



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 Times

Wednesdays: 5:30-6:30 pm
Sundays: Before Divine Liturgy

THIS WEEK

Wednesday, September 7th

Bible Study @ 7:00pm
(Online and in Church Hall)

Coffee Socials and Qurban

This Sunday, September 4th

Qurban: Marie Elhage
Coffee Social: Marie Elhage

Next Sunday, September 11th

Qurban: Holly Handal
Coffee Social: Cournane Family

Please pray for:

The Orthodox Servants of God

Fr. Ephrem Handal
The Elhage Family
Judy Sramcik
Vance Solis
Benjamin & Angele St. Hilaire

The Orthodox Servants Asleep in the Lord

Hannah and Afaf Moussy
Gladys Farah

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

Sunday, September 4th 2016

16th Sunday After Pentecost

Troparion of the Resurrection (7th Tone)

You destroyed Death by Your cross * You opened paradise to the thief * You changed the weeping of the myrrhbearers * and commanded Your apostles to proclaim * that You, O Christ God, have risen * granting to the world great mercy.

نشيد القيامة بالحن السابع

لاشيت بصلبيك الموت، وفتحت للصن الفردوس، وحولت نوح حملات الطيب الى فرح، وأمرت رسلك أن يكرزوا مبشرين بأنك قد قمت، أيها المسيح الاله، مانحاً العالم عظيم الرحمة.

Epistle Corinthians 6:1-10

BRETHREN, yes, working together with him, we beg you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation, I have helped you." (Is.49:8) Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! We give no offense to anyone, that our ministry may not be blamed. On the contrary, let us behave in all circumstances as God's ministers, in much patience, in tribulations, in hardships, in distress; in stripes, in imprisonments, in riots; in labors, in sleepless nights, in fastings; in innocence, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in unaffected love; in the word of truth, in God's power; with the armor of justification on the right hand and on the left; in honor and dishonor, in evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet truthful, as unknown and yet well known, as dying, and look, we live; as punished, but not killed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet enriching many, as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

Gospel Matthew 25: 14-30

The Lord told this parable: "A man going abroad, called his servants and handed over his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his particular ability, and then he went on his journey. And he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more. In like manner, he who had received the two gained two more. But he who had received the one went away and dug in the earth and hid his master's money. Then after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came and brought five other talents saying, "Master, thou didst hand over to me five talents; behold, I have gained five others in addition." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; because you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many; enter into the joy of your master." And he also who had received two talents came and said, "Master, you did hand over to me two talents; behold, I have gained two more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; because you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many; enter into the joy of your master." But he who had received the one talent came and said, "Master, I know that you are a stern man; you reap where you have not winnowed; and as I was afraid, I went away and hid your talent in the earth; behold, thou hast what is thine." But his master answered and said to him, "Wicked and slothful servant! You did know that I reap where I do not sow, and gather where I have not winnowed. Thou shouldst therefore have entrusted my money to the bankers, and on my return I should have got back my own with interest. Take away therefore the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who does not have, even that which he seems shall be taken away. But as for the unprofitable servant, cast him forth into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." And who has ears to hear let him hear.

Saints of the Day: Hieromartyr Babylas & The Holy Prophet Moses {Credit: OCA.org & Book of the Menaion}

- Babylas was Bishop of Antioch in the days of Emperor Philip the Arab, a Prefect of the Palace who had assassinated and succeeded Emperor Gordian. "It is believed," writes the historian Eusebius, "that Philip, a Christian, joined his fellow Christians in prayer on Easter-Eve in the year 244. Babylas stopped him at the entrance of the church and enjoined him to confess his sins and make public penance. The Emperor complied with the Bishop's command." Babylas was imprisoned and martyred in the year 250 under Emperor Decius. Decius declared that the holy bishop must worship the idols in order to make up for his lack of respect for the emperor, or else face execution. After convincing himself that the martyr would remain steadfast in his faith, he commanded the military commander Victorinus to put him in heavy chains and lead him through the city in disgrace. The holy martyr replied, "Emperor, these chains are as venerable for me as your imperial crown is for you. For me, suffering for Christ is as desirable as the imperial power is for you. Death for the Immortal King is as precious to me as your life is to you."
- Moses was born in Egypt and assimilated the Egyptian culture. God appeared to him in the Burning Bush and ordered him to deliver the people of Israel from Pharaoh's yoke. After a fast of forty days and forty nights, he again encountered the Lord and received from Him the Tablets of the Commandments. He then ruled his people for forty years: he only saw the Promised Land from the summit of Mount Moab where he died and was buried.

