



St. Elias Melkite Catholic Church

Serving San Jose Valley & Bay Area, CA

Church Information

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Pastor

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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 14th

Divine Liturgy @ 11:30am
Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Wednesday, September 14th

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

Coffee Socials and Qurban

This Sunday, September 11th

Qurban: Holly Handal
Coffee Social: Cournane Family

Next Sunday, September 18th

Qurban: Holly Handal
Coffee Social: Laure Kelley

Please pray for:

The Orthodox Servants of God

Priest Ephrem
Priest Joseph
Priest Charles
Priest Jerius
Priest Moheen
Lindsay Golden
Annie and Todd McKinney
Raji Sacr

The Orthodox Servants Asleep in the Lord

Noah Malson
Marie Solis

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

Sunday, September 11, 2016

SUNDAY OF THE CANAANITE WOMAN

SUNDAY BEFORE THE HOLY CROSS

4th Day of Celebration of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God

Commemoration of our Holy Mother Theodora of Alexandria

Commemoration of the Holy Martyr Autonomos (Transferred from September 12)

Troparion of the Resurrection (8th Tone)

You descended from on high O Compassionate One, * and consented to burial for three days * that You might free us from suffering * O Lord, our life and our resurrection * glory to You!

نشيد القيامة باللحن الثامن

إنحدرت من العلاء أيها التحنن، وقبلت الدفن ثلاثة أيام، لكي تعتقنا من الآلام، فيا حياتنا وقيامتنا، يا رب المجد لك.

Epistle Galatians 6:11-18

BRETHREN, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand! All those who want to please in a human way are forcing you to be circumcised merely to avoid persecution because of the cross of Christ. For not even the circumcised observe the Law: but they want you to be circumcised that they may boast of your subjection to external rites. But as for me, God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision but a new creation is of any account. And whoever follow this rule, peace and mercy be upon them and on God's Israel. From now on, let no man give me trouble, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Gospel John 3:13-17 *Sunday before the Feast of the Holy Cross*

The Lord said, "No one has gone up into heaven except the One Who has come down from heaven: the Son of Man Who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that those who believe in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that those who believe in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God did not send His Son into the world in order to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WEDNESDAY DIVINE LITURGY @ 11:30am

This Wednesday, September 14th is the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Divine Liturgy will be held at 11:30 am in honor of this Holy Feast. All are welcome and encouraged to attend- we hope to see you there! Please Note: We will still be holding our weekly Bible Study as usual at 7:00pm.

ST. JAMES MIDDLE EASTERN AND GREEK FOOD FESTIVAL: SEPTEMBER 16th-18th

St. James Orthodox Church in Milpitas will be holding their 11th Annual Middle Eastern and Greek Food Festival this upcoming Friday- Sunday. Enjoy your day with a traditional market place, fun games for the kids, live entertainment, dancing, and most importantly, delicious cuisines. Visit www.sjorthodox.org/festival for more information.

Saints of the Day: Holy Mother Theodora of Alexandria & Holy Martyr Autonomos {Credit: Book of the Menaion}

● **Holy Mother Theodora of Alexandria:** It is reported that Theodora lived at the time of Emperor Zeno (474-491). She was married to a young man of profound piety and noble parentage named Paphnutius. Beguiled by the devil, she fell into the snares of another man. When she realized the gravity of her sin, she made penance, taking the monastic habit and passing for a monk under the name of Theodore. She spent in a monastery a life of great holiness and rigorous penance, then passed on to eternal life.

● **Troparion of Theodora** "In you, O Mother Theodora, the faithful image of God shone forth, for you carried your cross and followed Christ. You taught by your deeds how to spurn the body, for it passes away, and how to value the soul, for it is immortal. Wherefore your soul is forever in happiness with the angels."

● **Holy Martyr Autonomos (Transferred from September 12th)**

Autonomos was born in Italy. He fled the persecution of Licinius and settled in Bithynia. Because of his great zeal for the faith of Christ, the pagans of Bithynia seized him and put him to death while he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy : thus did he mix his blood on the altar with the divine blood of Christ.

FROM THE DIOCESE OF NEWTON: SUNDAY BEFORE THE HOLY CROSS: "THE BURIAL CHAMBER OF CHRIST"

Of all the shrines and cathedrals throughout the Christian world there is nothing to equal the Anastasis, the Church of the Resurrection, in Jerusalem, known in the West as the Holy Sepulchre. The church complex includes the hill of Calvary, the place of Christ's death, and the tomb in which He was buried and from which He rose on the third day. Its dedication on September 13, 335 is remembered every year on this date on the Byzantine calendar. While the present form of the Anastasis dates from the mid-nineteenth century, its origins may be found at the beginning of the Christian Roman Empire, with the Equals to the Apostles, Sts Constantine and Helen. During the Roman persecution of Christians a pagan temple had been built on the site to bury the memory of Christ's tomb. The first Christian emperor, St Constantine, mounted an expedition, led by his mother St Helena, to restore and adorn the places associated with Christ's life. The pagan temple was demolished, and the Anastasis built on the site of Calvary and the tomb. The Anastasis is actually a complex of chapels and churches with the tomb of Christ at its center. According to the Gospel, "Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb ... hewn out of the rock" (Jn 19:41; Mt 27:60). The rock and earth around the tomb was removed and a kouvouklion or shrine built around it. Over the centuries it has been adorned with marble, hanging lamps, icons and other ornaments so that it bears little resemblance to the garden tomb in which Jesus was laid. The site, however, had been cherished by local Christians long before Constantine as the actual places where the Lord suffered His Passion. A rotunda, or circular enclosure, was build around the tomb to accommodate worshippers. At first it was open to the sky, but by the end of the fourth century a dome was constructed, enclosing the entire area. Besides the tomb of Christ, the Anastasis also contained a great basilica, called the martyrion, and a covered atrium over the rock of Calvary. These three separate structures were joined together in later years and several more chapels added, giving us the form we know today.

