



St. Elias Melkite Catholic Church

Serving San Jose Valley & Bay Area, CA

Church Information

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Pastor

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo
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Sunday Service Time

Divine Liturgy: 11:00 am
(Confession beforehand)

THIS WEEK

Monday, August 15th

Feast of the Dormition
Divine Liturgy @ 11:30am

Wednesday, August 17th

Online Bible Study @ 8:00pm

Coffee Socials and Qurban

This Sunday, August 14th

Qurban: Holly Handal
Coffee Social: Isis Hinady and
Laila Moussa

Next Sunday, August 21st

Qurban: Amal Gamoney
Coffee Social: Amal Gamoney

Please pray for:

The Orthodox Servants of God

The Santos Family
John and Barbara Andrews
Louis Carnazzo
Wilbur and Ann Bowden
Joshua Hynes
The Sramcik Family
William Connelly

The Orthodox Servants Asleep in the Lord

Bishara Naber
Mary Carnazzo

If you have names you would
like added to the list of
commemorations, please send
to steliasmelkite@gmail.com

Sunday, August 14th 2016

13th Sunday After Pentecost – The Wicked Tenants

Troparion of the Resurrection (4th Tone)

The women disciples of the Lord, having learned from the angel the joyful announcement of the resurrection, and having rejected the ancestral sentence, proudly told the apostles: "Death is despoiled. Christ God is risen, bestowing to the world great mercy."

Epistle 1 Corinthians 16:13-24

BRETHREN, watch, stand fast in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let everything you do be done out of love. Now, I beg you, brethren: you know that the members of Stephanas' family are the first-fruits of Achaia and have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. To such as these, you too become subject, and to every helper and worker. I rejoice at the presence of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because what was lacking on your part they have supplied — for they have refreshed both my spirit and yours. To such as these, therefore, give recognition. The churches of Asia greet you. Acquila and Priscilla with the church at their house greet you heartily in the Lord. All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, greet you with my own hand. If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. My love is with all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Gospel Matthew 21:33-42

The Lord told this parable: "There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge around it, and dug a wine vat in it, and built a tower; then he leased it to the vine-dressers, and went abroad. But when the fruit season drew near, he sent his servants to the vine-dressers to receive his fruits. And the vine-dressers seized his servants, and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent another party of servants more numerous than the first; and they did the same to these. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But the vine-dressers, on seeing the son, said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance.' So they seized him, cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. When, therefore, the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-dressers?" They said to him, "He will utterly destroy those evil men, and will lease the vineyard to other vine-dressers, who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, *'The Stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone; by the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes'*"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Feast of the Dormition – Monday, August 15th

DON'T FORGET! This Monday is the Feast of the Dormition. In honor of this glorious feast, we will be having Divine Liturgy at 11:30 am. Please make every effort to attend if you are able. We hope to see you there!

Church Magnets

This week we have new magnetic business cards for distribution. The magnets contain our church location, service time, and online presence. Please take one of these magnets home with you to display on your refrigerator or perhaps your desk at work.

Frequently Asked Questions

We recently added a new tab to our website titled "FAQ." This section features answers to commonly asked questions regarding the Melkite/Byzantine tradition. If you have any questions you have always wondered about and would like answered, please e-mail them to steliasmelkite@gmail.com so that we can post the answer and share with others.

Saint of the Day: Prophet Micah {Credit: OCA.org}

The Prophet Micah, the sixth of the Twelve Minor Prophets, was descended from the Tribe of Judah and was a native of the Moresheth, to the south of Jerusalem. His prophetic service began around the year 778 before Christ and continued for almost 50 years under the kings of Judah: Jotham, Ahaz, and Righteous Hezekiah. He was a contemporary of the Prophet Isaiah. His denunciation and predictions were in regard to the separate kingdoms of Judah and Israel. He foresaw the misfortunes threatening the kingdom of Israel before its destruction, and the sufferings of Judah during the incursions under the Assyrian emperor Sennacherib. To him belongs a prophecy about the birth of the Savior of the world: "And thou, Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, art too few in number to be reckoned with the thousands of Judah; yet out of thee shall come forth to Me, one who is to be a ruler in Israel, and His goings forth were from the beginning, even from eternity" (Mic. 5:2). From the words of the Prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 26: 18-19), the Jews were evidently afraid to kill the Prophet Micah. His relics were discovered in the fourth century after the Birth of Christ at Baraphsatia, through a revelation to the Bishop of Eleutheropolis, Zeuinos.

FROM THE DIOCESE OF NEWTON: THE 13TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST "TO THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CORINTH"

CONTEMPORARY READERS of certain New Testament passages may be lulled into thinking that the first century was a "Golden Age" for the Church. We read, for example, that the first Christian converts in Jerusalem "... continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common..." (Acts 2:43-44).

