



# St. Elias Melkite Church

Serving San Jose & South Bay Area, CA  
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**Vespers (evening prayer)**  
Saturdays 5pm  
Feastdays: See website Calendar

**Orthros (morning prayer)**  
Sundays 10am  
Feastdays: See website Calendar

**Divine Liturgy**  
Sundays: 11am  
Feastdays: See website Calendar

**Confession**  
During Vespers and Orthros, or  
by appointment

**Bible Study**  
Wednesdays: 6-7pm Online  
See website for link

**Sunday School**  
During Sunday Coffee Social

**Contact the Pastor**  
Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo  
Phone: (831) 229-8350  
[SebastianCarnazzo@gmail.com](mailto:SebastianCarnazzo@gmail.com)

- Qurban and Socials**
- This Sunday, 5/21  
Qurban: Gamoney  
Social: Farah
  - Next Sunday, 5/28  
Qurban: Higareda  
Social: Kaldani

**Pray for the Servants of God**  
The Readers Cyril and Romanos  
Gamoney Family  
Farah Family  
John Andrews  
Mary Solis  
Laure Kelly  
Kamal & Eugenie Neimat  
Hoersch Family  
Marvet Farah

**Asleep in the Lord in the Hope of the Resurrection**  
Jabra Asfour  
Florence Mendez  
Paul Hoersch

## May 21, 2017: SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

### PRAYER

O Christ God, Sun of Justice, You touched the man who was blind since his birth and restored to him his sight. Enlighten our minds. Make us children of Light, so that we may cry out to You full of faith: your mercy is beyond description. For You are our Light and our Sanctification, O Christ God, and to You we render glory, thanksgiving and worship, and to your Eternal Father and your All-holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and always and forever and ever. Amen.

### HYMNS

**Troparion of the resurrection (5th Tone):** Let us, O faithful, \* praise and worship the word, \* coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, \* born of the Virgin for our Salvation; \* for He was pleased to be lifted in the flesh upon the cross \* and to endure death \* and to raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

نشيد القيامة باللحن الخامس  
المولود من العذراء لخلاصنا. لأنه ارتضى أن يصعد بالجسد الأزلي مع الآب والروح، لننشد نحن المؤمنين ونسجد للكلمة،  
على الصليب، ويحتمل الموت، وينهض الموتى بقيامته المجيدة.

**Kondakion of Pascha, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> Tone:** Though You went down in the tomb, O immortal One, You overthrew the power of Hades and rose victorious, O Christ God. You greeted the ointment bearing women, saying "Rejoice!" You gave peace to Your apostles, and to those who had Fallen resurrection.

### READINGS

**Acts 26:1;12-20:** "While I was traveling on this business to Damascus with authority and permission from the chief priests, at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven brighter than the sunshine around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me Hebrew, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goad.' And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus you are persecuting. But rise and stand upon your feet: for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to be a minister and a witness to what you have seen, and of the visions you shall have of me; delivering you from the people and from the nations, to whom I am now sending you, to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the dominion of Satan to God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in me.' Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; but first to the people of Damascus and Jerusalem, and then all over Judea and the Gentiles, I set about declaring that they should repent and turn to God, doing work befitting their repentance."

**John 9:1-38** At that time as Jesus was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned nor have his parents, but the works of God were to be made manifest in him. I must do the works of the one who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world I am the Light of the world." When he had said these things, he spat on the ground and made clay with the spittle, and spread the clay over the man's eyes, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is interpreted 'sent')." .... Jesus heard they had turned him out, and when he had found him, said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?" And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen him, and he it is who speaks with you." And he said, "I believe, Lord." And falling down, he worshipped him.

**Hymn to the Theotokos:** The angel cried out to the one who is full of grace: "Hail, O Immaculate Virgin! Hail, again! For your Son is risen from the tomb on the third day!" Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord has shone upon you. Rejoice and be glad, O Sion; and you, O Pure One, O Mother of God, exult in the resurrection of your Son!

