



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, December 7th

Bible Study @ 7:00pm

Coffee Socials and Qurban

This Sunday, December 4th

Qurban: Leila Carnazzo
Coffee Social: Ophelia Drake

Next Sunday, December 11th

Qurban: The Higareda Family
Coffee Social: The Higareda Family

Please pray for:

The Orthodox Servants of God

Archimandrite Charles Aboody
Archimandrite Joseph Francavilla
Fr. Ephrem Handal
The Drake Family
Amal Gamoney
William Connelly
Ruth Lee
Leslie Griffin
Emily Roca-Dalyan

The Orthodox Servants Asleep in the Lord in the Hope of the Resurrection

Michael Harris
Vanda Kaldani
Siham Hanna
Anita Deasis

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

Sunday, December 4, 2016

10th Sunday After the Holy Cross – The Crippled Woman

Commemoration of the Holy Great-Martyr Barbara and of our Holy Father John the Damascene

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.”

نشيد القيامة باللحن الرابع
إن تلميذات الرب تعلمن من الملاك بشرى القيامة البهيجة. ونبذن القضاء على الجدين، وقلن للرسلي مفخرات: لقد سلب الموت، ونهض المسيح الإله، واهباً للعالم عظيم الرحمة.

Epistle: Galatians 3:23-4:5

Brethren, before the faith came, we were kept imprisoned under the Law, shut up from the faith that was to be revealed. Therefore the Law has been our tutor unto Christ that we might be made holy by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all God's children through faith in Christ Jesus. For all you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free man; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

(4: 1) Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he differs in no way from a slave, though he is the master of all; but he is under guardians and tutors until the time set by his father. So we too, when we were children, were enslaved under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Gospel of the 10th Sunday of Holy Cross Luke 13:10-17 (The Crippled Woman)

At that time Jesus was teaching in one of their synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent over and utterly unable to look upwards. When Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, “Woman, you are delivered from your infirmity.” And He laid His hands upon her, and instantly she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, addressed the crowd, saying, “There are six days in which one ought to work; on these therefore come and be cured, and not on the Sabbath.” But the Lord answered him and said, “Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or ass from the manger, and lead it out to water? And this woman, daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound, lo, for eighteen years, ought not she to be released from this bond on the Sabbath?” And as He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and the entire crowd rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPDATED ADDRESSES

This week you will be receiving an e-mail asking you to provide your current mailing address as well as your preferred phone number. Please respond in a timely manner in order that we may update our parish records.

Saints of the Day: Holy Great-Martyr Barbara and our Holy Father John the Damascene

- Barbara was martyred under Emperor Maximianus. There are many legends concerning her. The only thing certain is that she was put to death by her own father Dioscorus because of his hatred for the Christian religion.
- John the Damascene, or John of Damascus, descended from a noble ancestry. He was highly educated in matters of religion and government. He soon renounced his high estate to become a monk in the monastery of St. Sabas, near Jerusalem, where he lived as a companion of Cosmas. John and Cosmas rivalled in composing the most beautiful hymns and canons in honor of the Mother of God and of the saints. John was ordained a priest by another John, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. He became a zealous defender of the holy icons, and was also the first to write down the theology of Orthodoxy in the form of systematic treatises, following the Aristotelian method. John died at the same monastery of St. Sabas at a very advanced age, probably on December 4, 749. His tomb is still an object of veneration and pilgrimage. Pope Leo XIII declared him a doctor of the Universal Church. According to a legend recorded in the story of his life published in the tenth century, one of his hands was cut off by the Iconoclasts, but the Blessed Mother of God appeared to him and returned it to him in perfect health.

FROM THE DIOCESE: 10TH SUNDAY AFTER THE FEAST OF THE HOLY CROSS: "YOU ARE ONE IN CHRIST JESUS"

"ALL OF YOU who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, alleluia." This verse, sung at baptisms in Byzantine churches, is taken from the passage read at today's Divine Liturgy (*Gal 3:23-4:5*). The newly baptized is processed around the baptistery and into the nave wearing the white baptismal garment, the "robe of light." This rite illustrates St Paul's point in the passage that the Christian is one who has "put on" Christ. But what does "putting on Christ" mean apart from this ceremony?

