

Ambo

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Divine Services

Eve Sundays & Feast Days

5:00 PM Confessions

6:00 PM Great Vespers

Sundays and Feast Days

8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hour

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Please check weekly schedule
for specific days (last page).

Previous Ambos on website.

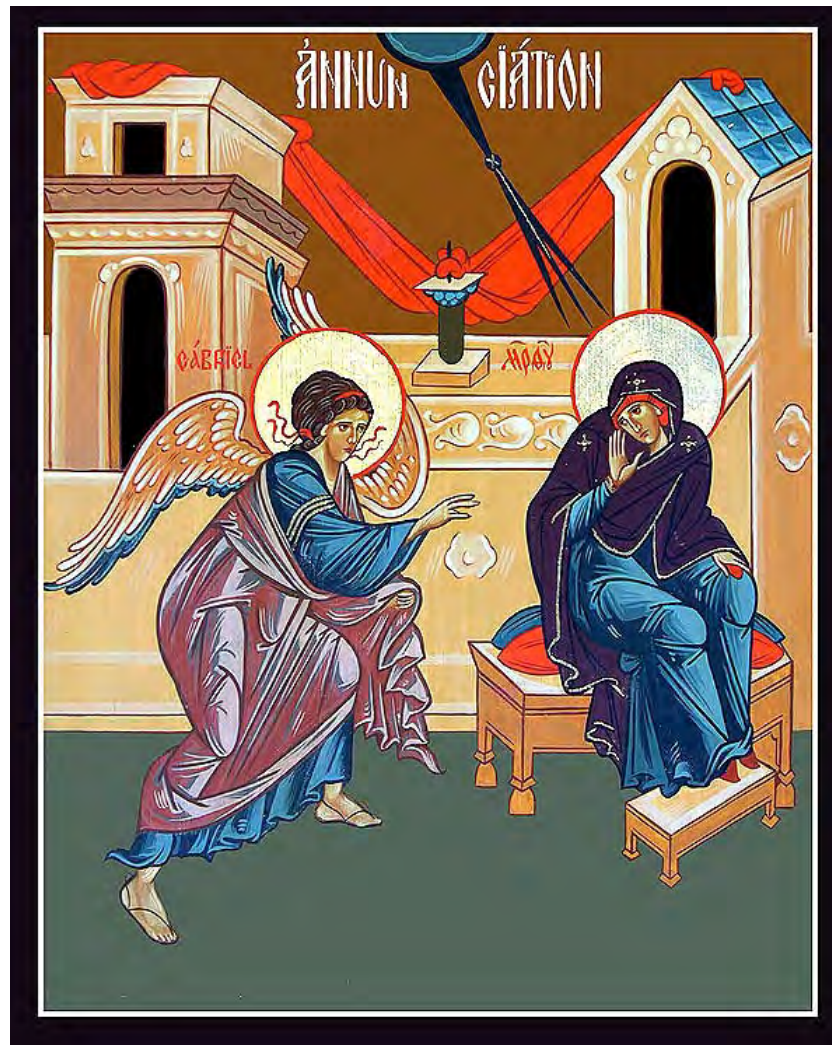
Articles for publication
should be submitted to:

ambo-theodosius@googlegroups.com

MARCH 24, 2024

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

SUNDAY OF
ORTHODOXY



The Feast of the Annunciation

(March 25) is one of the earliest Christian feasts, and was already being celebrated in the fourth century.

There is a painting of the Annunciation in the catacomb of Priscilla in Rome dating from the second century. The Council of Toledo in 656 mentions the Feast, and the Council in Trullo in 692 says that the Annunciation was celebrated during Great Lent.

The Greek and Slavonic names for the Feast may be translated as "good tidings."

This, of course, refers to the Incarnation of the Son of God and the salvation He brings. The background of the Annunciation is found in the Gospel of Saint Luke (1:26-38). The troparion describes this as the "beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the eternal mystery," for on this day the Son of God became the Son of Man.

There are two main components to the Annunciation: the message itself, and the response of the Virgin. The message fulfills God's promise to

send a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15): "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for his heel." The Fathers of the Church understand "her seed" to refer to Christ. The prophets hinted at His coming, which they saw dimly, but the Archangel Gabriel now proclaims that the promise is about to be fulfilled.

We see this echoed in the Liturgy of Saint Basil, as well: "When man disobeyed Thee, the only true God who had created him, and was deceived by the guile of the serpent, becoming subject to death by his own transgressions, Thou, O God, in Thy righteous judgment, didst send him forth from Paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was taken, yet providing for him the salvation of regeneration in Thy Christ Himself."

The Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth in Galilee. There he spoke to the undefiled Virgin who was betrothed to Saint Joseph: "Hail, thou who art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

In contrast to Eve, who was readily deceived by the serpent, the Virgin did not immediately accept the Angel's message. In her humility, she did not think she was deserving of such words, but was actually troubled by them. The fact that she asked for an explanation reveals her sobriety and prudence. She did not disbelieve the words of the angel, but could not understand how they would be fulfilled, for they spoke of something which was beyond nature.

Then said Mary unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34).

"And the angel answered and said unto her, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore also that which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age:

and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.' And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.' And the angel departed from her." (Luke 1: 35-38)

In his Sermon 23 on the day of the Annunciation, Saint Philaret of Moscow boldly stated that "the word of the creature brought the Creator down into the world." He explains that salvation is not merely an act of God's will, but also involves the Virgin's free will. She could have refused, but she accepted God's will and chose to cooperate without complaint or further questions.

The icon of the Feast shows the Archangel with a staff in his left hand, indicating his role as a messenger. Sometimes one wing is upraised, as if to show his swift descent from heaven. His right hand is stretched toward the holy Virgin as he delivers his message.

The Virgin is depicted either standing or sitting, usually holding yarn in her left hand. Sometimes she is shown holding a scroll. Her right hand may be raised to indicate her surprise at the message she is hearing. Her head is bowed, showing her consent and obedience. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon her is depicted by a ray of light issuing from a small sphere at the top of the icon, which symbolizes heaven. In a famous icon from Sinai, a white dove is shown in the ray of light.

There are several famous icons of the Annunciation. One is in the Moscow Kremlin in the church of the Annunciation. This icon appeared in connection with the rescue of a prisoner by the Mother of God during the reign of Ivan the Terrible. Another is to be found in the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow (July 8). It was originally located in Ustiug, and was the icon before which Saint Procopius the fool (July 8) prayed to save the city from destruction in 1290. One of the most highly revered icons in Greece is the Tinos icon of the Annunciation (January 30).

The Annunciation falls during Lent, but it is always celebrated with great joy. The Liturgy of Saint Basil or Saint John Chrysostom is served, even on the weekdays of Lent. It is one of the two days of Great Lent on which the fast is relaxed and fish is permitted (Palm Sunday is the other).



March 17, 2024
Protocol 03/001

To the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, my beloved children in the Lord:

Christ is in our midst!

I greet you at the outset of the Lenten fast, and I assure you of my prayers for you during this sacred season. I pray that the coming Forty Days will be a time of soul-saving struggle for all of you.

When a traveler sets out on a long and difficult journey, he endures the road by keeping his destination in mind. Similarly, at the beginning of the Fast, it is helpful for us to look forward, toward its end, towards our final destination. We look towards that destination so that we might properly direct our Lenten efforts, our prayer and fasting and almsgiving.

And what is the destination toward which the Lenten efforts are directed? What is the end of our journey?

We are going to see a king enthroned, to witness a ruler coming into his kingdom.

When the Lord took his seat in the place of judgment and Pilate stood before him, the Roman governor addressed the King of Glory with inquiries concerning the nature of his kingdom.

“Are you the King of the Jews?” (Jn. 18:33)

“So you are a king?” (Jn. 18:37)

The kingship of Christ was a stumbling block for Pilate then, and today, twenty centuries later, that same kingship remains a stumbling block for many. The Lord had already stated the matter plainly to his would-be judge: “My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world” (Jn 18:36). But Pilate refused to understand. “Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?” he asked the Lord (Jn. 19:10).

In his willful ignorance, Pilate remained convinced that his earthly authority, delegated by the emperor, made him the judge over the Man who sat before him, when in fact, it was that Man who had taken his seat to pass judgment over the world. Pilate thought that he held the life of this Man in his hand, when in fact, it was that Man who held the life of the world in his palms, palms soon to be pierced by the nails of torment. Pilate believed himself to be an agent of the rule of law, when in fact, it was Christ the Law-giver who was making ready to “reign from the tree” (cf. Ps. 95:10).

In short, Pilate thought the earthly empire of Rome was the measure of all kingship, when in fact, the greatest kingship is the otherworldly reign of Jesus Christ.