Surviving the Centuries

The Anastasis survived centuries of natural disasters as well as invasion and occupation by hostile forces. The church was almost destroyed by a fire in 614 during the Persian occupation of Jerusalem but restored after the Persians were driven out in 630. During Arab rule the church was damaged and then completely destroyed in ad 1009 by the so-called "Mad Caliph," al-Hakim. The shrine enclosing the tomb was buried in rubble which protected it from further damage. Rebuilding the Anastasis was negotiated in a peace treaty between the Arabs and the Byzantine Empire. It took twenty years of work to rebuild the church. Several small chapels surrounding the principal shrines were added at that time. The Anastasis was often damaged and restored in centuries that followed. The most extensive damage resulted from a fire in 1808. The great dome collapsed, damaging the kouvouklion somewhat. Two earthquakes in the 1830s caused further damage. The reconstruction that followed was completed in 1870. Further restoration was needed after an earthquake in 1927 and extensive repairs were begun in 1958 and are still continuing.

The Anastasis Today

The number of Christian groups seeking use of the church caused frequent squabbles until 1852, when the Ottomans decreed an arrangement called the status quo which is still in force. It placed the administration of the church in the hands of the three oldest and largest Christian groups in Jerusalem, the Armenian, Greek and Latin Churches. The Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox and Syriac Orthodox Churches also have certain sections allotted to their use. The Greek Catholic patriarchate is nearby, but not part of the Anastasis complex.

Entrance to the Anastasis is through an open courtyard flanked by a Roman Catholic chapel to Our Lady of Sorrows and a Greek Orthodox chapel of St Mary the Egyptian who experienced her conversion at the door of the Anastasis. A Greek Orthodox monastery, the Gethsemane Metochion, is also accessed from this courtyard.

The rotunda enclosing the Lord's tomb occupies approximately one-third of the church's main floor. Each day three Liturgies (Armenian, Greek and Latin) are offered in the tomb. The rotunda also contains a Coptic Orthodox chapel and a Syriac Orthodox. Five smaller chapels face the kouvouklion from the north and south.

Opposite the rotunda is the catholicon or cathedral of the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Greek and Armenian chapels line the aisle in the apse of the catholicon.

Descending a staircase brings us to three more chapels, Armenian, Greek, and Latin respectively. Ascending another staircase leads us to the Golgotha, shrine of the crucifixion. The Greek and Latin chapels here recall the death of Christ.

The "Garden Tomb"

American and European Protestants began coming to Jerusalem in the nineteenth century but did not feel comfortable with Eastern liturgy or the ornamentation of the holy sites. The ornamentation of the tomb, however, had begun as soon as the Anastasis was constructed. The pilgrim-nun Egeria saw it this way: "You see there nothing but gold and gems and silk. For if you look at the veils, they are wholly made of silk striped with gold, and if you look at the curtains they too are made wholly of silk striped with gold... And what shall I say of the decoration of the building itself which Constantine – at his mother's instigation – decorated with gold, mosaic and costly marbles, as far as the resources of his kingdom allowed him..."

Some Protestant writers, believing that Jerusalem in the first century was the same size as the present city, derided the Anastasis as "mere delusion, a monkish juggle" (Edward Clarke, 1812). British theorists proposed another site, "Gordon's Calvary" as the place of Christ's death and burial. The unadorned "Garden Tomb" developed there is the favored location for Protestant worship, although it is now realized that the site of the Anastasis was outside the city walls in Christ's day.

Egeria's Pilgrimage

In about 380 a Spanish nun visited the Holy Places. She described Sunday worship at the Anastasis as moving from the courtyard to the tomb, then to the Cross and the basilica: "On the seventh day, that is, on the Lord's Day, the whole multitude assembles before cockcrow ... in the basilica which is near the Anastasis, but outside the doors... As soon as the first cock has crowed, the bishop arrives and enters the cave at the Anastasis; all the doors are opened and the whole multitude enters the Anastasis where countless lamps are already lit... After three psalms and three prayers are ended, censers are brought into the cave of the Anastasis so that the whole basilica of the Anastasis is filled with odors. And then the bishop, standing within the rails, takes the book of the Gospel, and proceeding to the door, himself reads the Resurrection (narrative) ... After the reading of the Gospel the bishop goes out to the Cross, accompanied by all the people with hymns. There again a psalm is said and prayer is made, after which he blesses the faithful and the dismissal takes place... At daybreak because it is the Lord's Day every one proceeds to the greater church, built by Constantine, which is situated in Golgotha behind the Cross, where all things are done which are customary everywhere on the Lord's Day ...