



Sunday Bulletin April 7, 2019
Greek Orthodox Church of the
Annunciation

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**Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis, Presiding Priest-
Proistamenos**



Epistle Reading Hebrews 6:13-20

BRETHREN, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Gospel Reading Mark 9:17-31

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

Message from Fr. Michael....

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

Today, on this fourth Sunday of Lent, we commemorate a great ascetic, St. John Climacus. Such great ascetics commanded the elements of the earth such as wild beasts who obeyed them. Their spirituality allowed them to endure the rigors of nature. Such individuals, through their power of prayer, could heal the sick. They had the ability to walk on water with the same ease as walking on dry land. The elements of the world were subject to them, because they lived in God. They had the power of grace to overcome the mystery of mother nature. One such ascetic was St. John of the Ladder. He was surnamed "of the Ladder" (Climacus) because he wrote an immortal work, the "Ladder of Divine Ascent." In this book, we read that by means of thirty steps, the Christian gradually ascends from earth to the highest level that he or she can attain.... spiritual perfection. In his book, one virtue leads to another. As we ascend to a higher spiritual level, we may finally ascend to a height where there abides the crown of the virtues. Such a crown of virtues is called "Christian love."

During Great Lent, many monastics read Saint John's book. When reading this book, we learn how one passes from one step to the next. Anyone who wishes to save his soul for eternity should read this book and allow it to serve as a guide for divine ascent. As a Christian gradually ascends, the force of spiritual and asceticism boost him to a higher spiritual level. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Strive to enter in through the narrow gate." That is, the Christian ought to be an ascetic. You do not have to be a monk or nun to be an ascetic. The Christian must be willing to deny worldly things and the pleasures of earthly life. He must take pains for his soul and his life. He must direct his life on the Christian path, and clean his soul of all filth and impurity.

The struggling Christian must strive for such ascent. Failure to do so would cast him down into the abyss of Hell. Last Sunday, in the Gospel reading from St. Mark, we heard the Lord say: "He that would come after Me, let him take up his cross, deny himself, and follow Me." Brothers and sisters, we must be willing to take up our cross and follow Him. Fasting is not only meant to be observed by ascetics, monks, and priests. Fasting is to be observed by everyone who is in good health. The Church does not require of everyone, because it is not in accordance with everyone's strength. However, the Church DOES require of every Orthodox the keeping of those fasts which She has established.

Saint John Climacus has described the ladder of spiritual ascent. We must recognize that each Christian must ascend in accordance with the virtues attained from climbing this ladder. The ladder has been prepared for us by the adhering to and following the teachings of the Fathers of the church.

Holding onto the ladder with both hands, I remain
Prayerfully, your humble servant in Christ,

+Fr. Michael

Saints and Feasts Commemorated

Sunday of St. John Climacus



The memory of this Saint is celebrated on March 30, where his biography may be found. He is celebrated today because his book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, is a sure guide to the ascetic life, written by a great man of prayer experienced in all forms of the monastic polity; it teaches the seeker after salvation how to lay a sound foundation for his struggles, how to detect and war against each of the passions, how to avoid the snares laid by the demons, and how to rise from the rudimentary virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. It is held in such high esteem that it is universally read in its entirety in monasteries during the Great Fast.

Apolytikion for Sun. of St. John Climacus in the Plagal Fourth Mode

With the streams of thy tears, thou didst cultivate the barrenness of the desert; and by thy sighings from the depths, thou didst bear fruit a hundredfold in labours; and thou becamest a luminary, shining with miracles upon the world, O John our righteous Father. Intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

George, Bishop of Lesvos

The righteous George struggled in behalf of the holy icons, and reposed in peace about the year 821.

Wisdom of the Fathers

Seest thou how He now proceeds to lay beforehand in them the foundation of His doctrine about fasting? ... See, at any rate, how many blessings spring from them both. For he that is praying as he ought, and fasting, hath not many wants, and he that hath not many wants, cannot be covetous;

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 57 on Matthew 17,4,5. B#54, pp.355,356., 4th Century

... he that is not covetous, will be also more disposed for almsgiving. He that fasts is light, and winged, and prays with wakefulness, and quenches his wicked lusts, and propitiates God, and humbles his soul when lifted up. Therefore even the apostles were almost always fasting.