Today, earthly states and the passing polities of this world continue to assert themselves through violence, warfare, the application of crude power. In this unsettled time, we are filled with sorrow and anxiety at the sharp increase in partisan political tensions, together with vitriol and factionalism, in the lands where the Orthodox Church in America sojourns. We are filled with sorrow and anxiety as we hear of wars and rumors of wars in Ukraine, the Holy Land, Armenia, Yemen, throughout the Middle East, in East Africa, in the Korean Peninsula. We are filled with sorrow and anxiety as we see our fellow Orthodox Christians persecuted, suffering, and endangered in Ukraine, in Russia, in Gaza. As our Lord tells us, these frightening circumstances are characteristic of the troubled age in which we live—“but the end is not yet” (Matt. 24:6).

“The end is not yet,” but, as Orthodox Christians, we should be *living for the end*. We are called by Christ to live for the last things, for the kingdom that does not belong to this world of time. Thus, it is with acute sorrow that we observe today many Orthodox Christians manipulated by the false powers of this passing age. Confusing the temporal for the eternal, many have chosen the Pilate-like paths of violent aggression, apology for violence, and religious imperialism and nationalism. As tragic as Pilate’s lack of vision was, it is all the more tragic when those who have been illumined by holy Baptism choose short-sighted ideologies that place their hope in a this-worldly future rather than in the eternity of Christ’s kingdom.

Witnessing this confusion, and this idolatrous embrace of ideology, I pray for those who have been deceived and led astray. Moreover, I see how, in certain places that present themselves as safe havens for the Faith, those who pray for peace are jailed and suffer as prisoners of conscience, and I pray for those who are persecuted. I see how, in other lands, the legitimate interests of the state, distorted by the passions of nationalism, have become a cause for the unjust treatment of Orthodox Christians who desire nothing other than fidelity to the holy Canons and Tradition of the Church, and I pray for those who are oppressed. I see how, in my own Church, political divisions have infiltrated many of our communities, and I pray that we all might resist the temptation of diabolical division along ideological lines, instead growing in unity of mind, striving together to put on the mind of Christ.

Even as we shun the temptation to place our hope in this fleeting world and its crumbling powers, we must be clear: Christ reigns even now, in the present. It is in the present that we encounter him who is

named "I AM." Although Christ's kingdom is not of this world, nevertheless, Christians are called to become heirs of that kingdom even in this life. The kingdom is not found in a place or a time; it "is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God," says the Lord, is within us and in our midst, in the midst of his disciples, in the midst of the Church (Lk. 17:21).

Christ's rule is not postponed to the future age, but neither is it merely another earthly reign; it is the eternal reign of God already manifest in time among the people of God. This rule is revealed and made real whenever men proclaim the Name of Jesus Christ, not merely in word, but in deeds. Christ's kingdom is love, mercy, and forgiveness; it is repentance, self-sacrifice, and virtue.

The champions of Christ's kingdom, then, are not those who rise up to defend it from earthly attack. The Lord once rebuked St. Peter for his mistaken recourse to a crude, material sword (Mt. 26: 52-4), and St. Paul reminds us that, in our struggle, "we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

The champions of Christ's kingdom, rather, are those who bear witness to the Passion and Resurrection of the Savior by, in their flesh, completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions (Col. 1:24). These stalwart soldiers and knights of Christ are, in the first place, the holy martyrs—not those who kill in the Name of the Lord, but who die in the Name of the Lord. "Blessed are those who die in the Lord henceforth" (Rev. 14:13).

Many Christians today believe, and viscerally feel, that the kingdom of Christ is under attack. This is true. Satan is always going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. As St. Paul indicates, there is a war underway. But that war is spiritual in nature; earthly swords will do no better than St. Peter's blade did when he turned it against Malchus. To seek to defend the kingdom of God with tanks and airplanes is to accept Pilate's debased notion of kingship rather than embrace the exalted rule of Jesus Christ; using violence to establish a kingdom is the way of Herod, not of the tiny martyrs of Bethlehem. To believe that salvation depends on earthly rulers and regimes and favorable conditions for the faith is not the way of the martyrs, but the way of emperor-worship. In this regard, we must remember that many saints gave their lives rather than offer even a pinch of incense in worship of Caesar.

Of course, we desire that our earthly rulers provide us with a favorable situation for the propagation of the faith, for the peace and welfare of the churches of God, and we pray for this at the Divine Liturgy and the other holy services. Moreover, among the saints there is an entire rank of right-believing rulers. Indeed, from the time of Sts. Boris and Gleb to the time of St. Nicholas II and his royal family, there is sometimes significant overlap between the ranks of the right-believing rulers and the ranks of the martyrs and passion-bearers. Some of those rulers were effective; some were less effective. What they had in common was a fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, beginning in their own personal lives. The holy rulers were not those who sought earthly power; they are those who, presented with power,

remained faithful to the Lord and turned their earthly power back over to his service as best as they could.

