



## *Sunday Bulletin June 18, 2017* *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**

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### **Epistle Reading**

**Prokeimenon. First Mode. Psalm 32.22,1.**

**Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.**

**Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 2:10-16**

Brethren, glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

### **Gospel Reading      Matthew 4:18-23**

At that time, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

Dearly Beloved Faithful in the Lord:

Happy Father's Day to all fathers, grandfathers, Godfathers, and all who provide paternal guidance to our youth! We are currently celebrating the Apostle's fast, which started Monday, June 12 and will end on the Feast Day of Sts. Peter and Paul, on Friday, June 29. During this period of solemn fasting we continue to commemorate those apostles and disciples upon whom the Holy Spirit descended on the holy and miraculous day of Pentecost. Their teachings, preachings, healings, and self-sacrifices spread Christ Jesus' gospel beyond the Roman Empire into the empires that ruled Mesopotamia and India.

Today, the Gospel reading taken from Matthew 4:18-23 recounts the Evangelist Matthew's account of the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry. Jesus has received the blessing of His Heavenly Father in the Theophany; He has been tested by Satan himself in His 40-day period of fasting and prayer in the desert, and He has taken up His ministry in Galilee. Jesus chooses his first four disciples, Andrew and his brother Peter, and then the sons of Zebedee, James and John. These men were simple fishermen in business partnership, who were probably illiterate. Another thing that they had in common was that they were seeking the Messiah, who would save Israel and restore Israel to the glory it once enjoyed under King David. They were seekers and also disciples of John the Baptizer, who proclaimed that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

What is so striking about Matthew's account is the faith and obedience that Andrew, Peter, James and John showed when Jesus **COMMANDED** them to discipleship. They literally and without hesitation dropped their nets, left their boats, and followed Jesus to become "fishers of men" (Thevte opiso mou, ke piiso imas aliis anthropon – Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men). Affirmed by John the Baptizer, they truly believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Yet, it remains to be said that they fully did not understand what lay ahead of them. **BUT** they knew that Jesus, as the Son of God, was the way to eternal salvation by doing the Will of God, **NOT** their own will – faith and obedience!

My brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, Jesus Christ the Crucified and Resurrected One, also calls us to discipleship. Just like the simple disciples, Jesus wants us to have faith and believe in Him and be obedient and disciplined in fulfilling His Will. St. Paul in today's Epistle reading, tells us that we are not saved by faith alone. Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior is indeed fundamental and essential, but faith without deeds is not the difficult path toward salvation. It is the disciples of Christ Jesus who are the doers of the Will of God who are guiltless, righteous, justified, and saved. It is not enough to **KNOW** what to do, we must unselfishly **DO** the will of God. We as Orthodox Christians must go beyond being passive hearers (akouontes) of the Word of God in these Gospels. We must become active, accountable, responsible listeners (akroates). On this, we will be tested and judged in practicing and fulfilling God's Will. What do we have to do? We all cannot become Apostles, bishops, church hierarchs, nor can we all heal the sick, the lame, resurrect the dead. But we can fulfill Jesus' commandments: love your neighbor by sharing what you have, by compassion when he/she is sick, by doing charitable works of feeding the hungry by your monetary contributions to Loaves and Fishes and Meals on Wheels, and by clothing the naked by your contributions to the Salvation Army. Become active in the missions of the Church through your active participation in Philoptochos; as a Sunday School teacher for there is no greater good than being part of the spiritual development of our youth; as parents involved in GOYA; as a greeter to visitors of our church, guiding them to the fellowship hour and having them meet the other parishioners; and of course, the music ministry of our church through chanting and choir. Therefore, we are called upon to exhibit our love for our Savior by showing kindness to our neighbor and generosity to the poor, the sick, the lame and the downtrodden, and by extending our love to those who have not heard the Word of God (and have not been baptized). If we truly put on Christ, let us shine like beacons on all with whom we meet. My brothers and sisters in Christ, let us **NOT** become passive listeners of the Word of God. Let us take a more active role in creating the Kingdom of God here on earth. Let's be active, committed Orthodox Christians. It is then that we can be called true disciples of Christ.

Prayerfully following the Lord's calling, I remain  
Yours in His service,

+Fr. Michael

## **Leontius, Hypatius, & Theodulus the Martyrs of Syria**

This Martyr was from Greece. Being of great bodily stature and strength, he was an illustrious soldier in the Roman legions who had won many victories, and was known for his prudence and sobriety of mind. When it was learned that he gave grain to the poor from the imperial stores, and was moreover a Christian, Hadrian the Governor of Phoenicia sent Hypatius, a tribune, and Theodulus, a soldier, to arrest him. Saint Leontius converted them on the way to Tripolis in Phoenicia, where Hypatius and Theodulus were tormented and beheaded by Hadrian for their confession of Christ. Then Hadrian with many flatteries and many torments strove to turn Leontius from Christ. All his attempts failing, he had Leontius put to such tortures that he died in the midst of them, under Vespasian in the year 73.

## **Thaddeus (Jude) the Apostle & Brother of Our Lord**

The Apostle Jude was of the choir of the Twelve, and by Luke was called Jude, the brother of James the Brother of God (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), and therefore also a kinsman of the Lord according to His humanity. But by Matthew (10:3), he is called Lebbaeus, surnamed Thaddeus (he is not the Thaddeus who healed the suffering of Abgar, as Eusebius says in his Eccl. Hist., 1:13; see Aug. 21). Saint Jude preached in Mesopotamia, Arabia, Idumea, and Syria, and, it is said, completed the path of his divine apostleship by martyrdom in Beirut in the year 80. Written after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, his is the last of the Catholic (General) Epistles to the believing Jews in the Diaspora. His name (a variant of Judah) means "Praise."

**\*\*SUMMER IS HERE\*\***

**Please be advised that the 2 air conditioning units in the front of the church will be set at 70 degrees and will remain on throughout the services for the remainder of the summer season. This is the same temperature the church heat is set at during the winter months. The two units in the back may be turned on and off as the need arises; the units in the front will remain on and will not be altered. Please do not interrupt the services regarding the front units. The altar area contains hot spotlights, candles, burning charcoal, and other sources of heat which make it exceptionally warm when combined with the vestments worn. Parishioners are welcome to bring a sweater if there are any concerns.**

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, and Presbyteria Magdalena Michalopoulos. 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.

**At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy today, we will have a 9 year Memorial Service for Fotis Papagelos, beloved husband of Sophia Papagelos. May his memory be eternal! Our prayers and best wishes go out to the entire Papagelos family.**

**Also at the conclusion of Divine services today, we will have the Sunday School and Greek School graduation and promotion ceremony. Please congratulate our students and teachers for their great hard work and efforts!**

**Grecian Festival meeting, Tuesday night, June 20th, at 7 pm at our church fellowship hall. All are invited to attend. The report of our festival earnings, expenses, lessons learned, and overall festival operation will be discussed by the festival chairman. Questions and suggestions will be entertained. Please join us.**

**Parish Council meeting, Thursday night, June 22nd, at 6:45 pm at our church parish council office. All parish council members are expected to attend. This will be the last meeting until September. All members of the council please attend!**

**CONGRATULATIONS GO OUT TO ALL FATHERS, GRANDFATHERS, GODFATHERS, AND MEN WHO HAVE PROVIDED PATERNAL GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTION TO THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS! A BLESSED HAPPY FATHER'S DAY GREETING TO THEM ALL!**

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.