with Justina; with her, pray the man-befriending Master to save us, thy servants who sing thy praise.

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Michalena (Skiadas) Sukenik, Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon, Presbytera Magdalena Michalopulos, Henry Nussbaum, and Sam Kashou. 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 those interested in GOYA, Fr. Michael and Presbytera Kimberly will hold the first organizational meeting on Sunday, October 16, 2016 after the Divine Liturgy, during the Coffee Hour fellowship in our Church Hall. Everyone, ages 12-18 years old are invited. Please join us! Parents are also invited!

VOLUNTEERS are needed for the coffee hour fellowship, so that this can continue. Refreshments will be funded by the parish council and/or volunteers and other church groups, however we are in need of your time to assist in preparation, serving and clean up afterwards. Please see Steve Anastos, or any parish council member, to volunteer. Thank you.

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, to grow in Christ and in our Orthodox Faith. For any spiritual, religious, or sacramental matters, please contact Fr. Michael (607) 795-1474. For any building, facility or church property issues, please contact Parish Council President Steve Anastos, (607) 296-9799. Deadline for suggestions for the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.