



# 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

**Sunday, March 19, 2017: Third Sunday of Lent – Sunday of the Holy Cross**

## 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

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, 3/19  
Qurban: Gamoney  
Social: Gamoney
- Next Sunday, 3/19  
Qurban: Higareda  
Social: Higareda

## Pray for Servants of God

Gamoney Family

Jabra Asfour

Holly Handal

Kayla Marie Handal

Hania Dabit

Liliane

Silvia Dorham

## Asleep in the Lord

Fuad & Renee Kalil

Sebastiano & Alfina Carnazzo

Sheila Carnazzo

Ernest & Marion Young

Robert & Alice Robertson

## PRAYER

O Christ God, You chose of your own free will to be raised on the Cross for the sake of mankind. Have mercy on your people called after your name. Grant to the Church, your Mystical Body, to rejoice in your might. Safeguard all the peoples that You reconciled by your crucifixion. As for us, who have been sealed by the sign of your Cross, grant that we may not be proud of anything but of your Cross, bearing at all time in our hearts and our minds, the marks of your Holy Passion. For You are our Light and our Sanctification, O Christ our God, and to You we render glory, and to your Eternal Father, and your All-holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and always and forever and ever.

## HYMNS

**Troparion of the resurrection (3<sup>rd</sup> tone):** Let all in heaven rejoice \* and all on earth be glade \* for the Lord has exerted power with His arm: \* by death He has trampled upon Death \* and has become the firstborn from the dead.\* He has delivered us from the bosom of Hades \* and has granted to the world great mercy.

**Troparion of the Holy Cross:** O Lord save your people and bless your inheritance. Grant victory to our county over its enemies and preserve your people by the power of your cross.

Instead of the Trisagion We bow in worship before Your Cross, O Master, and we give praise to Your Holy Resurrection.

**Arabic:** Li-sa-lee-bi-ka ya Say-yi-da-na nas-jud, wa-li-qi-yaa-ma-ti-kal-mu-qad-da-sa nu-maj-jid.

**Greek:** Ton Stav-ron su pros-ki-noo-men Dhes-po-ta, ke tin a-gi-an su A-na-sta-sin dho-xa-zo-men.

**Kondakion 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: 4: 14-16; 5: 1-6** Brethren, since we have a great high priest who has passed into the heavens, let us hold fast out profession of faith. For we have not a high priest unable to pity our weaknesses, but one tried as we are in all things, save sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in matters pertaining to God, so that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to have compassion on the ignorant and erring, because he himself also is beset with weakness, and therefore must make offerings for sin in his own behalf as in behalf of the people. And no one invests himself with this honor: only one who is called by God takes it, as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself with the high priesthood, but glorified the One who had spoken to him, "You are my son, I this day have begotten you (Ps. 2:7). "As he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedek (Ps. 109:4)."

**Mark 8: 34-9:1** The Lord said: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who would save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake and for the sake of Good News will save it. For what does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, but suffers the loss of his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes with the holy angels in the glory of his Father." And he said to them, "Amen I say to you, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God coming in power."

**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!

## 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.

**March 25<sup>th</sup>:** Divine Liturgy at 9:30am for the feast of the Annunciation with St. Basil community.

### *From the Diocese*

AT THE DIVINE LITURGY on the Sundays of the Great Fast we regularly read from the Epistle to the Hebrews. Perhaps the most important theme in this epistle is the priesthood of the Lord Jesus expressed in two Old Testament images: the priesthood of Melchizedek and the priesthood of Israel. In both cases priesthood was intimately connected with the offering of sacrifices.

**Sacrifices in the Old Testament** While the epistle makes special reference to the Israelite temple and the role of the High Priest, we know that a priesthood and sacrifices were part of most religions in pre-Christian times. Ritual sacrifices were a way of expressing a relationship to God in more than mere words. People showed their thanks to God by offering gifts which could not be returned to their own use. Incense was burned up, wine was poured out, animals were immolated, Destroying the object offered meant that it could no longer be for anyone – it was surrendered completely to God. The Hebrews offered sacrifices long before the time of Moses. Cain and Abel offered sacrifices (Gen 4:3, 4); Noah and his sons offered sacrifices (Gen 8:20). By the time of Moses, however, sacrifices were restricted to the tabernacle (later the temple) under the supervision of priests. During the era of the temple at Jerusalem sacrifices were offered to express adoration, thanksgiving and atonement for both intentional and unintentional transgressions of the Law. A portion of some sacrifices, often those offered in thanksgiving, were shared between the priest and the offerer in a kind of communion with God, the Giver of the gift. The Law also included some restrictions which highlighted the unique holiness of God. Separate parts of the temple were marked off for the people and the priests while the Holy of Holies, the innermost area, was inaccessible to all but the High Priest, and that only on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). The temple, its priesthood and its sacrifices would be seen by the first Christians as a foreshadowing of the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus, “high priest of the good things that have come” (Heb 9:11).

