

*From the Divine Office for the Commemoration of our Father Among the Saints Spyridon the Wonderworker (Dec. 12)*

*O blessed father, venerable Spyridon, for love of God you challenge sin even now just as when you were alive. You practiced poverty, yet changed a serpent into gold; you stopped the flow of a river in your flowing compassion for the people; as an instrument of the Providence of God, you appeared to the emperor and healed him. As a disciple of Christ, you raised the dead. Joining the gathered assembly of the Fathers, you made the brilliant purity of the faith shine forth. Having such power with Christ who gave you these gifts, pray to Him to save our souls. (Vespers)*

*Today, let us celebrate Spyridon, a hierarch of the Lord, sanctified from his childhood. Having received from the divine glory the tablets of the new law of grace, he was known to all by his miracles as a witness to the divine radiance, a fervent defender of the poor, and a reconciler of sinners. By God's will, he has become a hierarch capable of beseeching the Lord that He may enlighten us all. (Ikos)*



**TENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS  
DECEMBER 10, 2023**



**MARTYRS MENAS, HERMOGENES, EUGRAPHOS  
DECEMBER 10**

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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 3) pg. 39**

Let all in heaven rejoice, and all on earth be glad, for the Lord has exerted power with His arm: By death He has trampled upon Death and has become the firstborn from the dead. He has delivered us from the bosom of Hades and has granted to the world great mercy.

### **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 to the eternal Word of God in an ineffable manner. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when you hear this news: and glorify with the angels and the shepherds, Him who shall appear as a new Child, being God from all eternity.

Our unity in the one body to which we have been called is first of all experienced in the local parish. As we look around the church at those worshipping with us we find countless opportunities to support, through prayer and interaction, those whom God has placed in our lives. Through prayer for those around us and by the way we relate to one another before or after the service we can demonstrate that love for our local parish which St Paul calls “*the bond of perfection*” (Col 3:14).

We can extend our support for one another through the week as well. A custom which some have found helpful is to take your parish directory and so divide the list of names that in the course of one month you are praying each day for five or ten of your fellow parishioners. Making such a commitment is one way of responding to St. Paul’s injunction, “*Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving*” (Col 4:2).

### **Praying for the Wider Church**

The Christian family has been likened to a series of concentric circles. Beyond the local community we see the other parishes which make up our eparchy as well as the parishes of other eparchies in the community in which we live. Beyond them we see the other eparchies of our nation or our patriarchate. Praying for several in turn not only benefits them but deepens our feelings of connection to these fellow believers for whom we may pray.

We may be moved to pray in a particular way for the suffering Churches throughout the world. There seem to be few countries in Asia or Africa today where Christians are not in constant danger on account of their faith.

As a result of hardships in their homelands, Eastern Christians have been scattered around the world in search of peace for themselves and their families. In response their Churches have journeyed with them, at first to support them in their time of need, but then to make with them a new frontier of witnesses to their particular traditions. Thus today we find Coptic churches in Australia, Syriac churches in Sweden and Malankara churches in Texas! We do well to pray for these “diaspora churches” that they may prosper as loving witness to the diversity of the apostolic traditions nourished by them for centuries.

When we think of missions we often imagine primitive peoples receiving the Gospel for the first time. There are still peoples all over the world whose Churches are in the early stages of development or whose economic environments compel them to continue seeking the support of more prosperous Christians. Missionary churches form another category of fellow believers in need of our intercession.

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## DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Robert Aboody

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Eric Ewanco

Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by the Dumont family

**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, 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,12,6PM - Vespers**

**Tue. Dec. 19, 6PM - Anointing Service**

### Nativity Liturgical Schedule

**Sun. 12/24, 10AM - Divine Liturgy, Sunday of the Genealogy & Paramony**

**Sun. 12/24, 4PM –Vesper/Liturgy of St. Basil for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ**

**Mon. 12/25, 10AM-Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of Christ**

**There is no fasting from December 25 until the Paramony of Theophany (Jan. 5)**

#### Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$821
Coffee Hr.	\$ 35
Candles	\$ 27
Xmas Flowers	\$ 55
Xmas Offering	\$ 20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$958</b>

