



Sunday Bulletin September 17, 2023 *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 Second Mode. Psalm 27.9,1.**  
**O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.**  
**Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.**

**The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 2:16-20**

Brethren, knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

### **Gospel Reading                      Mark 8:34-38; 9:1**

The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."

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

Dearly Beloved Faithful:

As this is the Sunday following the elevation of the cross, we are reminded that the cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the invincible trophy and a weapon of peace. Through the cross we attain eternal peace. A great paradox of our salvation exists and that is: how is it that the weapon utilized to be an instrument of our Lord's death became the means by which our Lord had victory over sin and death. The cross was the Roman symbol of torture and death. This symbol became elevated to a symbol of victory over death and everlasting salvation. Through the cross, we are turned away from sin and turned away from darkness to achieve the brightness of heavenly glory.

On this Sunday, we transcend our thoughts beyond what the Lord has done for the universe and focus on what the Lord has done for us as an individual. Additionally, we also stop and consider how we are responding to the Lord's call. The power of our Lord's Cross affects each of us. It is up to each of us, as individuals, to determine the impact that the Cross has on each of us. The Lord's Cross is the equivalent to God's finger pointing toward the direction that we are to follow to have everlasting life. The gospel reading of today reminds us to deny ourselves meaning that we are to deny the material pleasures and the secularism of the world and instead, we are to take up our Cross and follow the Lord, "for he who loses his life for my sake and the gospel will save his life." What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his life? We should allow the power of that symbol, which hangs down from our neck, lying on our chest next to our heart, to permeate into our heart. In doing so, we are changed for all eternity as it is the illuminating torch that we carry to bring us out of darkness. May the Lord's Cross be the symbol that soothes and protects our souls.

Prayerfully I remain  
Yours in His service,

+Fr. Michael

# Saints and Feasts Commemorated

## Sunday after Holy Cross

### Sophia & her three daughters: Faith, Hope, and Love



These Saints were from Italy and contested for the Faith about the year 126, during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian. Faith was twelve years old, Hope, ten, and Love, nine; each was tormented and then beheaded, from the eldest to the youngest. Their mother Sophia mourned at their grave for three days, where she also fell asleep in peace; because of her courageous endurance in the face of her daughters' sufferings, she is also counted a martyr. The name Sophia means "wisdom" in Greek; as for her daughters' names, Faith, Hope, and Love (Charity), they are Pistis, Elpis, and Agape in Greek, and Vera, Nadezhda, and Lyubov in Russian.

### Herakleides & Myron, Bishops of Cyprus

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Demetrios Pappastratis (father of George Pappastratis), Angelo Romas, Persa Nizamis, Mitry Ganim, Ted Simon, 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.

### **ATTENTION ALL YOUTH WORKERS**

Whether it be teaching our youth to Greek dance or conducting Sunday School or Greek lessons or working with our Youth of our Parish IN ANY CAPACITY, The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit have mandated that everyone working with the Youth must complete a background check and online Youth Safety training through Sterling. Please contact the Metropolis of Detroit and speak with the Metropolis Youth Director about details at (248) 823-2411. Please go on the [YouthSafetyPlatform.goarch.org](https://YouthSafetyPlatform.goarch.org) website and register.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL AND GREEK SCHOOL REGISTRATION**

Please note that registration forms are available for your children in the exo-Narthex. Please complete them and give them to Athena Papathomas for Sunday School and Giannoula Alikakos for Greek School. Classes will begin on the weekend of September 23-24, 2023.

### **MEMORIAL SERVICE - September 24, 2023**

3 Year Memorial Service will be held for Pavlos Alikakos on Sunday, September 24, 2023 at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. A coffee hour will held by his beloved wife, Giannoula Alikakos and her family in his memory following services. May his memory be eternal!

## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

The key to knowledge is the humility of Christ. The door of the Kingdom of Heaven is open, not to those who only know in their learned minds the mysteries of faith and the commandments of their Creator, but to those who have progressed far enough to live by them.

### **St. Bede the Venerable**

Unknown, 8th century

To deny oneself means to give up one's bad habits; to root out of the heart all that ties us to the world; not to cherish bad thoughts and desires; to suppress every evil thought; to avoid occasions of sin; not to desire or to do anything out of self-love, but to do everything out of love for God. To deny oneself, according to St. Paul means "to be dead to sin. . . but alive to God."

### **St. Innocent of Alaska**

The Lenten Spring, SVS Press, p. 147, 19th 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.*