



Sunday Bulletin September 30, 2018
Greek Orthodox Church of the
Annunciation

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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 Second Letter to the Corinthians 9:6-11**

Brethren, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.

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

The Lord said, "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 and 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

## **Saints and Feasts Commemorated**

### **Gregory the Illuminator, Bishop of Armenia**

This Saint, a Parthian by race, was the son of Anak. He was born about the year 240 and was taught the Faith of Christ in Caesarea of Cappadocia. He entered the service of Tiridates, King of Armenia, but when discovered to be a Christian, he was subjected to many horrible torments at the King's hands, then was cast into a pit of mire with poisonous serpents and left to die. By the power of God, however, he abode there unharmed for fourteen years, his needs provided by a certain widow, until he was made known by revelation and set free. He converted to piety innumerable multitudes of Armenians, including Tiridates himself, and was consecrated bishop by Leontius, Archbishop of Caesarea, to shepherd the vast flock he had gained for Christ. He spent the last part of his life in retirement in the ascetical discipline, and reposed in peace about the year 325. Saint Gregory is honoured as the Illuminator of Armenia.

#### **Apolytikion of Gregory the Illuminator**

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 Gregory. Intercede with Christ our God that our souls be saved.

#### **Kontakion of Gregory the Illuminator**

Second Tone

Let us the faithful today all acclaim with divine songs and hymns the renowned hierarch Gregory as an athlete for truth's sake, as a shepherd and teacher, a universal luminary bright with splendour; for he intercedeth with Christ that we be saved.

### **2nd Sunday of Luke**

#### **Mardonios & Stratonikos the Martyrs**

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Holy Transfiguration Monastery - Brookline, MA

FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Lilly Kashou, Issam Kashou, 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.

The JOY/HOPE Annual Ice Cream Social will be on Sunday, September 30, 2018 during coffee hour. See you there! Presbyteria Kim

WE WOULD LIKE TO PUBLICLY THANK AND ACKNOWLEDGE MR. TED SIMON WHO DONATED THE FUNDS FOR TODAY'S JOY/HOPE ICE CREAM SOCIAL. THANK YOU TED. MAY GOD BLESS HIM FOR HIS UNWAVERING GENEROSITY!

The Annual Church Golf Tournament/The Pastichio Open will be held on October 7, 2018 - Traditions at the Glenn, 4101 Watson Blvd, Johnson City, NY; 1:30 pm start. Dinner to follow at Riverdale Banquet House. \$80/Golfer and \$320 foursome/team. Dinner only at \$20/person. All are invited to sign up. Please contact Jim Anastos at 343-1601 or Kostas Papatomas at 205-0304.

Please pencil in the date. The annual church dance is scheduled for November 17, 2018 at the Riverdale Banquet Hall. Details will be provided at a later date. We encourage you to send your advertisements for the yearly dance book to papatho@gmail.com. Any questions please address them to Co-Chairs Steve Anastos or Kostas Papatomas.

### **Wisdom of the Fathers**

The sign that thou lovest God, is this, that thou lovest thy fellow; and if thou hatest thy fellow, thy hatred is towards God. For it is blasphemy if thou prayest before God while thou art wroth. For thy heart also convicts thee, that in vain thou multipliest words: thy conscience rightly judges that in thy prayers thou profitest nought.

St. Ephraim the Syrian  
ON ADMONITION AND REPENTANCE

Let us then, bearing in mind all the things which have been said, show forth great love even towards our enemies; and let us ease away that ridiculous custom, to which many of the more thoughtless give way, waiting for those that meet them to address them first.

St. John Chrysostom Homily 18 on Matthew 5, 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, 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 the Parish Council President or a member of the council. **Deadline for suggestions for the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.**