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 57 on Matthew 17,4,5. B#54, pp.355,356., 4th Century

In loving memory
Protopresbyter Father Michael Michalopoulos
Πρωτοπρεσβύτερος πατήρ Μιχαήλ Μιχαλόπουλος
March 1, 1931 – April 4, 2008

Fr. Michael Michalopoulos was born in Filia, Kalavrita, Greece on March 1, 1931. As a child he served as a Novice at the Monastery of the Great Cave in Kalavrita, Greece. After graduating from high school, young Michael moved to Argentina where he met Magdalene Prodromidis; they were married in 1956 and have 2 children: Katherine and Alexandros, and five grandchildren. He was ordained Deacon in Buenos Aires in 1956 by Bishop Irinaios Kassimatis, first Greek Orthodox Bishop of South America. In 1959 Deacon Michael left for Boston to study for the priesthood at Holy Cross School of Theology, while serving as Deacon to Archbishop Iakovos of North and South America. In 1961, after his ordination to the priesthood by Archbishop Iakovos he was transferred to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Fr. Michael served there for one year, and then was transferred to Brazil as the parish priest in the city of Florianopolis also serving all the cities of southern Brazil until 1966 when he was transferred to San Paulo as Archdiocesan Vicar for all Brazil. In June 1970, Fr. Michael returned to Buenos Aires to serve at the parish of The Archangels until August 1, 1981 when he was transferred to Annunciation Church in Vestal, New York. Fr. Michael served there until his retirement in 2003. As a retired priest, Fr. Michael offered his services at the Dormition of the Theotokos Church in Windham, New York every summer and in Ottawa with his son Fr. Alex Michalopoulos. Humble, kind, approachable, trustworthy; Fr. Michael was loved by everyone who met him. When God, whom he served with fervent faith since childhood called him "Home" everyone felt that they had lost a family member. May his memory be eternal.

Ο πατήρ Μιχαήλ Μιχαλόπουλος γεννήθηκε την 1^η Μαρτίου 1931 στα Φίλια Καλαβρύτων (Αχαΐα). Παιδί, ακόμα, υπηρέτησε ως δόκιμος στο Μέγα Σπήλαιο Καλαβρύτων. Αμέσως μετά την αποφοίτησή του από το Γυμνάσιο, σε ηλικία 18 ετών, μετανάστευσε στην Αργεντινή. Το 1956 παντρεύτηκε τη Μαγδαληνή Προδρομίδου. Απέκτησαν δύο παιδιά, την Αικατερίνη και τον Αλέξανδρο και, αργότερα, πέντε εγγόνια. Το 1956 χειροτονήθηκε διάκονος από τον πρώτο Ελληνορθόδοξο Επίσκοπο Νοτίου Αμερικής, Ειρηναίο Κασσιμάτη. Το 1959 μετέβη στη Βοστώνη όπου εφοίτησε στην Θεολογική Σχολή του Τιμίου Σταυρού. Συγχρόνως, υπηρετούσε, ως διάκονος, του Αρχιεπισκόπου Βορείου και Νοτίου Αμερικής, Ιακώβου, χειροτονήθηκε ιερέας από τον Αρχιεπίσκοπο Ιάκωβο και διορίσθηκε στο Μπουένος Άιρες της Αργεντινής. Ένα χρόνο αργότερα πήρε μετάθεση για τη Βραζιλία όπου υπηρέτησε στη Φλοριανούπολη και σε άλλες πόλεις της Νοτίου Βραζιλίας. Το 1966 μετετέθη στο Σάο Πάολο ως Αρχιερατικός Επίτροπος Πάσης Βραζιλίας, εκ μέρους της Αρχιεπισκοπής Βορείου και Νοτίου Αμερικής. Τον Ιούνιο του 1970, ο πατήρ Μιχαήλ επέστρεψε στο Μπουένος Άιρες και υπηρέτησε στον ιερό ναό των Αρχαγγέλων. Την 1^η Αυγούστου 1981 μετετέθη στον ιερό ναό του Ευαγγελισμού της Θεοτόκου της πόλης Vestal (Νέα Υόρκη) όπου και παρέμεινε μέχρι τη συνταξιοδότησή του, το 2003. Ως συνταξιούχος ιερέας υπηρέτησε τον ιερό ναό Κοιμήσεως της Θεοτόκου στην πόλη Windham (Νέα Υόρκη) καθώς και το ιερό Οττάβας όπου βοηθούσε τον ιερέα υιό του, πατέρα Αλέξανδρο Μιχαλόπουλο. Ταπεινός, ευγενής και προσηνής, ο πατήρ Μιχαήλ ενέπνεε εμπιστοσύνη και αγαπήθηκε από όλους όσοι τον γνώρισαν. Για αυτό και όταν ο Κύριος, τον Οποίον από παιδί υπηρετούσε με θερμή πίστη, τον κάλεσε κοντά Του, νιώσαμε όλοι ότι χάσαμε μέλος της δικής μας οικογένειας. Ας είναι αιωνία η μνήμη του.

FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Angelo Romas, Maria Lambrinos, Lilly Kashou, Issam Kashou, Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon, and Presbytera 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.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, April 9, 2019 at 6:45 pm

We look forward to having all parish council members in attendance.

Zoe for Life! is a pan-Orthodox, non-profit, Christ-centered support organization that began 21 years ago in Cleveland, Ohio. Its mission is to provide confidential emotional and spiritual support to women during crisis pregnancies. If you are interested in helping to organize a Zoe for Life! chapter in the Binghamton area, please provide your contact information on the sign-up list in the Narthex. Meetings and other events to launching the project will be scheduled after Pascha. For additional information see <http://www.zoeforlifeonline.org>, or contact Matushka Marge Kappanadze (mkappanadze@gmail.com).

On Holy Friday, April 26, 2019, we will have Camp Annunciation at 12 noon for our youth in our fellowship hall with a prayerful focus on Good Friday and the preparation for Holy Pascha.

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 at (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.

Holy Week Schedule for the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation for 2019

Presiding Priest/Proistamenos: Rev. Dr. Michael Bahlatzis

Saturday of Lazarus, April 20, 2019: Orthros 9 AM Divine Liturgy 10 AM
(at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Binghamton)
(This will be followed by the making of crosses from palms afterwards at the
Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Vestal at 12 noon)

Palm Sunday, April 21, 2019: Orthros 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

**Palm Sunday evening, April 21, 2019: Service of the Nymphios/
Bridegroom matins 6:00 PM**

Holy Monday, April 22: Service of the Bridegroom matins 7:30 PM

**Holy Tuesday, April 23: Service of the Bridegroom matins and Hymn of Kassiani
6:30 PM**

Holy Wednesday evening, April 24: Service of the Bridegroom matins 5:30 PM
Service of the Sacrament of Holy Unction to immediately follow

**Holy Thursday morning, April 25: Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
9:30 AM**

**Holy Thursday evening, April 25: Service of the Holy Passions of our Lord and
the 12 Gospels 6:00 PM**

Holy Friday morning, April 26: Service of the Royal Hours 9:00 AM
(All are invited to assist in the flower decoration of the Epitaphios at the conclusion of
this service. Fr. Michael will provide written excuses for school absences for those
children who spend the day at the church.)

Camp Annunciation Holy Friday Program begins with decorating the Epitaphios
followed by a light Lenten lunch at 12 noon. All are encouraged to bring and share a
dish to pass that conforms with the fast of Holy Friday). A JOY/HOPE meeting will be at
1 PM. All adults and children are invited to attend.

**Holy Friday afternoon, April 26: Service of Great Vespers of the Apokathelosis
(The un-nailing of our Lord from the cross) 3 PM**

Holy Friday evening, April 26: Service of the Lamentations matins 6:30 PM

**Holy Saturday morning, April 27: Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
(The First Resurrection of our Lord raising Adam and Eve from the dead) 10 AM**

Holy Saturday night, April 27: Matins of the Pascha 11:00 PM

'O Come and Receive Ye the Light...' 11:45 PM
Reading of the Gospel of the Resurrection of our Lord 12 AM midnight
followed by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

**Easter Sunday (Pascha), April 28: Vespers service of Agape (The Gospel will be
read in multiple languages. Please see Fr. Michael if you are interested in reading the
Gospel in ANY other language besides Greek and English) 11 AM**