The Epistles to the Corinthians show us another picture. The Church at Corinth, founded by St Paul himself, appears fractured by divisions, filled with arrogance, and seemingly tolerant of immorality. There were doctrinal controversies about the resurrection of the body and liturgical abuses as well. Its members were tempted to go along with questionable practices on one hand or to combat them with unchristian methods on the other. Although called to a unity of love, the community was already being divided between rich and poor. No wonder St Paul encouraged his spiritual children to "*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love*" (1 Cor 16:13, 14).

The Problems Paul Faced: Disunity

The Corinthian Church was composed of spiritually immature people, whom St Paul likened to infants: "*I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able* (1 Cor 3:2). Little wonder then that they were unprepared to deal with difficult issues in ways based on the Gospel. Some had degenerated into factions based on who had 'discipled' them – Paul or Apollos, a previous elder, or Cephas (Peter) or Christ (see 1 Cor 1:11-15). Others had gone to court against one another (see 1 Cor 6: 1-11). If you can't settle problems among yourselves, Paul concluded, better to be cheated than to parade your problems before unbelievers.

St Paul's response was to insist on the unity of believers with God and with one another in Christ. He used images of a common field or a building and, most importantly, the human body to illustrate what he knew to be the organic oneness of the Church with the Lord Jesus. It is the Eucharist, he reminded them, which brought about and deepened this unity as symbolized by the sharing of a single loaf: "*For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread*" (1 Cor 10:17).

The Problems Paul Faced: Moral Laxity

Paul mentions two major instances of sexual immorality condoned by the Corinthian Christians. The first – "*that a man has his father's wife*" (1 Cor 5:1) – he says is unmentionable even among unbelievers. While a stepmother is not a blood relative she is a member of the extended family, an inviolable relationship in the Torah (see Lev18:6-18) and in any traditional society.

The second instance mentioned is frequenting prostitutes, a common enough practice in the Roman Empire. St Paul again explains why such a practice is immoral for a Christian. "*Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body... Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? ... Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you...*" (1 Cor 6:13-19).

The Problems Paul Faced: Divorce

Divorce was commonly practiced in the Roman Empire, and could be initiated by either the husband or the wife. The Lord Jesus had clearly enunciated His principle for marriage: "*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate*" (Mt 19:4-6). This is why St Paul says that his teaching on marriage is not his but Christ's: "*Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife*" (1 Cor 7:10, 11).

St Paul then sets out a principle of his own for cases where a husband or wife becomes a Christian while the partner does not and leaves the spouse as a result. "*If the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases*" (1 Cor 7:15).

The Problems Paul Faced: Selectivity

The most fundamental problem St Paul faced was doctrinal. Some believers were choosing to reject belief in the Resurrection. This was the Gospel St Paul had preached to them (see 1 Cor 15:1-8), but not everyone accepted it. "*Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is also in vain*" (1 Cor 15:12-15).

St Paul replies with an eloquent, even lyrical, teaching on Christ's resurrection and His defeat of Death. He proclaims that we too will share in His victory. "*And as we have borne the image of the man of dust [i.e. Adam], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man*" (1 Cor 15:49).

St Paul's Response

St Paul's response was twofold, as we noted above. In terms of the doctrine or moral issues he urged the Corinthians to "*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*" Christians had to *watch*: to be aware of what was happening in their Church and how they were responding to the values of those around them. Where they simply going along with the prevailing social norms which, in a pagan society, certainly did not arise from the Gospel? When they saw that false teachings or ungodly behavior was evident they were to *stand fast in the faith*.

The focus of the faith St Paul had preached to them was the death and resurrection of Christ and the unbreakable unity of the Church with Christ, the Body with its Head. To uphold the teachings of Christ, especially the moral teachings, require that believers *be brave, be strong* in withstanding the pressures of the culture around them to go against or ignore the teachings of the Gospel.

The second prong of St Paul's two-fold approach to the Corinthian situation was that the faithful believers respond in love to their fellow Christians, even to those who are misguided or unwavering in their delusions. *Let all that you do be done with love*, even if that means excluding from their company those who claim to be believers but deny their relationship to Christ by their lifestyle. There is no place for pharisaic self-righteousness here – correcting another must be an act of love, not to get even or "teach someone a lesson."

In our culture Churches today are faced with similar problems: doctrinal or moral relativism (it's good or true "if it works for you") and factionalism among church members. We must apply St Paul's response to the Corinthians here: be firm in observing the Tradition but be loving in dealing with those in our community who follow the ways of the world rather than the ways of Christ.