

From the Divine Office for the Commemoration of the Holy Apostle Andrew (Nov. 30)

You had walked in the light of the Forerunner. But when the incarnate Image of the Father's glory appeared to save mankind in His mercy, you were the first to follow after Him O Illustrious Andrew, whose spirit was illumined by the perfect splendor of His radiant divinity. Thus you were the Apostle and herald of Christ our God: entreat Him to save and enlighten our souls. (Vespers)

O holy Apostle Andrew, we fittingly venerate you as the first-called of the Disciples, the eye-witness of the Word and His servant. For, in the fervor of your love, you followed the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Later you shared in the Passion of the One who voluntarily suffered death in the flesh. Therefore, we entreat you to intercede before Christ our God to grant remission of sins to those who wholeheartedly celebrate your holy memory. (Orthros)



**THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
NOVEMBER 26, 2023**



JESUS AND THE RICH YOUNG MAN

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (1st)

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praise to His name.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

2: Say to God: How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You.

Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

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 1) pg. 38

After the stone was sealed by the Jews and the while the soldiers were watching Your spotless body, You rose, O Savior, on the third day, bestowing life to the world. Wherefore, the heavenly powers cried out to You, O Giver of life: “Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your kingdom! Glory to Your economy, O You who alone are the lover of mankind!”

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 Preparation of the Nativity of our Lord (Tone 3)

Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth in a manner beyond understanding to the Word who is, in all eternity. Rejoice, therefore, universe, when you hear it heralded: with the angles and the shepherds, glorify Him who chose to be seen as a new-born Babe, while remaining God in all eternity.

Christ as Light in St John

The contrast of light and darkness here concerns our ethical behavior; elsewhere in the New Testament this imagery suggests something more. In the First Epistle of St John we read, “*This is the message which we have heard from Him [Christ] and declare to you: that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all*” (1 Jn 1:5). There is something about God’s very being that can be described as light.

Later in the same epistle we are told that “*God is love*” (1 Jn 4:8). The Fathers came to see this love as the expression of the eternal relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and, by extension, between the Trinity and all creation, particularly mankind. In a similar way they came to see light as the expression of God’s holiness, especially in the flesh of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, with His holy transfiguration on Mt. Tabor as the preeminent experience of that light in His flesh.

Baptism as Illumination

The Fathers regularly spoke of baptism as the mystery of illumination whereby we are filled with the light of Christ. In *The Life in Christ* St. Nicholas Cabasilas writes, quoting St. John Chrysostom, “From our baptism, our soul, purified by the Spirit, is more resplendent than the sun. Not only do we contemplate the glory of God, but we receive again its luster. Just as pure silver, when exposed to its rays, completely sparkles – not only by its own nature but due to the brightness of the sun – so the soul, purified by baptism, is made brighter than silver, receiving from the Spirit the ray of glory such as to possess a proper brilliance such as only the Spirit can communicate. ... That which Moses bore on his forehead, the saints bore in the depths of their souls, but with far more brilliance...”

The Taboric Light

This baptismal radiance is so commonly obscured in us by our subsequent acts of sin and neglect that we see Cabasilas’ words as hyperbole, exaggeration. Yet it is this very light which iconographers seek to portray by depicting haloes in the icons of the saints.

In addition we have numerous examples of a tangible light – called the Taboric light, in other words, the light experienced on Mt. Tabor – not only in the souls of certain saints, reflecting their union with Christ the Light, but in their bodies as well. Perhaps the most famous of them is St. Seraphim of Sarov, whose disciple, Nicholas Motovilov, described the event in detail.

The recognized saints of the Church are not the only ones to reflect this light. The twentieth-century Romanian elder, Fr Dumitru Bejan tells how in the late 1960s he saw, unobserved, two old monks who always stayed behind in church after Matins. “After everyone had left they would lie outstretched on the floor of the church in the form of the Cross and begin to pray with tears to the Savior, asking for mercy, forgiveness, and absolution of sins....As Fr Dumitru watched them pray, to his amazement he saw a translucent flame of light rise and intensify over their heads. Seeing this flame of the grace of the Holy Spirit manifest, Fr Dumitru fell to his knees and joined the two elders in prayer” (Balan, *Shepherd of Souls*, p. 140-141).



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Rose Garabedian. Requested by Antoinette Arraj and family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by

Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by

Please remember in your prayers: Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Wyatt William Rahall, Billy Rahall, Dan Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Tom Sarrouf, Sandra Hanlan, Melissa Kalpakgian, Susan Bailey, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in the Middle East.

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.

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.

Upcoming Liturgical Schedule

Tue, Dec. 5 6PM - Vespers for the Feast of St. Nicholas

FOOD DONATION BOX

There is a green box in the narthex for food donations. Once a month, we will deliver whatever we collect to a local charity that helps those with food insecurity. Please buy a couple of extra items when you go the grocery store and put them in the box on your way into the church on Sunday. Thank you in advance for your generosity in helping those who need a little extra assistance!