FROM THE DIOCESE OF NEWTON: THE 16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST "STORIES THAT TELL A STORY"

THE CULTURE OF WESTERN EUROPE which we have inherited is based on the ideas and methods of Greek philosophy. We use abstractions, logic and the devices of classical thought to express ourselves. That sort of thinking was alien to the Semites of the ancient Middle East. Where a classic philosopher might speak of generosity, a Middle Easterner would tell a story about a generous person. The parables found in Scripture are examples of stories told to teach a truth.

The greatest number of parables in Scripture is found in the Gospels, but the Lord Jesus was hardly the first to teach in parables. One of the most striking parables in the Old Testament is found in 2 Samuel 12:1-9. In it the prophet Nathan confronts King David who has arranged the death of Uriah the Hittite so that he could marry Uriah's wife. Nathan makes his point with a story: *"Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: 'There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare a meal for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it. 'So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, 'As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.' Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man!'..."* (vv. 1-7). Parables such as this use concrete narratives to express abstract arguments. Here Nathan was reproaching David for his own actions under the figure of the rich man in the parable. Very likely, the parable was much more effective than a discourse on the Commandments would have been.

Parable of the Talents

The Lord Jesus teaches His followers about what we would call "stewardship" in the parable of the talents. In the Mediterranean world a talent (*talanton*) was a measure of weight. In the Palestine of Christ's day a talent would have equaled 130 pounds, as of a precious metal (silver or gold). Today a pound of gold might be worth \$15,000.00, so three talents (390 pounds) was a considerable sum. The master expects his servants to be productive: to increase the value of what he was given. The first two servants in the parable did exactly that; the third fellow buried the money in the ground. He did not squander what he had received, but he did not increase its value either. On his return the master commended the first two servants, but told the third: *"You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest"* (vv. 26, 27). Even that would have been productive but the servant did not even make the effort to do that. The Lord points us to the parable's spiritual meaning in its first line: *"The kingdom of heaven is like..."* (v.14) this. There will be productive servants who will be rewarded and foolish ones who will be humiliated... and worse. As we read earlier in Matthew, *"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire"* (Mt 7:19). The basis for this judgment will be what the servants have done with the wealth entrusted to them.

When Will the Master Arrive?

There have been several answers to this question because the parable applies equally to all of them, human nature being what it is. The original reference may have been to Christ's coming to Jerusalem which exposed some servants as productive and others as wasteful. In this interpretation the Messiah Himself is the pearl of great price. Some received Him to their profit; others wasted their chance of entering His joy. Some have said that the Master entrusts Himself to us in any number of ways: in the Scriptures, the Eucharist, the Church, the poor. The way we respond to His presence shows whether we are bearing fruit or not. The most common interpretation is that at the Second Coming of Christ His servants will receive what their deeds deserve.

What Do the Talents Represent?

The Fathers offered varied answers to this question as well. St. John Chrysostom said that, "This parable is delivered against those who will not assist their neighbors with money, or words, or in any other way, but hide all that they have." St. Jerome interpreted it to mean that, "In the five, two, and one talent, we recognize the diversity of gifts wherewith we have been entrusted." St. Gregory of Nyssa expands on this thought, pointing to all the gifts believers receive in and for the sake of the Church: "Let him then who has understanding look that he hold not his peace; let him who has affluence not be dead to mercy; let him who has the art of guiding life communicate its use with his neighbor; and him who has the faculty of eloquence intercede with the rich for the poor." Each of us in the Church has received talents of various kinds and degrees. As St Paul taught, they are meant to be used for the benefit of the community: *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness"* (Rom 12: 6-8). If we use our gifts to benefit the Church they will increase and bear fruit; if we bury them we will incur the judgment of the Master.

This Parable in Our Liturgy

The theme of this parable echoes in the hymns of Holy Week, when it is most timely.

You have received equal grace from God, so increase the talent with the help of Christ who gave it to you and sing: Bless the Lord, O works of the Lord!

You have heard the judgment of the one who hid the talent, O my soul. Therefore, do not hide the Word of God. Proclaim His wonders, so that increasing His gift, you may enter into the joy of the Lord.

Come, O faithful, let us work eagerly for the Master, for He distributes wealth to His servants; and let us increase the talent of grace, each one according to his ability. Let one adorn his wisdom with good deeds. Let another beautify the celebration of the service. Let someone strong in faith communicate the word to the uninitiated, and another dispense his wealth to the poor. Thus, we shall increase what has been loaned to us and, like faithful stewards of grace, shall be worthy of the Master's joy. O Christ God, make us worthy of that joy, for You are the Lover of Mankind.

Behold, O my soul, the Lord has entrusted you with a talent. Receive His gift with fear. Repay the Giver by giving to the poor and make the Lord your Friend, so that when He comes in glory, you may stand at His right hand and hear His blessed voice: Enter, O servant, into the joy of your Lord. Though I have gone astray, make me worthy of that joy, O Savior, through Your great mercy.