



# St. Elias Melkite Church

Serving San Jose & South Bay Area, CA

14263 Mulberry Dr., Los Gatos, CA 95032

steliasmelkite.org • (408) 785-1212 • steliasmelkite@gmail.com

**March 26, 2017: Fourth Sunday of Lent – Sunday of our Father John Climacos**

## Divine Liturgy

Sundays: 11am

Feastdays: See website Calendar

## Confession Times

Wednesdays: 5-6 pm

Sundays: 10-11 am

## Vespers, Bible Study, and Social

Wednesdays of Fast: 6pm

## Presanctified Liturgy and Social

Fridays of Fast: 7:30pm

## Sunday School: After liturgy

## Contact the Pastor

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo

Phone: (831) 229-8350

[SebastianCarnazzo@gmail.com](mailto:SebastianCarnazzo@gmail.com)

## Qurban and Socials

- This Sunday, 3/26  
Qurban: Higareda  
Social: Higareda
- Next Sunday, 4/2  
Qurban: Kaldani  
Social: Kaldani

## Pray for Servants of God

Ciardella Family

Timothy Ciardella

Higareda Family

Jabra Asfour

Holly Handal

Kayla Marie Handal

Hania Dabit

Liliane Ghazal

Silvia Dorham

Nabil Matta

John Andrews

Xavier Demello

Kamal & Eugenie Neimat

Isaac & Julia Kaldani

Thomas Kalil

Madeline Hynes

William Connelly

Anne Bowden

## Asleep in the Lord

Atef Kuburssi

Zobeida Srour

## PRAYER

O Lord, Lover of mankind, You saved the people of Niniva as they repented, fasting and weeping. Have mercy on us, for we fall short of any defense. And since You are compassionate, strengthen in our hearts our faith in your name and steady our footsteps in the way of your Commandments. For You are good and forbearing, O our God, and to You we render glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

## HYMNS

**Troparion of the resurrection (4<sup>th</sup> 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."

**Kontakion of the Annunciation:** Triumphant leader to you belongs our prize of victory! And since you saved us from adversity we offer you our thanks. We are your people O mother of God! So as you have that invincible power, continue to deliver us from danger that we may cry out to you Hail, O Virgin and bride ever pure.

## READINGS

**Hebrews 6:13-20** Brethren, when God made his promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you, and will surely multiply you Gn.22 : 14)." And so, after patient waiting, Abraham obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater than themselves, and an oath given as a guarantee is the final settlement of all their disagreements. Hence God, meaning to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the firmness of his will interposed an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to deceive, we may have the strongest comfort — we who have sought refuge in holding fast the hope set before us. This hope we have as a sure and firm anchor of the soul, reaching even behind the veil where our forerunner Jesus has entered for us, as he became a high priest forever according to the order of Melchisedek.

**Mark 9:17-31** At that time one of the crowd came to Jesus and bowed to him saying: "Master, I have brought to you my son, who has a dumb spirit; and whenever it seizes him it throws him down, and he foams and grinds his teeth; and he is wasting away. And I told your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." And he, answering him, said, "O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to me." And they brought him to him; and the spirit, when it saw Jesus, immediately threw the boy in convulsions, and he fell down on the ground and rolled about foaming at the mouth. So he asked his father, "How long is it since this has come upon him?" And he said, "From his infancy. Oftentimes, it has thrown him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him. But if you can do anything have compassion on us and help us." But Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to the man of faith." At once the father of the boy cried out and said with tears, "I do believe; help my unbelief." Now when Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, go out of him and enter him no more." And crying out and violently convulsing him, it went out of him, and he became like one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand, and raised him and he stood up. And when he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind can be cast out in no way except by prayer and fasting." And leaving that place, they were passing through Galilee, and he did not wish anyone to know it. For he was teaching his disciples, and saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and having been killed, he will rise again on the third day."

**Irmos:** In you, O full of grace, all creation exults, the hierarchy of angels together with the race of men: in you, sanctified Temple, spiritual Paradise, Glory of virgins of whom God took flesh from whom our God who exists before the world, became a child! For He has made your womb his throne, making it more spacious than the heavens. In you, O Woman full of grace, all creation exults: glory to you!

النشيد لوالدة الاله

إن البرايا بأسرها تفرح بك يا ممتلئة نعمة. محافل الملائكة وأجناس البشر لك يعظمون. أيها الهيكل المتقدس والفردوس الناطق وفخر البتولية، التي منها تجسد الاله وصار طفلاً، وهو الهنا قبل الدهور. لأنه صنع مستودعك عرشاً، وجعل بطنك أرحب من السماوات. لذلك، يا ممتلئة نعمة تفرح بك كل البرايا وتمجدك.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Vespers and Presanctified:** Remember that we have Vespers every Wednesday at 6pm and Presanctified every Friday at 7:30pm throughout the time of the Great Fast. Don't miss out on these wonderful services and these extra times to go to confession.

### *From the Diocese*

ST LUKE'S GOSPEL is the basis of the Great Feast of the Annunciation which our Church celebrates on March 25. In its first chapter this Scripture describes the appearance of the Angel Gabriel – one of the few angels actually named in Scripture – to the Virgin Mary. The ultimate source of this story, however, could only be the Holy Virgin herself as there were no other eye-witnesses. According to a tradition documented in the first centuries, “Luke, was born in Antioch, by profession, was a physician. He had become a disciple of the Apostle Paul and later followed Paul until his [Paul's] martyrdom” (from a second-century prologue to the Gospel). He was thought to be either a Hellenized Jew or a “Greek” (a converted pagan) writing in Greek for a Greek-speaking community. This explains the Greek expression used by the Angel in the Annunciation narrative, a phrase which has become part of the prayer life of Christians all over the world: “Hail, full of grace.”

