

# St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

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## March 24, 2019 Sunday of St. Gregory of Palamas



On March 24 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we celebrate the Forefeast of the Annunciation to the Theotokos, and we commemorate Venerable Father Zachariah the recluse and Artemon, bishop of Seleucia; and New-hieromartyr Parthenios, patriarch of Constantinople.

On this same day, the Second Sunday of the Fast, we make remembrance of our father among the saints, Gregory Palamas, archbishop of Thessalonica.

This divine father was born in Asia and was brought up from infancy in the royal palace of Constantinople. When he was of age, Gregory left the palace and gave himself to asceticism on Mount Athos. He eventually moved to Thessalonica to seek cure for the diseases he contracted because of his asceticism and piety. In 1349, he was elevated to the episcopacy, tending to his people in an Apostolic fashion for 13 years. He is glorified as an ascetic, a theologian, a hierarch and a miracle-worker, who forsook a prominent, secular lifestyle to take up his cross and follow Christ. The Most-Holy Theotokos,

St. John the Theologian, St. Demetrius, St. Anthony the Great, St. John Chrysostom and angels of God appeared to him at different times.

Through his intercessions, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

## **APOLYTIKION FOR ST. GREGORY PALAMAS IN TONE EIGHT**

O Star of Orthodoxy, support of the Church and its teacher, O comeliness of ascetics, and incontestable champion of those who speak in theology, Gregory the wonder-worker, the pride of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, implore thou constantly for the salvation of our souls.

## **KONTAKION FOR THE FOREFEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION IN TONE FOUR**

At the great Archangel's voice, \* O Theotokos, \* the All-holy Spirit came \* upon thee and thou didst conceive \* Him that is one in essence and throne \* with God the Father, O Adam's recovery.

**THE EPISTLE** - *O Lord, Thou wilt preserve us and keep us from this generation. Save me, O Lord, for the godly man hath disappeared.*

### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (1:10-2:3)**

“In the beginning, Thou, O Lord, didst found the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands; they will perish, but Thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle Thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years will never end.” But to what angel has He ever said, “Sit at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies a stool for thy feet”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore, we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message, declared by angels, was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard Him.

### **THE GOSPEL - The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (2:1-12)**

At that time, when Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and He was preaching the Word to them. And they came, bringing to Jesus a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now, some of the scribes were sitting there, reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak thus? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus reasoned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you reason thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your pallet and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” – He said to the paralytic – “I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.” And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all. So that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

## Oldest Surviving Icon of the Annunciation

The oldest surviving icon of the Annunciation is found in the Catacomb of Priscilla on the *Via Salaria* in Rome, Italy, and dates from the second half of the second century A.D. Priscilla is thought to have been a well-to-do Roman who converted to Christianity and was martyred. These Christian catacombs, along with many others found surrounding Rome, are a treasury of early Christian iconography.



*Annunciation Icon, Ohrid, 14th Century*

as Bishop of Milan. He held to the Nicene belief and through the eloquence of his arguments he persuaded Emperor Gratian to the Nicene confession. Ambrose zealously combated imperial court attempts at favoritism to the parties of Arians, the “old” religion, and the Jews, particularly opposing the favors from Emperor Valentinian who supported the Arians. In defending the Orthodox position he has often been compared to St. Hilary of Poitiers. He was known for his sermons which greatly influenced the conversion of Augustine of Hippo.

The mysteries of God are unsearchable, as is especially declared in the prophetic words :

*What man is he that can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the Lord is?*

Nevertheless, some things have been revealed to us. And hence we may gather, from the words and works of our Lord and Saviour, that there was a special purpose of God in the fact that she who was chosen to bring forth the Lord was espoused to a man.

Why did not the power of the Highest overshadow her before she was so espoused? Perhaps it was lest any might blasphemously say that the Holy One was conceived in fornication, and the Angel came in unto her.



*Annunciation, late 2nd century, Rome*

It is remarkable how similar this image is to the established iconography of the Annunciation: Mary seated in a high-backed chair, the Archangel Gabriel stood, robed simply, with bare feet, and arm raised to signify he is speaking:

*Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with You!*

## Reflections on The Annunciation by St. Ambrose of Milan

*Our father among the saints **Ambrose of Milan** came to be bishop of Milan as the only competent candidate to succeed Auxentius, a bishop of Arian persuasion, in 374. A catechumentheology through intense study of subject as he was successively baptized and then consecrated*

Let us learn from this Virgin how to bear ourselves: let us learn by her devout utterance ; above all let us learn by the holy mystery to be timid, to avoid the advances of men, and to shrink from men's addresses. Would that our women would learn from the example of modesty here set before us. She upon whom the stare of men had never been fixed was alone in her chamber, and was found only by an Angel.

There was neither companion nor witness there, that what passed might not be debased in gossip; and the Angel saluted her. The message of God to the Virgin was a mystery so great that it must needs not be uttered by the mouth of man, but only by an Angel.

*For the first time on earth the words are spoken: The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee.*

The holy maiden heareth, and believeth. At length she saith:

*Behold the handmaiden of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word.*

Here is an example of lowliness; here is a pattern of true devotion. At the very moment she is chosen to be the Mother of the Lord she declareth herself to be his handmaid. The knowledge that she was chosen to this high vocation wrought in Mary only an act of humility.

### **Annunciation Sermon by St. Leo the Great**

*St. Leo the Great was the bishop of Rome during difficult times. He was an eminent scholar of Scripture and rhetoric. During an invasion by Attila the Hun, St. Leo met him outside the gates of Rome. After some short words, to everyone's surprise, Attila turned and left. Three years later, during an invasion by Genseric the Vandal, St. Leo's intercession again saved the Eternal City from destruction.*

God is He whose nature is goodness, whose will is power, and whose work is mercy.

