



Sunday Bulletin September 1, 2019 *Greek Orthodox Church of the* *Annunciation*

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

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### **Epistle Reading**

**Prokeimenon. Fourth Mode. Psalm 146.5;134.3.**

**Great is our Lord, and great is his power.**

**Verse: Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 2:1-7**

Timothy, my son, first of all, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

### **Gospel Reading**

**Luke 4:16-22**

At that time, Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

*Message from Fr. Michael.....*

Dearly Beloved Faithful who thirst for the Word of God:

As we have begun the ecclesiastical New Year today, we are reminded of the gracious words of our Lord as he stood in a Synagogue and opened the book of the Prophet Isaiah and we heard the following words:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Today, September 1st, marks the Indiction, or *Indictio* as it was known in the earlier centuries of Church history, which is the start of the ecclesiastical New Year, we offer special prayers "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." The Lord preaches to us the *Good News* and we start this great year fully attentive and thirsty for His Word, with our hearts and minds open to His calling.

We may wonder and ask, "How will we benefit from this?" Well, the start of the Church New Year is an opportunity for a *fresh new start* in our lives. It is an opportunity to begin to live a Godly life and to focus on what really matters in life: our personal relationship with God. A life without faith is a life with no shield against evil forces. Our faith is our breastplate of armor. Our prayers are our incense that ascend to Heaven. Our fast is our *secret text message* to God. Our devotion to His Holy Icons in Church is our *Skype* or FaceTime with God. For He sees us and we see Him through the majesty of the Holy Icons, our windows to Heaven.

Be joyous today for the start of this blessed ecclesiastical New Year and be more joyous than the secular January 1st New Year. May the blessing of our Lord be upon you as you venture into this Blessed New Year. Quench your thirst with the Word of God! May this year be the year of intense scripture study.

Prayerfully yours, in His service,

+Fr. Michael

## Ecclesiastical New Year

For the maintenance of their armed forces, the Roman emperors decreed that their subjects in every district should be taxed every year. This same decree was reissued every fifteen years, since the Roman soldiers were obliged to serve for fifteen years. At the end of each fifteen-year period, an assessment was made of what economic changes had taken place, and a new tax was decreed, which was to be paid over the span of the fifteen years. This imperial decree, which was issued before the season of winter, was named *Indictio*, that is, *Definitio*, or *Order*. This name was adopted by the emperors in Constantinople also. At other times, the latter also used the term *Epinemisis*, that is, *Distribution* (*Dianome*). It is commonly held that Saint Constantine the Great introduced the Indiction decrees in A.D. 312, after he beheld the sign of the Cross in heaven and vanquished Maxentius and was proclaimed Emperor in the West. Some, however (and this seems more likely), ascribe the institution of the Indiction to Augustus Caesar, three years before the birth of Christ. Those who hold this view offer as proof the papal bull issued in A.D. 781 which is dated thus: *Anno IV, Indictionis LIII* -that is, the fourth year of the fifty-third Indiction. From this, we can deduce the aforementioned year (3 B.C.) by multiplying the fifty-two complete Indictions by the number of years in each (15), and adding the three years of the fifty-third Indiction. There are three types of Indictions: 1) That which was introduced in the West, and which is called *Imperial*, or *Caesarean*, or *Constantinian*, and which begins on the 24th of September; 2) The so-called *Papal Indiction*, which begins on the 1st of January; and 3) The *Constantinopolitan*, which was adopted by the Patriarchs of that city after the fall of the Eastern Empire in 1453. This Indiction is indicated in their own hand on the decrees they issue, without the numeration of the fifteen years. This Indiction begins on the 1st of September and is observed with special ceremony in the Church. Since the completion of each year takes place, as it were, with the harvest and gathering of the crops into storehouses, and we begin anew from henceforth the sowing of seed in the earth for the production of future crops, September is considered the beginning of the New Year. The Church also keeps festival this day, beseeching God for fair weather, seasonable rains, and an abundance of the fruits of the earth. The Holy Scriptures (Lev. 23:24-5 and Num. 29:1-2) also testify that the people of Israel celebrated the feast of the Blowing of the Trumpets on this day, offering hymns of thanksgiving. In addition to all the aforesaid, on this feast we also commemorate our Saviour's entry into the synagogue in Nazareth, where He was given the book of the Prophet Esaias to read, and He opened it and found the place where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, for which cause He hath anointed Me..." (Luke 4:16-30). It should be noted that to the present day, the Church has always celebrated the beginning of the New Year on September 1. This was the custom in Constantinople until its fall in 1453 and in Russia until the reign of Peter I. September 1 is still festively celebrated as the New Year at the Patriarchate of Constantinople; among the Jews also the New Year, although reckoned according to a moveable calendar, usually falls in September. The service of the *Menaion* for January 1 is for our Lord's Circumcision and for the memorial of Saint Basil the Great, without any mention of its being the beginning of a new year.