**The Angel's Greeting** In the Gospel the Angel greets Mary with the Greek word *chaire*, rather than with the Hebrew/Aramaic salutation, *shalom*. While each of these expressions has a different literal meaning, both are idiomatic forms of greeting, expressing good will between people. Some translations use the literal meaning, Rejoice, while others use the idiomatic meaning, Hail. The Angel describes Mary in Lk 1:28 as *kecharitomeni*, another word which has proven difficult to translate. When St Jerome rendered the Bible into Latin he translated this term literally as *gratia plena*, full of grace. Centuries later when Western theology began using *gratia* as a technical term to mean the holiness bestowed by God, they interpreted Gabriel's greeting as an indication that Mary was immaculately conceived. During the Reformation many Protestants rejected both this doctrine and St Jerome's translation, pointing to the angel Gabriel's own explanation of the term in v. 30: “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor [*charis*] with God.” Some modern Catholic translations of Luke began using this interpretation as well, rendering *kecharitomeni* as “highly favored one.”

**The Angel's Greeting in Prayer** One effect of the Council of Ephesus (431), which affirmed the Virgin Mary as Theotokos, was an increase of devotion to her. St Theodotos of Ancyra, a Father of that council, left us a praise of Mary based on Gabriel's greeting: Hail, our desirable gladness; Hail, O rejoicing of the churches; Hail, O name that breathes out sweetness; Hail, face that radiates divinity and grace; Hail, most venerable memory; Hail, O spiritual and saving fleece; Hail, O Mother of unsetting splendor, filled with light; Hail, unstained Mother of holiness; Hail, most limpid font of the life-giving wave; Hail, new Mother, workshop of the birth. Hail, ineffable mother of a mystery beyond understanding; Hail, new book of a new Scripture, of which, as Isaiah tells, angels and men are faithful witnesses; Hail, alabaster jar of sanctifying ointment; Hail, best trader of the coin of virginity; Hail, creature embracing your Creator; Hail, little container containing the Uncontainable (Homily 4:3).

Later poets would use the same literary device in composing Akathists to the Theotokos and, later, to numerous saints. It is also found in the Greek and Syriac hymns of Severus of Antioch (c. 459-538), Andrew of Crete (650-740), and John of Damascus (c. 675-749). Appropriately enough, the same device is used in our services on the feast of the Annunciation. Several stichera at vespers are extended forms of the Mary-Gabriel dialogue in the Gospel, such as these: “Gabriel stood before you, O Maiden, revealing the pre-eternal counsel, greeting you and exclaiming: ‘Rejoice, O earth unsown! Rejoice, O bush unburnt! Rejoice, O depth hard to fathom! Rejoice, O bridge leading to the heavens and lofty ladder, which Jacob beheld! Rejoice, O divine jar of Manna! Rejoice, annulment of the curse! Rejoice, restoration of Adam: the Lord is with you!’” “You appear to me as a man,” the incorrupt Maiden said to the supreme commander; “yet how is it that you announce words which are beyond man? For you have said that God is with me, and that He will dwell in my womb. Tell me, how shall I become so spacious a dwelling and a place of sanctity which surpasses the cherubim? Deceive me no more with falsehood, for I have not known lust, I have not partaken of marriage, how then shall I give birth to a Child?”

**The Angelic Salutation** The most popular prayer to the Theotokos based on Luke is undoubtedly the “Hail, Mary” which exists in different versions in the Greek, Latin and Syriac traditions. In each of these versions Gabriel's greeting (Lk 1:28) is joined to Elizabeth's greeting when she was visited by Mary after the Annunciation (Lk 1:42). In the Byzantine tradition, the text is this: “Hail, O Theotokos, Virgin Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, for you have given birth to the Savior of our souls.” This troparion is sung at vespers every day during the Great Fast and at other times during the year. It is also used by many people as part of their daily rule of prayer. The oldest version in the West is that of Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) who used the following text as the offertory chant on the Fourth Sunday in Advent: “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” The second part of the prayer developed after the twelfth century and was fixed by Pope Pius V in 1568.

The only other tradition which uses this prayer is that of the Syriac Church which has a slightly different version in its book of the hours: “Hail Virgin Mary, full of grace, Our Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the Fruit of your womb, Our Lord. O Saint Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at all times, and at the hour of our death. Amen.” It is often added to the concluding prayers of the daily office, particularly in India.

**The Importance of the Annunciation** The meaning of this feast is well expressed in the hymns of vespers and orthros, such as this one sung at the aposticha of vespers. Today is the joy of the annunciation, the triumph of virginity! Those below are united to those above! Adam is restored, and Eve is freed from her primal grief. The tabernacle of our nature, mingled with divinity, has become the temple of God! O the mystery! Incomprehensible is the image of His abasement, and ineffable the richness of His goodness! An angel serves the miracle, and the Virgin's womb receives the Son. The Holy Spirit is sent down from on high, and the Father is well pleased. The covenant is enacted by common consent. Saved thereby, let us cry out together with Gabriel to the Virgin: Rejoice, O joyous one, from whom Christ God, our salvation, is come, assuming our nature and elevating it in Himself! Entreat Him, that our souls be saved.