Wherefore, at the very beginning of the world, as soon as the devil's hatred had mortally annunciation poisoned mankind with the venom on his envy, this almighty and merciful God even then foretold those remedies which his mercy had foreordained for our healing.

At that time he bade the serpent know that there was to be a seed of the woman who yet should crush the prideful swelling of his pestilential head. This seed was none other than the Christ to come in the flesh, even God and Man in one Person, who should be born of the Virgin, and by his virgin-birth should condemn the seducer of man.

The devil rejoiced that he had, by his artful cunning, so deceived man as to make him lose the gifts of God, and forfeit the privilege of eternal life. Yea, when the devil had thus brought man under the hard sentence of death, he found a certain solace for his own misery in the fact that he now had a comrade in his guilt. He thought also that God, in His just anger, would change His original design towards man, whom he had made in such honor.

But, dearly beloved, that unchangeable God, whose will cannot be balked of its loving-kindness, in the dispensation of his own secret counsel, had already provided a mysterious way for carrying out his original purpose of goodness. So it was that mankind, which had been led into sin by the wicked craft of the devil, was not suffered to perish, and frustrate that gracious purpose of God.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Thank You!** A huge warm thank you to the Antiochian Women and the many helping hands that came together to make the Annunciation Tea a very blessed event! May God bless each one of you who worked so hard to make the day a great blessing for all who participated!

**Meal Train for the Rush Family** - I wanted to reach out to everyone from the Parish to see who is willing and able to sign up for the Meal Train for the Rush family. Bryne was blessed with her sweet baby boy a couple of weeks early so we are trying to fill up the rest of March so they won't have to worry about cooking meals during this time. The dates that still need to be filled are:

- March 27,29,31
- April 9, 23
- May 1,3,7,11,15,17

The family doesn't have any food allergies, and are open to all kinds of foods!

Contact me if you can provide any meals for the Rush's on the above dates. If possible, please drop off the meals at 5:00PM.

Thank you! Joanna Funderburg (Bryne's sister) [joannamae83@gmail.com](mailto:joannamae83@gmail.com) (208) 651-6188

**St. Herman of Alaska Scholarship Fund** - St. Herman's Scholarship Fund has been established to help students who wish to pursue or are currently pursuing full time study in an institution of learning (two or four year college or university) or a vocational institute. It was created for the purpose of helping young people who have recently graduated from high school or are already in college. Each year a student will be selected to receive a stipend of \$2,000. In order to be eligible for the stipend, a student should be a member in good standing at St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church in Post Falls or at Christ the Savior Orthodox Church in Spokane or at Holy Myrrhbearers Orthodox Church in Bonners Ferry, and a full time student at a high school or college with a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4 point scale. Academic excellence, financial need and church/community service will be taken into account in the awarding of the stipend. Please see Fr. Mark or Barbara Garbinski for an application form. June 17<sup>th</sup> is the deadline.



## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES & EVENTS

**Saturday, Mar 23:** Annunciation Tea 12:00pm – 4:00pm; Great Vespers 6:00pm

**Sunday, Mar 24: Sunday of St. Gregory of Palamas** - Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am, Sunday School and Lunch following; **Great Vespers for the Annunciation 6:00pm**

**Monday, Mar 25: Annunciation of the Theotokos** – Vespers Divine Liturgy for the Annunciation 6:00pm; Youth Swing 7:00pm

**Tuesday, Mar 26:** Just for Kix 5:30pm

**Wednesday, Mar 27:** Presanctified Divine Liturgy 6:00pm, Lenten dinner and reading from the Divine Ladder following.

**Thursday, Mar 28:** Just for Kix 5:30pm

**Friday, Mar 29:** Spiritual Circle 9:30am, Little Compline w/ Akathist Canon 6:00pm

**Saturday, Mar 30:** Great Vespers 6:00pm

**Sunday, Mar 31: Sunday of the Holy Cross** - Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am, Sunday School and Lunch following

**Monday, April 1:** Great Compline 6:00pm; Youth Swing 7:00pm

**Tuesday, April 2:** Just for Kix 5:30pm

**Wednesday, April 3:** Presanctified Divine Liturgy 6:00pm

**Thursday, April 4:** Just for Kix 5:30pm

**Friday, April 5:** Spiritual Circle 9:30am, Little Compline w/ Akathist Canon 6:00pm

**Saturday, April 6:** Great Vespers 6:00pm

**Sunday, April 7: Sunday of St. John Climacus** - Orthros 9:00am, Divine Liturgy 10:00am, Sunday School and Lunch following

## EPISTLE READERS

Mar 24 Terri (Xenia) Izzi

April 7 Reader Sebastian Horton

Mar 31 Tabitha Townsend

April 14 Reader Mark Fellegly

## LUNCH TEAM

Mar 24: Team 4: Mannion family, Jack Nolan & Walden family

Mar 31: Potluck

April 7: Team 1: Schaefer family, Gallatin family & Phillips family

April 14: Team 2: Bardwell family, Linda Cardinal, Jenny Dancy & Sandford family

## CLEANING ROTATION (nave, narthex, hallway and upstairs restrooms)

Week of 3/24 St. Theophan Coop

Week of 4/7 Mary Jo Neyman

Week of 3/31 Jeanne Rickert

Week of 4/14 Dn. Joseph & Susan Mannion

**PRAYERS FOR THE LIVING:** Barbara Garbinski, Kaitlin Weisman, Helen Odell, Metropolitans Paul and John (hostages in Syria), the suffering Christians throughout the Middle East.

**PRAYERS FOR THE DEPARTED:** Stephen Bryant, Victims of abortion, the departed Christians throughout the world who have died for the Faith.