

From the Divine Office for the First Sunday of Great Lent

Today has the Church of Christ received honorable adornment: the noble and hallowed icons of Christ the Savior, of the Theotokos and of all the Saints. We lift them up with joy and gladness as the Church exults in grace, happily glorifying her God, the Lover of Mankind who patiently suffered for her sake. (Vespers)

The mystery of our salvation was once announced by the divinely-inspired prophets. They foretold this illumination for us who have arrived at the last days. By it, we receive knowledge of God, the one God and Lord, glorified in Three Persons; and we serve Him alone. Having one faith and one baptism, we have put on Christ. Wherefore, we confess our salvation in word and in deed, and we restore our likeness to God. (Orthros)



**FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT
FEBRUARY 26, 2023**



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

Antiphon

1- The Lord is King, in splendor robed; robed is the Lord and girt about with strength.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

2- Who can tell the mighty deeds of the Lord, or proclaim all His praises?

*Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka.
Haleloueya.*

3- Thus let the redeemed of the Lord say, those whom He has redeemed from the hand of the foe.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: *O Son of God, Who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!*

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 5) pg. 40

Let us, O faithful, praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our Salvation, for He was pleased to be lifted in the flesh upon the cross, and to endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

Troparion of the Holy Icons (Tone 2)

Before Your most pure image, we bow in worship, O Good Lord, begging forgiveness of our sins, O Christ God: because You chose of your own free will to ascend upon the cross in the flesh in order to deliver from the enemy's bondage those You had created. For this reason we cry out to You in thanksgiving: "You our Savior have Filled all things with joy when You came to save the world."

Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) Pg. 15

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kontakion of the Annunciation (Tone 8)-English this week

We your servants ascribe to you, O Mother of God, thank offerings of victory, O Champion Leader, for we have been liberated from terror. But as you have that invincible power do you free us from every kind of danger, so that we may cry out to you: "Hail O Virgin and Bride ever pure!

Icons Reveal Christ as God's Image

In the eighth and ninth centuries, some Byzantine emperors and churchmen waged a struggle against the use of icons. This conflict was ultimately ended in 843 with the restoration of icons, called in the Church the "Triumph of Orthodoxy." Today's observance celebrates this act.

Iconoclasm formally began in the 720s when certain bishops began questioning the excessive way some people were revering icons. In 730 Emperor Leo III took up their cause and issued a decree forbidding the veneration of religious images, "the evil art of painters," as a later iconoclastic council called it. While iconoclasts saw images as a departure from the practice of the early Church, those who supported the veneration of icons did so precisely on the basis of tradition: the Church had done so for years and was not in error.

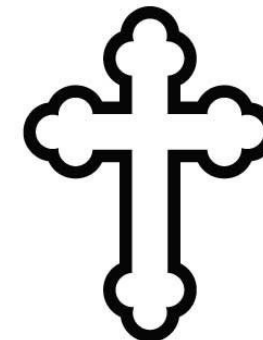
It was St John of Damascus (676-749) who gave the Church the insight that the use of icons was the logical consequence of the incarnation of Christ. As he wrote in his Treatise on the Divine Images, "In former times, God, who is without form or body, could never be depicted. But now when God is seen in the flesh conversing with men, I make an image of the God whom I see. I do not worship matter; I worship the Creator of matter who became matter for my sake." St John's teaching became normative in the Byzantine Church which, since the Triumph of Orthodoxy, has in the minds of many become identified as the "Church of Icons."

"But I Can't Fast"

"If there are some gathered here who are hindered by sickness and cannot remain without food, I advise them to reverse their ailment and not to deprive themselves from the fast, but to care for it even more. "For there exist, there really exist, ways which are even more important than abstinence from food which can open the gates which lead to God with boldness. He, therefore, who eats and cannot fast, let him display richer almsgiving, let him pray more, let him have a more intense desire to hear divine words. Then our physical illness is not a hindrance to our spirit. Let him become reconciled with his enemies, let him distance from his soul every resentment. If he wants to accomplish these things, then he has done the true fast, which is what the Lord asks of us more than anything else.

"It is for this reason that He asks us to abstain from food, in order to place the flesh in subjection to the fulfillment of His commandments, by curbing its impetuous-ness ... If we eat with moderation we should never be ashamed, because the Creator gave us such a body which cannot be supported in any other way except by receiving food. Let us only stop excessive food; that in itself contributes a great deal to the health and well-being of the body."

Abridged from St. John Chrysostom homilies "On Fasting"



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today All those affected by the earthquakes in Syria & Turkey
+Georgette, Wadi, Dori, Tanios Kahale. Deceased members of Kahale, Daw and Yanni families. Requested by Houda Daou
+Victims of the earthquakes in Syria & Turkey

Mar 5 +Sandra Aboody (40 day). Requested by her family
+Wayne Kallio (3rd). Requested by Susan Aboody-Kallio and family

This morning's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Houda Daou

Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by the family of Sandra Aboody

Please remember in your prayers: George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Vi Gazal, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Anthony Poti, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, Ruth Welsh, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Michael Mooradian, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Wyatt William Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Elaine Foley, all those affected by the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, and the people of Ukraine.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$1,289
Candles	\$ 28
Coffee Hr.	\$ 25
Easter Flowers	\$ 50
Other	\$ 525
TOTAL	\$1,917

God bless you for your generosity!



Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.

