



Sunday Bulletin January 10, 2021
Greek Orthodox Church of the
Annunciation

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

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## **Epistle Reading**

**Prokeimenon. First Mode. Psalm 32.22,1.**

**Let your mercy, O Lord, be upon us.**

**Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 4:7-13**

BRETHREN, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (in saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

## **Gospel Reading**

**Matthew 4:12-17**

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

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

*Dearly Beloved Faithful in the Lord:*

As today is the Sunday following Theophany, in the gospel reading according to St. Matthew today we heard that the people in Zebulon and Naphtali were a people who sat in darkness. In the same manner, we find ourselves sitting in darkness. Well we ask ourselves if the light of our beloved Savior Jesus has dawned upon us, how can we be sitting in darkness?

It is only due to our having turned away from God's divine light. If we recall in the gospel of John 13:30, Judas walked out of thumper room where the Last Supper was held. He walked away from the light into outer eternal darkness. In our zeal for the pleasures of the secular life, we too, often times, walk away from the light of holiness into darkness. We come in contact with darkness when we cast ourselves away from the true source of our inner being which is God and attempt to find meaning in our lives by looking elsewhere. If we live in sin, the light will not remain in us. The light may not illuminate us if we choose to remain in the shadow of the unholy. The person that believes in God and places all their faith in God will not be condemned. However, the person whose not believe will be condemned. According to the gospel of John 3: 18-21, "he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

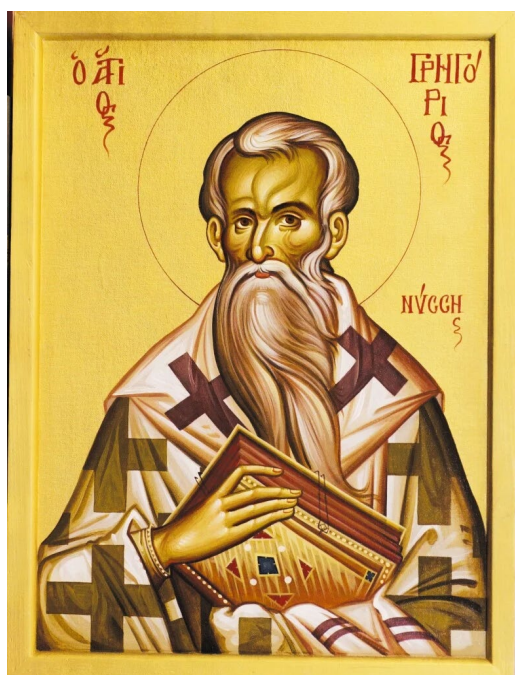
As we celebrated the Theophany of our Lord last Wednesday, we remember that this was the feast of the light and in Greek known as 'ta phota' or 'ton foton.' In that service, we recall the prayer of Patriarch Sophronius, " Today we have escaped from darkness, and by the light of the knowledge of God we have been illuminated." In John 8: 12, we heard the Lord say, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

It is our mission as Orthodox Christians to always seek the high ground in life looking for the good in everything by loving thy neighbor as thyself and in doing so, we may remain in His divine light. May God bless us as we seek to be the people of God who love Him and await His great mercy.

Prayerfully yours,

+Fr. Michael

## Sunday after Epiphany



### Gregory of Nyssa

Saint Gregory, the younger brother of Basil the Great, illustrious in speech and a zealot for the Orthodox Faith, was born in 331. His brother Basil was encouraged by their elder sister Macrina to prefer the service of God to a secular career (see July 19); Saint Gregory was moved in a similar way by his godly mother Emily, who, when Gregory was still a young man, implored him to attend a service in honor of the holy Forty Martyrs at her retreat at Annesi on the River Iris. Saint Gregory came at his mother's bidding, but being wearied with the journey, and feeling little zeal, he fell asleep during the service. The Forty

Martyrs then appeared to him in a dream, threatening him and reproaching him for his slothfulness. After this he repented and became very diligent in the service of God.

Gregory became bishop in 372, and because of his Orthodoxy he was exiled in 374 by Valens, who was of one mind with the Arians. After the death of Valens in 378, Gregory was recalled to his throne by the Emperor Gratian. He attended the Local Council of Antioch, which sent him to visit the churches of Arabia and Palestine, which had been defiled and ravaged by Arianism. He attended the Second Ecumenical Council, which was assembled in Constantinople in 381. Having lived some sixty years and left behind many remarkable writings, he reposed about the year 395. The acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council call him 'Father of Fathers.'

### Dometian, Bishop of Melitene

Saint Dometian lived in the years of the Emperor Justin II, who reigned from 565 to 578, and the Emperor Maurice, who reigned from 582 to 602. Born of pious parents named Theodore and Eudocia, he received a thorough education in both secular and sacred knowledge. After he had lived in lawful wedlock a short time, his wife died, and he, for his virtue was made Bishop of Melitene in Armenia at the age of thirty. As a kinsman and trusted friend of the Emperor Maurice, he received from him great largesse, which he spent on the building of churches and the help of the poor; he was entrusted with the dealings of Byzantium with Persia. While in Constantinople, he reposed in peace in the year 602.

**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.

Today, we are having a 40 day Memorial service for Nicholas Koutsaris. May his memory be eternal! Our prayers and heartfelt best wishes go out to the entire Koutsaris family.

## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

For as persons not even knowing where to put a step forward, so they sat, overtaken by the darkness.

### **St. John Chrysostom**

Homily 14 on Matthew 4, 4th Century

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 the sole and peculiar property of the Substance that transcends all, to be able to bestow on men the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and make those that draw near unto It partakers of the divine nature.

### **St. Cyril of Alexandria**

Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, Homily 10., 4th Century

But this exists in Christ, not as a thing received, nor by communication from another, but as His own, and as belonging to His substance, for He baptizes in the Holy Spirit.

### **St. Cyril of Alexandria**

Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, Homily 10., 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 to the bulletin is 12:00 noon on Thursday.*