**Christ’s Death as a Sacrifice** In the Gospels the Lord Jesus is described as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). This term alludes to the spotless lamb whose blood, spread on the doorposts of the Israelites, saved them from the wrath of God against the Egyptians. “The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt” (Ex 12:13). On the Jewish feast of Passover unblemished lambs would be sacrificed and consumed at the Seder meal in remembrance of that event. The Gospel of John describes Jesus’ crucifixion as taking place on Friday afternoon, the day before the Passover, when the priests would begin to sacrifice lambs for the feast. St Paul makes the same connection when he tells the Corinthians, “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Cor 5:7). The death of Christ initiates the New and Ultimate Passover, His blood delivering all mankind from the curse of eternal death. The Scriptures do not portray Christ as merely the victim of the sacrifice but as the One who offered Himself for us. St Paul tells the Ephesians, “Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Eph 5:2). This image recalls an occasion recorded in the Book of Exodus when a sacrifice was made to God, “a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD” (EX 29:18). This was the consecration of Aaron and his sons as the first priests of the Old Covenant. St Paul borrowed that imagery to say that Christ is at once the Lamb offered in sacrifice and the High Priest who offers that sacrifice.

**Our Liturgy and Christ’s Sacrifice** According to many rabbis of Christ’s day, all sacrifices would cease with the coming of the Messiah, except for the thankofferings (in Hebrew, *todah*) which would never cease to be offered throughout all eternity. Some Jewish writers in the Greek speaking Roman Empire used *eucharistia* to translate the Hebrew *todah*. Little wonder that the first Christians saw the Eucharist as their sharing in the sacrifice of Christ. Our Liturgy today expresses in several ways this connection with Christ’s sacrifice. In the Prothesis, or preparation of the gifts, the priest takes up the bread and says, “In remembrance of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ... ‘Like a sheep He was led to the slaughter. Like a spotless lamb silent before its shearer, He opens not His mouth. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away. And who shall declare His generation?’” These verses from Isaiah 53 describing the “Suffering Servant” are explained as pointing to Christ in the encounter of the Apostle Philip with the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40). Here the Priest is commemorating Christ’s sacrifice, making the first “remembrance” in the Liturgy. Another reference to sacrifice in the prothesis rite concerns the Eucharistic bread itself. In our tradition the central portion of the loaf, inscribed with the monogram IC XC NIKA (Jesus Christ is victorious) – the part of the loaf which will be consecrated – is called the Lamb. Once he has cut the Lamb away from the rest of the loaf, the Priest pierces it with the lance, saying, “‘The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’ is immolated for the life and salvation of the world.” The Bread/Lamb is identified with Christ, the Victim/Lamb of the New Passover. The Sacrifice Accepted in the Heavens Christ’s sacrifice did not end at the cross. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, what followed is described in terms of the Yom Kippur sacrifice in the temple at Jerusalem. “Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption... For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb 9:12, 24). In our Liturgy this is remembered graphically as the Priest, bearing the holy gifts, enters the altar, the Most Holy Place “behind the veil” (Heb 6:19) which represents the throne of God. At the highpoint of the Liturgy, the priest recounts how the Lord instituted the Eucharist at the mystical supper, making another remembrance, recalling Christ’s command, “Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19). Remembering “... this precept of salvation and everything that was done for our sake, the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into Heaven, the enthronement at the right hand, the second and glorious coming again” he offers the holy gifts to God. A remembrance or memorial (anamnesis) in the Liturgy is not a simple mental act: the Priest recalling something that happened in the past. While the death of Christ occurred in human time, His offering to the Father occurred in “God’s time.” It is an eternal action in which we share through our remembrance in the Liturgy. We do not repeat these events, but we become present to them in a mystical way. Thus our Liturgy is not a new sacrifice but a “sacrifice of praise” in which we enter into the eternal mystery as Christ offers Himself to the Father once for all for our salvation, and the Father accepts it.