Thank you to all who donated to our Thanksgiving Food Drive. We donated 14 turkeys plus sides to Pernet Family Health Services.

God bless you for your generosity!

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 1,208
Coffee Hr.	\$ 34
Candles	\$ 19
Stole	\$ 300
Xmas Flowers	\$ 105
Xmas Offering	\$ 50
Other	\$ 240
Bookstore	\$ 679
TOTAL	\$ 2,635

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Walking in the Light (Eph 5:8b-19)

CONTRASTING OPPOSITES WAS a popular rhetorical device during the time of St Paul. The Lord Himself used the method, usually contrasting concrete things such as new wine and old wineskins or the plank in one's own eye vs. the speck in one's brother's eye. He pointed to those who would be first vs. those who would be last in the Kingdom of God. "*Many are called but few are chosen*" He noted, and this became a kind of refrain commenting on Gospel incidents (e.g. Mt 20:16).

When St. Paul wrote to communities where believing Jews and their converts often tended to maintain their allegiance to the Law while accepting Christ as the Messiah, he focused on the contrast between those who found their salvation in keeping the Torah (Law) and those who found it by believing in Christ. But Christ alone, Paul insisted, is the source of our salvation and only through faith are we joined with Him.

Not having to keep the Law made some people think that they could do whatever they wanted. Paul responded with another contrast: that between flesh and spirit. "*The Law is fulfilled in this one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'*" (Gal 5:14), he affirmed. Our fallen passions – the flesh – push us to abuse our neighbor instead through sexual immorality, hatred, selfish ambitions and the like. But living in the Spirit produces love, joy, peace and the other characteristics St Paul calls "*the fruit of the Spirit*" (Gal 5:22-23).

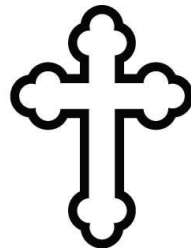
Darkness and Light in St. Paul

When Paul writes to the Ephesians he speaks of darkness and light to contrast a life lived in ignorance of God vs. a life illumined by the knowledge of God. When people are "*alienated from the life of God*" they walk "in the futility of their minds" (Eph 4:17-18) like pagans. Separated from God, they try to figure things out on their own and that inevitably leads to disaster: epitomized, in Paul's words, by lewdness and every kind of excess.

St. Paul included idolatry as another example of our futile self-determination. Of course, actual idolatry was practiced in the ancient world for centuries, dying out in some places only in the fifth or sixth century. But St John Chrysostom, commenting on this passage, said that, for those who claim to worship Christ, idolatry may mean something else. Giving service to our passions, he argued, is actually worship of Venus, the goddess of love; allowing wrath to absorb us is actually worship of Mars, the god of war. You more truly worship by your deeds and practices than by your rituals, he insisted, and this is the higher kind of worship! (Homily 18 on Ephesians).

St Paul has been criticized for singling out sexual immorality as the height of godlessness. Paul, they say, saw licentiousness as the gravest sin, worse than any other. Note, however, that Paul only starts by focusing on promiscuity. He then goes on to include all kinds of behavior which, he teaches, are equally incompatible with the life in Christ. He names untruthful speech, unresolved anger, theft, and unseemly language as signs of – and here he introduces another contrast – the old man (vs. the new man created according to God).

It is perhaps the moralizing of some Christians in earlier days rather than St. Paul which is responsible for our ignoring unresolved anger or lack of mutual love while focusing on sexual morality. It may be argued, however, that, our sexual failings are, in fact, weathervanes indicating our need for self-satisfaction at all costs. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the Church when lust and greed drive its members, including their leaders, to turn their backs on the light. Then we see the chilling force of Christ's own words, "If the light that is in you is darkness, how great must it be" (Mt 6:23).



Prokimenon

Reader: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

People: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

Reader: Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

People: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in You.

Reader: May Your kindness, O Lord, be upon us,

People: For we have hoped in You.

Epistle: Eph. 5:8-19

Alleluia Verses

O God, You granted me retribution and made peoples subject to me and saved me from my raging enemies.

Verse: Therefore, I will proclaim You, O Lord, among the nations, and I will sing praise to Your name.

Gospel: Lk. 18:18-27

Nativity Fast

The traditional Nativity Fast began **November 15**. In the Melkite usage, it begins on **December 10**. It is important for our spiritual life that we observe these fast periods in order to reorient ourselves to God; that we focus on Him rather than on our desires.

Whether you observe the Fast from November 15 or December 10, abstain from meat and dairy, from gossip and speaking ill of your neighbor, perform acts of charity, increase your prayer life, focusing on the great mystery of the Incarnation: God becoming one of us in order to restore us to our true nature.