Thus, our way forward consists neither in vainly grasping after earthly power nor in capitulation to the dark spirit of the age, but in fidelity to the Gospel according to our circumstances. We must reject sin—through repentance, confession, and preaching to those who have ears to hear. We must strive for the kingdom—through worship, charity, and virtue. We must fight for the faith—against the old Adam, against the devil, and against the passions. We do not reject the world's dark ideologies by embracing the vanity of external violence and power. Instead, we reject the world's dark ideologies by putting sin to death in our flesh through the violence of the ascetic life and the grace-filled power of God in whom is our hope and trust.

As we speak of the violence of the ascetic life, I point us back towards our Lenten efforts. In the face of tragedy and conflict, it is characteristic for all manner of organizations and companies and parties and public figures to offer up their “thoughts and prayers.” However, as Orthodox Christians, we are invited truly to pray, truly to fast, to bear some small martyrdom, some small witness, in our bodies. By the grace of God, this ascetic struggle, this little martyrdom, connects us to the Lord, his saints, and all those who suffer innocently. During these Forty Days that Save Our Souls, I exhort all of you to make a genuine effort to fast for peace and to pray for those who suffer. Platitudes are not enough: real ascetic effort is required. This ascetic effort makes concrete the hope and trust that we place in the kingdom to come.

It is this hope in the coming kingdom and this trust in the Savior that gave the martyrs the power to accomplish the greatest feat of arms—willingly to die, and thereby to join in Christ's conquest of the world, death, and the devil. May God give us all the strength and the courage necessary to follow the way of the martyrs and to reject the false paths of human violence, power, and pride.

To our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, who suffers with all the innocent sufferers and lives in the deaths of all the martyrs, be unending glory and adoration, together with his Father and his Most Holy Spirit, now and unto everlasting ages. Amen.

Sincerely yours in our Lord Jesus Christ,
With all the blessings of the Holy Forty Days,

+TIKHON
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

ST. THEODOSIUS ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CATHEDRAL

JOURNEY TO HEAVEN

ACCORDING TO ST. TIKHON OF ZADONSK

March 22 The fall of Adam

March 29 Remember the love of God

April 5 The way of salvation

April 12 Spiritual struggles

April 19 The way of duty

April 26 The Last Judgment

Each class will be about 15min long and will follow a 6pm
Presanctified liturgy

MEMORIAL SATURDAYS

With the coming of Great Lent it is again time to submit names for Memorial Saturdays.

We ask for the names of your departed, to be remembered in prayer.

We also invite you to join us in prayer for the departed. The Ambo schedule will list each Memorial Saturday service.

Parish Directories Available

If you would like a hard copy of our recently updated Parish Directory, please contact Fr. Jan Cizmar or the church office. Thank you!

Consider Sponsoring Coffee Hour!

For those who would like to HELP with Coffee Hour but don't cook, you can now sponsor a Coffee Hour! By donating \$65 you can sponsor a Coffee Hour, just put it in a white envelope marked "coffee hour" and place it in the collection basket or coffee hour basket in the Hall.



SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS MONASTERY

Ecumenical Patriarchate – Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

METROPOLIS OF PITTSBURGH

His Eminence Metropolitan SAVAS

February 9, 2024

Dear brother and concelebrant,

It has been a few years since we have had our traditional St. Gregory Palamas Pilgrimage on the second Saturday of Great Lent. These were wonderful times of gathering with our hierarch for the Divine Liturgy, sharing a Lenten meal and meeting other Orthodox Christians from other parishes and jurisdictions. We are planning to resume this event. This year, the second Saturday in Great Lent is **March 30** and this will be the date for the **Spring Pilgrimage**.

We cordially invite you to attend and serve with His Eminence Metropolitan Savas. The presence of the area priests is a great blessing and support for us and we are very grateful for the time that you would take from your busy schedule to be with us. We also ask you publish our invitation to your faithful in your church bulletins.

The schedule:

Saturday March 30: 9:30 a.m. entrance of the bishop

(Clergy, please be present at 9:15 a.m.)

10:00 a.m. Hierarchal Divine Liturgy

Followed by a Lenten Meal in the large trapeza

We ask that if you are able to attend and if any of the faithful are accompanying you that you would notify us in advance so that we can appropriately prepare the meal. You may call us at 419-368-5335 or email us at monastery@palamasmonastery.org

With our prayers and good thoughts.