#### FINANCIALS

11.2023	YTD(10.2023-11.2023)
Income \$21,819	Income \$35,996
Expenses \$15,371	Expense \$31,890
Net \$ 6,448	Net \$ 4,106



### Christmas Toy Drive

**We are having our toy drive again this year. If you would like to donate a new, unwrapped toy for a child in need, please place it in one of the green bins in the narthex.**

**We are also collecting hats, coats, and gloves for both children and adults.**

**If you would like to donate money instead, we will use it to make the above purchases.**

**The deadline for donating is next Sunday, December 19.**

**Thank you in advance for your generosity!**

## Knowing the Will of God (Col 1:12-18)

MANY OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES begin with an introduction combining greetings to the community he is addressing and to individuals he knew in that community. As in the Epistle to the Colossians, the introduction may include prayers of thanksgiving that the Gospel has taken root there as well as prayers of intercession for the members of that local Church. These introductions provide us with models of prayer for our sister Churches and for our own local community as well.

Paul's prayer for the Colossians begins with verse 9 of chapter 1: *"For this reason, we also – since the day we heard it – do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."*

What does it mean to be filled with the knowledge of His will? St Paul is not talking here about God's will for one or another individual. Rather he is speaking about the great plan of God for the restoration of creation, for which the Incarnation is the linchpin. To know the will of God is to know the depth of His compassion for His fallen creation: a compassion which does not balk at setting aside for a time the splendor of His rightful place on what Scripture calls *"the throne of the majesty on high"* (Heb 1:3) to come as one of us, sharing our broken human nature. *"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell and by Him to reconcile all things in Himself by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross"* (Col 1:19-20).

To know the will of God is to know deeply – as a guiding force in our lives – that Christ God and His creation have been brought together again. This is *"the mystery which has been hidden from ages and generations but now has been revealed to His saints: ... Christ in you, the hope of glory"* (Col 1:26-27).

While God's will is for the restoration of all creation, His will for human beings is that they *"may be partakers of the divine nature"* (2 Pt 1:2) through Jesus Christ, united to God through Him. In the words of St. Ignatius of Antioch and so many others, "God became man so that man might become god."

### Knowing That You Are the Church

St Paul then turns his attention to practical questions concerning the Church. Many people in our society have come to understand "the Church" to mean its leaders, the clergy. Even practicing believers talk about "the Church" when they mean the hierarchy. In effect they place themselves outside the Church when they speak this way, relegating themselves to the status of spectators, clients, or even customers.

The nineteenth-century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard described this kind of church in terms of the ordinary Lutheran worship experience of his day. Kierkegaard said that in church the clergy and the choir are the actors, God is the prompter giving the lines and the people are the audience. In reality, he affirmed, it is the people who are meant to be the actors. The clergy and the choir are the prompters ("Let us pray") and God is the audience.

That the people of God are the "actors" not the audience points out another dimension to the will of God which we must know: all believers are meant to affirm by their actions their conviction that we are called to union with God. This happens first of all in the liturgical assembly where we are to be more than spectators, *"teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Col 3:16).

St. Paul's vision of the Church in this epistle is focused, not on distinctions of rank or function but on mutuality: the Church is one body with Christ as its head (see Col 1:18, 24), a theme developed further in other epistles. In his vision believers are called to bear with one another, forgive one another and pray for one another, thus building up the Church as one body.

### Prokimenon

**Reader:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!  
**People:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!  
**Reader:** All you peoples, clap your hands! Shout to God with cries of gladness!  
**People:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise! Sing praise to our King, sing praise!  
**Reader:** Sing praise to our God, sing praise!  
**People:** Sing praise to our King, sing praise!

**Epistle:** Col. 1:12-18

### Alleluia Verses

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High abides in the shadow of the God of heaven.  
**Verse:** He will say to the Lord, "My wall, my refuge my God in whom I will trust!"

**Gospel:** Lk. 13:10-17

