



Sunday Bulletin November 17, 2019
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. Plagal First Mode. Psalm 11.7,1.**

**You, O Lord, shall keep us and preserve us.**

**Verse: Save me, O Lord, for the godly man has failed.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18**

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

## **Gospel Reading Luke 12:16-21**

The Lord said this parable: "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." As he said these things, he cried out: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

*Message from Fr. Michael....*

Dearly Beloved Faithful in the Lord:

As the gospel reading of today encourages us to lay up treasures in Heaven rather than build "bigger barns" to store our crops or goods. It is angelic figures or heavenly hosts who inspire us to look toward the Divine. As we approach the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord (Christmas), we think of the angels that gathered on this most holiest of nights. Every time we gather together to celebrate as a spiritual family the Divine Liturgy, we proclaim our faith in "One God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth and of everything visible and invisible." We recall from the writings of St. Paul to the Colossians: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him" (Col. 1:16). The Greek word "angel," or "angeleophoros," means literally a messenger or carrier, whose task is to deliver the directives and messages of God to the people; and, in return, from the people to God. This is the role and mission of the order of beings of the spiritual world, the angels. In both the Old and New Testaments, the angels are presented as Divine messengers to the people inhabiting the earth. The angels bring signs of God's will and His desires to all mankind. Origen and Chrysostom wrote: "We learn to call them 'angels' from their actions and what they do... because they announce to the people the messages of God." Prophets, bishops, and priests, having the same sort of function, are also referred to in the Scriptures as "angels." This is especially true in regard to St. John the Baptist, who came to proclaim the advent of the Messiah: "Behold, I send My messenger (the angel) before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee" (Mark 1:2). However, the word "angel" is used most frequently in the Scriptures to refer to invisible, heavenly spiritual beings.

Throughout the Bible are contained accounts of the appearances of angels. In the third chapter of Genesis, for instance, we read that when God had cast our first parents, Adam and Eve, out of Paradise, "He placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (vs. 24, American Standard Version). An angel spoke to Hagar in the desert. An angel miraculously saved the life of Lot. Also, an angel spoke to Abraham, as he was preparing to sacrifice his only son, Isaac. Angels spoke to the prophets, directing their ministries. In the New Testament as well, from the very first pages, we read of the appearance of angels. At the Annunciation (the patron feast of our beloved church), the angel, Gabriel, announced to the Virgin Mary the Nativity of Christ: "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women ... And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus" (Luke 1:28, 31). Angels hail the birth of Christ in Bethlehem of Judaea: "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13,14). Angels appeared to the Magi and warned them to return home as Herod was seeking to destroy the newly born Christ Child. Angels

appeared to strengthen Christ during the period of His temptation following His forty-day fast. Angels accompanied His entire public ministry of three years. They were present during His Divine Passion in Gethsemane and on Golgotha. Finally, the angels were triumphantly present at the Lord's Resurrection, and accompanied Him into heaven at His Ascension.

Man accepts the existence of angels. The relation between man and angels is not with great distance from each other as we read: "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownest him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands" (Heb. 2:7). The angels too are creatures of the Divine and free creative love of God, who created them before the creation of the visible world. The nature of angels is that of pure spiritual beings (spirits), that of "immaterial and bodiless beings," as written in the Scriptures, and the proclamation of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. But the Fathers of the Church believed that the immateriality of the angels is not the same as that of God. They are not called "bodiless" to liken them to God (St. John Damascene), but because they neither multiply and increase, nor reduce and decrease. They come into being only by a specific Divine creative act. They are not omnipresent; that is a property of God alone. Therefore they must "travel" (if we may use that word in connection with angelic movements) from one place to another. Their mission is to serve and contribute toward the salvation of men. This is the teaching of Scripture.

In the Scriptures three archangels, although there are many more which exist, are named: Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Each man, particularly every pious person, has his own "Guardian Angel." In the liturgical services of the Church we ask in our petitions "for an Angel of peace, a faithful Guide, a Guardian of our souls and bodies." Fathers, such as John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, and Origen, believe that nations and sovereign states also have their own patron angels.

Finally, the ranks of angels are divided into three hierarchies, each containing three choirs. They are as follows: (1) Cherubim, Seraphim, Thrones; (2) Principalities, Powers, Authorities; and (3) Dominions, Archangels, and Angels.

May the Heavenly Hosts encircle us so that our prayers may ascend as one, I remain

Your humble pastor in His service,  
+Fr. Michael

### **Resurrectional Apolytikion in the Plagal First Mode**

Let us worship the Word, O ye faithful, praising Him that with the Father and the Spirit is co-beginningless God, Who was born of a pure Virgin that we all be saved; for He was pleased to mount the Cross in the flesh that He assumed, accepting thus to endure death. And by His glorious rising, He also willed to resurrect the dead.