In Christ,

Fr. Joseph and the Brotherhood of St. Gregory Palamas Monastery

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PRAYER REQUESTS

as of 3/24/2024



Deceased

Patriarch Neophyt of Bulgaria

Reader Paul Pangrace

Priest Anthony Karbo

Antonina Clos

Walter Dimitrijevs

Andrew Mytrohovich

Special Intentions:

Fr. Micah Chisholm

Subdeacon Theodore Lentz

Subdeacon Roger Pinta

Subdeacon Leon Felon

Reader Frank Tkacz

Stephan Chwalyk

Horia Dascalescu (*Lavinia's brother*)

Diane Kearsey (*Janice Tkacz's Sister*)

Janice Tkacz

Eleanor Wachovec (*friend of Karen Felon*)

Rachel Ohlin (*relative of Tatiana*)

Erin Zawolowycz

Jeffrey Parhamovich (*brother of Karen Felon*)

Margaret Parhamovich (*sister-in-law of Karen Felon*)

Margaret Peyton (*Cathy's aunt*)

Jean Woycitzky Thompson (*Frank's cousin*)

Anna Marie Luvison (*daughter of Matthew & Katie (Ellis) Luvison*)

Debra Parhamovich (*sister of Karen Felon*)

Grace Mary Parhamovich (*mother of Karen Felon*)

Lonnie Ellis (*Husband to Debra Ellis*)

Robert Martin Prock

Valentina Zawolowycz (*mother of Paul Z*)

Justina Zolikoff

Melissa and Yohnathan King and **unborn child**

Julie Velikoff

Kevin Reck (*Stepfather of Cathy Weber*)

Mark

Gazzilo Family

Daniel (*brother of James*)

Please submit names to the Prayer List by emailing them to Fr. Jan Cizmar st.theodosiuscathedral@gmail.com
Or calling at 1 (440) 732-8182
Names remain on the list for 30 days unless requested otherwise.



ST. THEODOSIUS IS A SUBSCRIBER TO TITHE.LY

In response to requests to be able to donate electronically, we have set up a Tithe.ly account so people can donate either regularly or for special occasions online. Click here to see: <https://www.sttheodosius.org/donate>



Coffee Hour Sign-Up

Questions/Concerns: Cathy Weber (412-215-1928)

Jan 7	Gayle and Wayne	Feb 18	Sponsored by William Lynk (Mike and Sarah Brennan to host)
Jan 14	Sponsored by Mat. Ludmila Timko (Mat. Jana to host)	Feb 25	Georgi and Lina
Jan 21	Cindy and Nikol	Mar 3	Sarah and Mike Brennan
Jan 28	Sponsored by William Lynk (Joyce & Judy to host)	Mar 10	(Meatfare) Cathy and Tammy
Feb 4	Sponsored by Greg Born (Georgi and Lina to host)	Mar 17	(Cheesefare) Dan & Lavinia
Feb 11	Shawna	Mar 24	(Great Lent) Jana
		Mar 31	Joyce & Judy

Sunday, March 24

Sunday of Orthodoxy

Forefeast of the Annunciation

8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hours

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour

4:00 PM Sunday of Orthodoxy

Pan-Orthodox Vespers

Monday, March 25

The Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady, Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

6:00 PM Vespereal Liturgy

Festal Evening Meal to follow

Tuesday, March 26

Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel

7:00 PM Panichida for Andrew

Mytrohovich at Yurch Funeral Home

Wednesday, March 27

Martyr Matrona of Thessalonica (3rd-4th c.)

10:00 AM Funeral for Andrew Mytrohovich

4:30 PM Confessions

5:30 PM 9th Hour and Typica

6:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy

WEEKLY SCHEDULE 2024



Thursday, March 28

Ven. Hilarion the New, Abbot of Pelekete (ca. 754)

Friday, March 29

Hieromartyr Mark, Bishop of Arethusa, Martyr Cyril the Deacon, of Heliopolis, and others who suffered under Julian the Apostate (ca. 364)

4:30 PM Confessions

5:30 PM 9th Hour and Typica

6:00 PM Presanctified Liturgy

Saturday, March 30

Second Saturday of Great Lent

Ven. John Climacus of Sinai, author of The Ladder (6th c.)

5:00 PM Memorial Saturday

Panichida

5:30 PM Confessions

6:00 PM Great Vespers

Sunday, March 31

Second Sunday of Lent

St. Gregory Palamas

8:40 AM 3rd and 6th Hours

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour

11:00 AM FOCA Meeting

11:15 AM Panichida for

Paul Pangrace 40 Days