Neither Jew Nor Greek

We see St Paul's explanation in the next verse, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*" (*Gal 3:28*). Once a person puts on Christ all human distinctions which divide people from one another – race, social status, gender and any other division people have made to exalt themselves over others – cease to have any meaning. A Christian is a brother or sister to every other person baptized in Christ, of any race or nation.

Here St Paul was echoing one of Christ's most controversial teachings. The family was the most important social structure of His day. It remains so in traditional societies everywhere. But Christ taught that being related by blood was not as important as being "related" in God's family. "*While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brethren stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then someone said to Him, 'Look, Your mother and Your brethren are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.'* But He answered and said to the one who told Him, '*Who is My mother and who are My brethren?*' And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, '*Here are My mother and My brethren! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother*'" (*Mt 12:46-50*). Reflecting on this passage, St Augustine was emboldened to say, "It is greater for Mary to have been a disciple of Christ than the mother of Christ" (Sermon 72). Her physical role of bearing Christ in her womb was, after all, dependent on her spiritual acceptance of God's will at the annunciation.

From the earliest days of the Church the great sign of this union of all believers with one another has been the Eucharist. As St Paul reminded the Corinthians, "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread*" (*1 Cor 10:16, 17*). To this day Byzantine Catholics and Orthodox as well as some other Eastern Christians, always receive a particle of "*that one bread*," a single loaf broken and divided among participants, as a reminder that at the Eucharist we all share in the one Christ.

Putting on the Mind of Christ

A few years ago it became popular to label coffee mugs, T-shirts and bracelets with the acronym WWJD ("What would Jesus do?"). Christians, this practice suggests, should think and act like Christ as well as pray to Him. St Paul took a similar approach in his epistles. We should imitate Christ's way of life, particularly in the way we relate to one another.

One area in which St Paul frequently urges believers to imitate Christ is in bearing with one another's weaknesses. "*We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me'*" (*Rom 15:1-3*). Christ bore our failings even to the cross; we can surely bear with the weaknesses of those we encounter in the fellowship of the Church.

Towards the end of his epistle to the Galatians St Paul suggests that not bearing with the weak is really a matter of pride. "*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself*" (*Gal 6:2, 3*). We are often intolerant of the weak, the ignorant or the poor because we feel ourselves somehow diminished by their company. On the contrary, bearing with the weak is a sign of true inner greatness. As St John Chrysostom observes, "What Paul says is this: If you are strong, then let the weak test your strength (Homilies on Romans, 27).

St Paul speaks with great clarity on this subject in his Epistle to the Philippians: humility is a fundamental imitation of Christ: "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond-servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross*" (*Phil 2:5-8*). We are urged to enter into the lives of others as Christ entered into our humanity, as an obedient servant.

St Paul is echoing here the words of Christ after He had washed the feet of His disciples: "*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you*" (*Jn 13:14, 15*). To put on the mind of Christ, then, means becoming a humble servant of one another in His Body, the Church.

Putting on the Trinity

Gal 4:5-7 expands even further our understanding of the mystery of "putting on Christ." The aim of the Incarnation, he teaches, is our incorporation into the "family" of God, the interrelationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit which we call the Trinity. We become children of God not by nature (as is His only-begotten Son), but by the freely given act of adoption. "*But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'*" (*Gal 4:5-7*)

St Paul also teaches here that, because we are adopted children of God in Christ, we subsequently receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts. At our baptism, of course, this is effected in the mystery of chrismation. St. Paul would return to that theme when writing to the Corinthians. Using temple imagery he describes the baptized as holy since the Holy Spirit dwells in them: "*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are*" (*1 Cor 3:16, 17*). This is expressed in our Liturgy when the priest invites the worshippers to Communion with the words, "Holy gifts for the holy!"

Since we have put on Christ and have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, St Paul says, we can call God by name as Jesus did (see *Mk 14:36*). When Moses asked to know God's name he was told "I am the Existing One," the One who truly is and who is the source of all existence. Now in Christ we are given another name, *Abba*, a name of intimate relationship of son to father.

In recent years it has been said that *Abba* was a child's word, like daddy or poppa, but there is no evidence that it was used by Jesus' contemporaries in this way. *Abba* was simply the ordinary word for father in everyday speech. It would later be the term used in monasteries for the head of the community.