### COMMEMORATION

**Holy and Glorious Sovereigns, Constantine and Helena:** Constantine was the first Christian emperor. He transferred the capital to Byzantium and renamed the city Constantinople. He called the first Ecumenical Council in 325 in Nicea. His mother Helena found the true cross in Jerusalem where she built the church of the Resurrection.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

**VESPERS AND ORTHROS:** Every Saturday at 5pm we now celebrate vespers and every Sunday at 10am we now celebrate Orthros. Come and experience these ancient and beautiful services. These are also great opportunities for weekly confession!

**QURBAN:** Now that we have Vespers every Sunday (5pm), as is the Tradition, the Qurban for a Sunday Divine Liturgy should be brought to the Church on Saturday evening before or after vespers. At the very latest it should be at the church before Orthros so that there is ample time for its preparation (Prothesis).

### **From the Dioceses**

In every age there are people who have made dramatic turn-arounds in their life, going from one religion – or no religion – to another. These conversions often lead to a person making a significant contribution to the religious life of their age. One convert who has touched every successive age is St Paul the Apostle. The story of St Paul's conversion is described three times in the New Testament – twice in the Acts of the Apostles and once in St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. The story is basically the same, although there are a few variations we can note. The basic story, told largely in his own words, is as follows:

*Paul's Background* – When he was attacked by Jews in Jerusalem and accused of defiling the temple Paul began his defense by speaking of his upbringing: *"I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers' Law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today"* (Acts 22:3). He described his religiosity in his Epistle to the Philippians. He tells how he was *"... circumcised on the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; concerning the righteousness which is of the Law, blameless"* (Phil 3:5, 6). At this time Paul was still known as Saul of Tarsus. The name Paul was given to him upon his conversion. Paul's teacher, Gamaliel (+ad 52) was an important member of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. He is described in the New Testament as *"a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law held in respect by all the people"* (Acts 5:34) and a voice of moderation in their council. When the Sanhedrin was considering how to kill Peter and the other apostles, Gamaliel calmed them, saying *"...if this plan or this work [preaching Christ] is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God"* (Acts 5:38, 39). We do not know why Saul did not adopt Gamaliel's wait-and-see approach to the followers of Jesus, but he describes his own attitude to them like this: *"I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren..."* (Acts 22:4, 5). We may have a clue to Saul's thinking in what he wrote to believers in Galatia, St Paul described his religious convictions this way: *"And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers"* (Gal 1:14). He had been, after all, a participant in the stoning of the protomartyr, St. Stephen.

*The Commission to Damascus* – There was a large Jewish community – some say it numbered 10,000 – in Damascus in the first century ad. This community, which traced its origin to the time of King David, some 1000 years earlier, was so prominent that it was ruled by its own ethnarch in Roman times. Some 130 miles from Jerusalem, Damascus was one of the first destinations to which Jewish believers in Jesus brought their message. Their impact on the Jews of Damascus was so great that news of it reached Jerusalem. Saul *"went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem"* (Acts 9:1). What happened on Saul's journey to Syria is well known. Years later Paul described it for his accusers in Jerusalem with these words: *"Now it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' So I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' "And those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. So I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.' And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus"* (Acts 22:6-21). Many English-speaking commentators have pointed out an apparent contradiction between the two stories of this event in Acts. In chapter 9 we are told that *"the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one"* (Acts 9:7). Paul, however, says that *"those who were with me indeed saw the light and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me"* (Acts 22:9). The word in chapter 22 translated as *hear* may also be translated as *understand*. In other Scriptural passages, it is rendered in just that way. So this verse may mean that Saul's companions heard a sound but did not understand it as speech. It may also mean that they heard speaking but may not have understood the words.

*Saul's Baptism* – Saul was led into the city by the hand, *"And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank"* (Acts 9:9). Then, we are told, the following took place: *"Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, 'Ananias.' And he said, 'Here I am, Lord.' So the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.' "Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.' And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus."*

*Paul Preaches Christ* – As a result of Saul's experience on the road, *"Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, 'Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?' But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket"* (Acts 9:19-25).

In 1885 the Melkite Patriarch Gregory II purchased a dilapidated mosque in the old city wall of Damascus. A former church, it had been long revered as the site of St Paul's escape. It is now a church again.