## **Symeon the Stylite**

Our righteous Father Symeon was born about the year 390 in a certain village named Sis, in the mountain region of Cilicia and Syria. Having first been a shepherd, he entered the monastic discipline at a young age. After trying various kinds of ascetical practices, both in the monastery and then in the wilderness, he began standing on pillars of progressively greater height, and heroically persevered in this for more than forty years; the greater part of this time he spent standing upright, even when one of his feet became gangrenous, and other parts of his body gave way under the strain. He did not adopt this strange way of life out of vainglory, a charge that some of his contemporaries made against him at the first: because he was already famous for his asceticism and holiness before ascending his first pillar (in Greek, style, whence he is called "Stylite"), many pious people came to him wishing to touch his garments, either for healing or for a blessing; to escape the continual vexation they caused, he made a pillar about ten feet high, and then higher and higher, until the fourth and last was about fifty feet high. The Church historian Theodoret of Cyrrhus, an eyewitness of his exploits who wrote of him while Symeon was yet alive, called him "the great wonder of the world." God gave him the grace to persevere in such an astonishing form of asceticism that multitudes came to see him from Persia, Armenia, South Arabia, Georgia, Thrace, Spain, Italy, Gaul, and the British Isles. Theodoret says that he became so famous in Rome that the Nomadic Arabs by the thousands believed in Christ and were baptized because of him; the King of Persia sent envoys to inquire into his way of life, and the Queen asked to be sent oil that he had blessed. He also was a great defender of sound doctrine, and confirmed the Orthodoxy of the Holy Council of Chalcedon for many who had been beguiled by the teachings of the Monophysites, including the Empress Eudocia, widow of Theodosius the Younger. After a life of unheard-of achievements and struggles, he reposed in peace at the age of sixty-nine, in the year 459.

### **Apolytikion for Righteous Symeon the Stylite in the First Mode**

Thou becamest a pillar of patience and didst emulate the Forefathers, O righteous one: Job in his sufferings, Joseph in temptations, and the life of the bodiless while in the body, O Symeon, our righteous Father, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

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

O God of all, Thou Who hast made all the ages, \* O Sovereign Lord, truly transcendent in essence, \* bestow Thy grace and blessing on the year to come; \* and, O Most Compassionate, \* in Thine infinite mercy \* save all them that worship Thee, \* Who alone art our Master, \* and that with fear, O Saviour, cry to Thee: \* Grant unto all men a fruitful and godly year.

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Peter Sousouris 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.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS WANTED AND NEEDED:**

- Great benefits: Heavenly treasures paid in spiritual dividends as your instruction inspires the minds and souls of our youth.
- Holidays off. Christmas and full summer vacations!
- Great hours: only 30 minutes per week: Sundays immediately following the distribution of Holy Communion. After consultation, with our past and former Sunday School superintendent, Lynda Ivan, it was felt that Sunday School classes would be better attended following the distribution of Holy Communion rather than earlier.
- Sunday School year will run from September 15, 2019 - May 17, 2020. Sunday School graduation and moving up day will be on May 17, 2020.
- Anyone may apply. PLEASE SEE FR. MICHAEL IF YOU ARE INTERESTED or call him evenings at 795-1474.

Message from Fr. Michael: I am respectfully asking everyone to help make our Sunday School program a successful one this year. I am asking that the parents of our youth make the commitment of bringing their children to Church on time this year. It is requested that our youth be at Church by 10 am this year on Sundays. Together, let us try to fulfill our obligation to God by coming to Church regularly. Let us all do so in a loving enthusiastic way. Our children's attendance begins with YOU the parents. We show our children how important God is by our enthusiasm in bringing our children to Church. Please help us assist in the spiritual welfare of the children of our community (who represent the future of our church) so that they may continue to grow and prosper within the faith. May God bless you for doing so.

Prayerfully and lovingly,  
+ Fr. Michael

## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

And while one calls on Jerusalem, saying, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, for lo! thy King cometh to thee meek, riding upon an ass, and a young colt;" another proclaims His second coming also, saying on this wise, "The Lord, whom ye seek, will come, and who will abide the day of His coming? Leap ye as calves set free from bonds." And another again, amazed at such things, said, "This is our God; there shall none other be accounted of in comparison of Him."

### **St. John Chrysostom**

Homily 19 on Matthew 6, 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.*