



Sunday Bulletin November 29, 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. Plagal Fourth Mode. Psalm 75.11,1.**

**Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.**

**Verse: God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:1-7**

Brethren, I, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

## **Gospel Reading     Luke 18:18-27**

At that time, a ruler came to Jesus and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.' " And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth." And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

*Message from Fr. Michael....*

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

In the Holy Gospel reading today, we heard the story of a rich man asking the Lord about inheriting eternal life. During the time that Jesus walked the earth, a wealthy Jew was often wealthy because he had worked with the oppressive Romans often at the cost of his own people. We heard that he adhered to the commandments yet he betrayed his own people. His obedience to the Law of Moses was a superficial obedience and was not a spiritually deep rooted one with love. He displayed a false piety which served to distract others from his unupious ways. He learns that "to inherit life" he must sell his possessions, "and give to the poor" and become a follower of Jesus he turns away in sorrow "for he was very rich." He is condemned for his love of worldly things. The rich man places greater value on his earthy treasures than those he should lay up for himself in the Kingdom of Heaven. He is so consumed with his love of wealth that he is truly lost. He is willing to give up eternal salvation in order to hold on to his worldly possessions. It is though he loves his possessions more than he loves God. Although the rich man stated, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

St. Clement wrote that this was a trick by the rich man to try to "convict Christ of introducing laws of His own and of dishonoring the commandments spoken by the most wise Moses" (Commentary on Luke, Homily 122, quoted in ACCS, NT, vol III: Luke, p., 283) The rich man was not looking to establish a friendship with our Lord. The rich man was fooling no one but himself. He was actually poisoning his own soul through his own misguidedness. Salvation, i.e. inheritance of eternal life, joy, and peace could have been granted to him and all he had to do was to follow Christ. If he understood and adhered to a life of self-denial, then he would have moved away from the temporal or worldly things and sought refuge with those things which are everlasting.

Brothers and sisters, are we leading a life of misguidedness? Are we too concerned about what we could acquire on Black Friday shopping in stores? Are we too busy complaining about the workings of our church without trying to help God's Church? Do we sit back and let others labor for God while we do nothing to keep God's Church lovingly united? Do we point our finger at others while not realizing that there are three fingers pointing right back at us? St. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians:8-12: "If there be a ready mind, it is accepted according to what a man has and not according to what he has not". Are we the rich man who walks sad due to not being ready for joy? We are not that type of person! For that type of person prefers to carry the weight of his own sin rather than acquiring the freedom that is gained from taking up the Cross and following our loving Lord, Jesus.

May we lay up treasures in Heaven as our prayers ascend as one, I remain  
In His service,

+Fr. Michael

## **Saints and Feasts Commemorated**

### **Dionysios, Bishop of Corinth**

#### **13th Sunday of Luke**

### **Paramonus, Philumenus, and their 370 Companion Martyrs in Bithynia**

Saint Paramonus contested for piety's sake during the reign of Decius, in the year 250. A ruler named Aquilinus, seeking relief from a bodily malady, visited a certain therapeutic hot spring. He brought with him captive Christians from Nicomedia, and commanded them to offer sacrifice in the temple of Isis. When they refused, he had them all slaughtered, to the number of 370. Saint Paramonus, beholding their murder, boldly cried out against such an act of ungodliness. When Aquilinus heard this, he sent men to take the Saint. Some smote him with spears, others pierced his tongue and body with sharp reeds, until he died.

Saint Philumenus' contest in martyrdom took place during the reign of Aurelian, in the year 270. Coming from Lycaonia, he was conveying a load of wheat into Galatia when he was denounced as a Christian to Felix, Governor of Ancyra. Nails were driven into his hands, feet, and head, and he was commanded to run. While running in the road, he fell and gave up his holy soul into the hands of God.

## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

Take heed, then, often to come together to give thanks to God, and show forth His praise. For when ye assemble frequently in the same place, the powers of Satan are destroyed, and the destruction at which he aims is prevented by the unity of your faith.

### **St. Ignatius of Antioch**

Epistle to the Ephesians Ch. 13, 2nd century

It is only when in the darkness of this world we discern that Christ has already "filled all things with Himself" that these things, whatever they may be, are revealed and given to us full of meaning and beauty. A Christian is one who, wherever he looks, finds Christ and rejoices in Him.

### **Fr. Alexander Schmemmann**

For the Life of the World, p. 113, 20th century

**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.

## **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR 2020 CHRISTMAS SEASON**

### **Thursday, December 24**

Christmas Eve

Orthros 6:00 pm and Christmas Divine Liturgy 7:00 pm

(There will be no services on Christmas Day in the morning)

### **Sunday after the Nativity, December 27**

Feast of St. Stephen the Protomartyr

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

### **Friday, January 1, 2021**

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 3, 2021**

Orthros 9 am and Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

### **Wednesday, January 6, 2021**

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.

*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 to the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.*