



Sunday Bulletin June 25, 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 Romans 5:1-10**

BRETHREN, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man -- though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

### **Gospel Reading Matthew 6:22-33**

The Lord said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

Message from Fr. Michael...

Dearly Beloved Faithful in the Lord:

Many like to skip reading the Priest's message and jump to the "Gossip column" page of the Bulletin. As the Editor and with my Associate Editor, we try to impart on you information that strengthens your Orthodoxy and not weakens it. We have the media in the outside world who may feed our heads with Godless or faithless topics, if we so choose. However, the 1-2 hours that we spend at Church on Sunday should be a time of self-reflection and prayer that we wholeheartedly and obediently give to God. So if you are reading this message, may GOD BLESS YOU! For those outside media sources make us anxious about our life! (read the third paragraph below!)

Have you ever seen Brad Pitt's movie, "Seven Years in Tibet?" It was a beautiful movie about a young German man who set out to climb the Himalayans and entered the intriguing state of Tibet. Well 4 days ago marked a historical milestone for me as it is "Nine Years in Vestal." Exactly nine years and 4 days ago, I was ordained to the Holy Priesthood in our Holy edifice of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, after having served as a deacon for 21 years. I ask myself, "Where has the time gone?" Well the Orthodox Himalayans that I have set out to climb are spiritual high grounds that I continue to persevere to ascend. After 30 years as a clergyman for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, I have had the opportunity to work with many wonderful faithful and God fearing people. It has been an awesome experience! I cannot put into words how spiritually uplifting it has been to be your pastor, proistamenos, presiding priest, confessor, confidante', teacher, counselor, mentor, friend, and brother-in-Christ. It has been an honor and great privilege to have had the opportunity to endeavor to ascend the spiritual ladder with you. I pray that God continues to give us His special grace so that we may continue on our mission to attain everlasting and eternal salvation. I pray that God continues to keep us together for many years to come as one loving, cohesive, and spiritual family.

In today's gospel reading, The Lord said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on." As your pastor, I say, instead, "for as many that have been baptized in Christ, put on Christ. Alleluia." Brothers and sisters, we forget this and put on or take on other unnecessary things in our lives that obscure our eye. We get caught up with worldly mundane issues that have nothing to do with our spiritual life and in fact, hinder us from seeing God's light. We have been baptized in Christ and have put on Christ.

Thus, we have been charged with the sacred duty, obligation, and responsibility to follow Him and to lead others on this path. This is the mission that your priest has assumed for the past seven years and will continue to endeavor to lead all out of darkness as God allows. I only ask for your prayers and faithful devotion to this cause so that we may be led out of the wilderness of worldliness to a life of holiness. May we ascend the Himalayans of spirituality to achieve Divine bliss.

A blessed and happy summer greeting goes out to all! Enjoy the sunshine and warm weather!

With paternal pastoral love, I remain  
Your faithful servant,

+Fr. Michael

## **The Righteous Martyr Febronia**



This Martyr practiced the ascetic discipline in Nisibis of Mesopotamia; she was of such great beauty that the report of her came to the persecutor Selenus, and every attempt was made to make her deny Christ. After many horrible tortures, she was cruelly dismembered by the executioners, then beheaded, in the year 310 (or, according to some, in 302, during the reign of Diocletian).

## **Appearance of the Icon of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos of Tikhvin**

According to one tradition, this icon was painted by Saint Luke the Evangelist. It was formerly situated in the famous Church of Blachernae in Constantinople. In 1383, it appeared upon the waters of Lake Ladoga, whence it travelled miraculously through the air to the city of Tikhvin; there, it remained by the River Tikhvinka, and a monastery was built to shelter the icon. In 1613-14 this monastery miraculously withstood the many attacks of the Swedish invaders. In the early twentieth century it was brought to America and was returned to Russia in 2004. The holy icon is renowned for a great many miracles wrought through it by the all-holy Mother of God, especially for the healing of children.

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 luncheon, which is free for all, to honor the departure of Dr. John and Anita Abdo. The luncheon is also in honor of all our Grecian Festival workers. We thank John and Anita Abdo for their service to our church. We wish them Godspeed in their new life in Florida. We also wish to take this opportunity to thank all our Festival workers for their great work, self-sacrifice, and service. Great job! Once again, records were broken and our church did very well this year.

Special Service - Saturday, July 1st at our Annunciation Church: Feast Day of Sts. Cosmas and Damian the Unmercenaries (Anagyroi), as well as a belated celebration for the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul and the Synaxis of the Holy Apostles:

Orthros 8:45 am  
Divine Liturgy 9:45 am

Please join us on this special day!

**\*\*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 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.

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.