



Sunday Bulletin July 12, 2020 *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 103.24,1. O Lord, how manifold are your works. You have made all things in wisdom**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans 10:1-10**

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified. Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

### **Gospel Reading**

**Matthew 8:28-34; 9:1**

At that time, when Jesus came to the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one would pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighbourhood. And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city.

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

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

In today's gospel reading of St. Matthew, we heard the story of the Lord coming upon two demoniacs, men possessed by demons, who lived amongst the tombs of the deceased. The first greeting by the demoniacs to the Lord professes who Jesus is when they say "Son of God." That was the recognition of the Lord's Divinity by them. St. Matthew referred to this land that the Lord came upon as the land of the Gergesenes. Was he referring to this land as the world we live in and the overall condition of the world that we dwell in? Why did St. Matthew say "Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town"? All towns and lands are the Lord's as He is the Creator. As people feared the demoniacs, ordinary people who avoid passing that way. However, the Lord purposely journeyed there. The image of the tombs remind us of our earthly mortality and that life on earth is finite. The image of the two demoniacs, the possessed men, remind us of what life is without the presence of God in our lives. The two demoniacs are symbol of all of the people on earth who have separated themselves from God.

In those days, Jews did not use swine as a source of food. Only the Gentiles and non-Jews would farm them. The symbol of the presence swine becomes associated with death as we read in St. Matthew's gospel: "the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water" (8:32). The demoniacs fear death and thought the Lord was coming upon them to cast Last Judgement for they said "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?" Although the Messiah has come to save the world, for those that separate themselves from God, in the final analysis, they will be judges as sheep and goats. Sheep to the right for eternal salvation and goats to the left for eternal damnation. The Swine was a metaphor for death. We may "sink or swim." Swim in the ocean of the Lord's infinite mercy and be nurtured eternally in the bosom of Abraham or sink to depths of the murky water of the abyss where there is eternal darkness and no chance of return. Brothers and sisters, we have the prerogative of determining which path we will choose as God has given us free will.

Prayerfully I remain  
Your faithful servant,

+Fr. Michael

## Saints and Feasts Commemorated

### 5th Sunday of Matthew

**Veronica, the woman with the issue of blood who was healed by Jesus**



### Proclus & Hilary the Martyrs of Ancyra

These Martyrs contested in Ancyra in 106, during the reign of the Emperor Trajan. Saint Proclus was seized as a Christian and, confessing his faith, was burned on his sides and belly, was hung upon a beam with heavy stones tied to his feet, and finally was taken away to be shot with arrows. As he was being led forth, his nephew Hilary encountered him and greeted him, and was himself seized. After his uncle had been slain with arrows, Hilary, because he would not deny Christ, was tormented, then beheaded.

#### Apolytikion of Martyrs Proclus & Hilary

#### Fourth Tone

Thy Martyrs, O Lord, in their courageous contest for Thee received as the prize the crowns of incorruption and life from Thee, our immortal God. For since they possessed Thy strength, they cast down the tyrants and wholly destroyed the demons' strengthless presumption. O Christ God, by their prayers, save our souls, since Thou art merciful.

#### Kontakion of Martyrs Proclus & Hilary

#### Second Tone

As kinsmen, ye did prove to be of like spirit in your life and of one accord in all things, O renowned Martyr Proclus and godly-minded Hilary; for having yourselves become images of the Passion of Christ, ye were counted worthy of glory, and ye grant divine forgiveness unto all.

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS...**that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Ted Simon, John Gianakos, Maria Lambrinos, Steve Anastos, 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.

Results of Live-streaming services on YouTube for Annunciation Church in Vestal:

4th Sunday of Lent, March 29 - 147 views  
5th Sunday of Lent - unable to broadcast due to Wi-Fi issues  
Sat. of Lazarus, April 11 - 97 views  
Palm Sunday, April 12 - 152 views  
Palm Sunday evening, April 12 - 68 views  
Holy Monday evening, April 13 - 63 views  
Holy Tuesday evening, April 14 - 76 views  
Holy Wednesday evening, April 15 - 85 views  
Holy Thurs morning, April 16 - 41 views  
Holy Thurs evening, April 16 - 100 views  
Holy Friday morning, April 17 - 112 views  
Holy Friday afternoon, April 17 - 42 views  
Holy Friday evening, April 17 - 118 views  
Holy Sat morning, April 18 - 45 views  
Holy Sat afternoon/eve, April 18 - 126 views  
Easter Sunday/Pascha, April 19 - 41 views  
Sunday of Thomas, April 26 - 63 views  
Sunday of the Myrrhbearers, May 3 - 42 views  
Sunday of the Paralytic/Mother's Day, May 10 - 66 views  
Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, May 17 - 59 views

Total views to date: 1,543 as of May 23, 2020

I want to take this time to thank everyone for their 'virtual' attendance through viewing these services through YouTube. It is truly a blessing to see the diligence of the faithful in viewing these services and not allowing the discourse of the pandemic from inhibiting our thirst for hearing the word of God. May the Lord bless you for your continued love and faith!

In the risen Christ,  
+Fr. Michael

## Wisdom of the Fathers

Now, should any one say, "And wherefore did Christ fulfill the devils' request, suffering them to depart into the herd of swine?" this would be our reply, that He did so, not as yielding to them, but as providing for many objects thereby.

### **St. John Chrysostom**

Homily 28 on Matthew 8, 4th Century

One, to teach them that are delivered from those wicked tyrants, how great the malice of their insidious enemies: another, that all might learn, how not even against swine are they bold, except He allow them; a third, that they would have treated those men more grievously than the swine, unless even in their calamity they had enjoyed much of God's providential care. For that they hate us more than the brutes is surely evident to every man.

### **St. John Chrysostom**

Homily 28 on Matthew 8, 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 all other matters, please notify Fr. Michael or a member of the parish council. Deadline for suggestions for the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.*