LENTEN SERVICES THIS WEEK

Mon. 2/27, 6PM - Great Compline

Wed. 3/1, 6PM - Presanctified Liturgy

Fri. 3/3, 6PM- Compline & Akathist (Part 2)

ADULT EDUCATION

Our next adult education series will be this **Tuesday February 28 at 6:30PM**. Our text is Fr. Justin Rose's book "Come, Follow Me." It is a Byzantine Christian approach to evangelization and disciple-making. We will meet weekly as we make our way through the book. This theme fits in well with Bishop Francois' motto: Becoming Disciples, Making Disciples. **Please bring your Bible. We have the books.**

Please plan to join us!

SHEPHERDS CARE

Shepherd's Care is the diocesan Lenten charitable program. There are mite boxes and pamphlets at the back of the church. Please take one and put the savings from your fasting in it. Bring it back to church on Palm Sunday or anytime during Holy Week.

LENTEN DINNER

We are planning a Lenten Lunch for **Sunday March 19** after the Divine Liturgy. The suggested donation is \$20 per adult and \$5 per child. We are finalizing the menu. The proceeds from the dinner will go to aid those affected by the earthquakes in Syria.

Please plan to join us!

What It Means to See Jesus (John 1:43-51)

AT EVERY DIVINE LITURGY during the Great Fast we read from the Holy Gospel according to Mark – except for today. Why is this passage from St John’s Gospel read on this Sunday, the Sunday of Orthodoxy?

The brief answer is that both the Gospel reading and the triumph of Orthodoxy we commemorate today are about seeing God. In the Gospel story, we hear how Philip invites Nathaniel to see Jesus (physically); when they meet, Nathaniel sees (spiritually) that Jesus is the Messiah. In the Church, we (physically) see icons and see (spiritually) that they reflect the reality of Christ’s incarnation.

Nathaniel Sees God

The story of Jesus’ encounter with Nathaniel is a brief and almost cryptic tale which many have tried to explain. Nathaniel and his friend Philip were both disciples of St John the Forerunner. They had responded to John’s announcement that One was coming *“whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loosen”* (Jn 1:27). The Lord Jesus had gone to the Jordan where John was baptizing and it is there that John identified Jesus as the Awaited One. *“Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’”* (vv. 35, 36) Philip may have been one of those who heard John’s testimony, so that when Jesus invited Philip to follow Him, he responded positively. In turn, Philip goes to his friend Nathaniel with the news, *“We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph”* (v. 45). Nathaniel replies laconically, *“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”* (v.46)

Modern commentators generally see this remark of Nathaniel as a somewhat snide dismissal of Jesus because He was a Nazarene. The Fathers approach this passage differently, saying that Nathaniel was saying the exact opposite: that if Jesus was the Awaited One, then He could not have come from Nazareth. St John Chrysostom suggested that Nathaniel *“thought within himself that Philip was probably mistaken about the place”* and that Jesus *“was not from Nazareth”* (Hom. 20 on Jn).

In any case, Philip responds with the same words that Jesus earlier said to Andrew, *“Come and see.”* When Nathaniel finally meets Jesus, the Lord utters another cryptic remark: *“Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you’”* (vv. 47, 48).

What was Nathaniel doing under the fig tree? Again, many suggestions have been offered; none of them are attested in the Scripture, so we cannot know for sure. One possibility upheld by many in our Tradition is that Nathaniel was praying at that time: *O God of our fathers, send us the One whom You have promised. Send us the Messiah, the Savior.* Faith in the promise of a Savior is what marks out a true Israelite. The Lord, they say, saw him at prayer and He saw Nathaniel’s heart. Nathaniel’s response marks him as one of the first disciples of Christ, whom He called before His ministry in Galilee.

“You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” (v. 49), Nathaniel sees that Jesus is the Messiah and acclaims Him with the traditional titles of a royal Messiah: *“Son of God”* and *“King of Israel.”*

At the end of His public ministry Jesus’ followers would affirm their faith in His heavenly origin: *“See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God”* (Jn 16:29, 30). But it would only be after His resurrection, when the risen Christ was manifested to the disciples that the full force of Jesus’ words to Nathaniel would be realized: *“Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man”* (Jn 1:51). Nathaniel, like the rest of the apostles, would grow to see Jesus not as the earthly conqueror devout Jews were awaiting but as a King not of this world and, ultimately, the eternal Word of God incarnate.

Prokimenon

Reader: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and Your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and Your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

Reader: For You are just in all You have done to us, and all Your works are true, and Your ways right.

People: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers, and Your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

Reader: Blessed are You, O Lord, God of our fathers,

People: And Your name is worthy of praise and glorious forever.

Epistle: Heb. 11:24-26; 32-40; 12:1-2

Alleluia


Moses and Aaron were among His priests and Samuel among those who called upon His name.

Verse: They called upon the Lord, and He answered them; from the pillar of cloud He spoke to them.

Gospel: John 1:43-51, Sunday of Orthodoxy

Hirmos of Saint Basil (Tone 3)-Arabic this week

In you, O Full of Grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the human race as well: O Sanctified Temple, Spiritual Paradise, and Glory of Virgins, from whom our God, who exists before all eternity, took flesh and became a little Child! He has taken your womb as His throne, making it more spacious than the heavens. Therefore, Full of Grace, in you all creation rejoices: glory to you!



Ὁ Ἅγιος Ἰωάννης Χρυσόστομος

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Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism. For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers?

St John Chrysostom

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