## **Gregory the Wonderworker & Bishop of Neo-Caesarea**



Saint Gregory was born in Neocaesarea of Pontus to parents who were not Christians. He studied in Athens, in Alexandria, in Beirut, and finally for five years in Caesarea of Palestine under Origen, by whom he was also instructed in the Faith of Christ. Then, in the year 240, he became bishop of his own city, wherein he found only seventeen Christians. By the time the Saint reposed about the year 265, there were only seventeen unbelievers left there. Virtually the whole duration of his episcopacy was a time of continual, marvellous wonders worked by him. Because of this, he received the surname "Wonderworker"; even the enemies of the truth called him a second Moses (see Saint Basil the Great's On the Holy Spirit, ch. 29).

### **Apolytikion for Gregory the Wonderworker in the Plagal Fourth Mode**

By vigilance in prayer, and continuance in the working of wonders, thou didst acquire thine achievements as a surname; wherefore, intercede with Christ our God, O Father Gregory, to enlighten our souls, lest we sleep in sin unto death.

## **Righteous Mother Hilda of Whitby**

Our righteous Mother Hilda was of noble birth, being a kinswoman of Saint Edwin, King of Northumbria (celebrated Oct. 12). At the age of thirty-three she renounced the world, and lived another thirty-three years as a nun and abbess. The last six years of her life she suffered a burning fever with patience and nobility, and reposed in peace in the year 680.

## **Gennadios I and Maximus, Patriarchs of Constantinople**

### **Seasonal Kontakion in the Fourth Mode**

Today, the most pure temple of the Savior, the precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the sacred treasure of God, enters the house of the Lord, bringing the grace of the Divine Spirit. The Angels of God praise her. She is the heavenly tabernacle.

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Bassam, brother of Jeanet Hazar. Maria Lambrinos, Steve Anastos, Lilly Kashou, Angelo Romas, and Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon. 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.

## **ANNUAL CHURCH COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD**

Sign up is located in the narthex. We would like to have everyone included in this project. Donation of \$10 is requested to be included in the Community Christmas Card as a fundraiser for the church to offset the costs of printing and mailing the cards. Please PRINT names clearly and legibly.

**JOY/HOPE will meet next Sunday, November 24, 2019 during the fellowship hour. See you there.**

### **Attention:**

It is requested that everyone do their part in being conscientious about not leaving food particles on the tables, counters, and floors as mice may invade our church as we encountered incidents of this occurring.

The Parish Council

## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

*I cannot be silent about the story of Hesychius the Horebite. He passed his life in complete negligence, without paying the least attention to his soul. Then he became extremely ill, and for an hour he left his body.*

### **St. John Climacus**

Ladder of Divine Ascent. Step 6: On Remembrance of Death, 6th Century

*And when he came to himself, he begged us all to leave him immediately. And he built up the door of his cell, and he stayed in it for twelve years without ever uttering a word to anyone, and without eating anything but bread and water.*

*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 a member of the council.*

## **SCHEDULE OF CHRISTMAS SERVICES FOR 2019 CHRISTMAS SEASON**

**Sunday, December 22**

**Sunday before the Nativity of the Lord**

**Orthros 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy 10:00 am**

**Sunday School and Greek School X-mas Pageant to follow the  
Divine Liturgy**

**Tuesday, December 24**

**Christmas Eve Orthros 9:00 pm**

**Christmas Divine Liturgy 10:00 pm (Since we are having  
Christmas Liturgy which concludes at or before midnight, there  
will be no services on Christmas Day in the morning)**

**Sunday, December 29**

**Sunday after the Nativity**

**Orthros 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy 10:00 am**

**The Oath of Office will be administered by Fr. Michael to the new  
Parish Council members for the 2020-2022 term. At the  
conclusion of the service, under the chairmanship of the Priest,  
the newly elected Parish Council members will retreat to the  
church office, where officer elections will be conducted.**

**Wednesday, January 1, 2020**

**Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord and the feast day of  
St. Basil the Great**

**Orthros 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 10:00 am**

**Sunday, January 5, 2020**

**The Eve of the Feast of the Holy Theophany of the Lord**

**Orthros 9:00 am and Divine Liturgy 10:00 am**

**Monday, January 6, 2020**

**Feast of Holy Theophany**

**Orthros 8:45 am and Divine Liturgy 9:45 am**

**The Great Blessing of the Waters is to be at the conclusion of  
the Divine Liturgy on this day.**