



# 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, 5/28  
Qurban: Higareda  
Social: Kaldani
- Next Sunday, 6/4  
Qurban: Carnazzo  
Social: Higareda

## Pray for the Servants of God

The Readers Cyril and Romanos  
Higareda Family  
Kaldani Family  
John Andrews  
Mary Solis  
Laure Kelly  
Kamal & Eugenie Neimat  
Marvet Farah  
Lynski Family  
William Connelly  
Lily Higareda

## Asleep in the Lord in the Hope of the Resurrection

Jabra Asfour  
Florence Mendez  
Paul Hoersch  
Sr. Jean Marie

## May 28, 2017: 4TH DAY OF THE ASCENSION SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF NICEA I

### PRAYER

O Lord, Who are Good beyond description, we ask You through the intercession of Your All-pure Mother and the Holy Fathers who participated in the Ecumenical Councils, to support the Church, uphold the faith and make us all partake of Your heavenly Kingdom, when You come to judge the whole creation. For You are the Way, the Truth and the Life, O Christ God and we render glory, to You and to Your Eternal Father and Your All-holy, Good and Life-giving Spirit, now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

### HYMNS

**Troparion of the resurrection (6th Tone):** The angelic powers were around Your tomb, \* and the guards became as dead; \* and Mary stood at the tomb, \* seeking Your spotless body. \* Then You despoiled Hades without being tried by it \* and You met the Virgin, O Bestower of life. \* O Lord, Who rose from the dead, \* glory to You!

نشيد القيامة باللحن السادس  
إن القوات الملائكة ظهرت على قبرك، والحراس صاروا كالأموات، ومريم وقفت عند القبر، طالبةً جسدك الطاهر. فسلبت الجحيم ولم تنلك بأذى، ولاقيت البنول واهباً الحياة. فيا من قام من بين الأموات، يا رب المجد لك.

**Troparion of the Ascension (4th Tone):** You ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through Your blessing they were confirmed in their belief that You are the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

### READINGS

**Acts of the Apostles 20:16-18, 28-36:** In those days Paul decided to sail past Ephesus so as not to waste time in Asia. For he was hurrying as much as he could in order to reach Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. From Miletus, however, he had sent an invitation to Ephesus for the presbyters of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them, (20:28) "Be careful about yourselves and the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishops, to herd the Church of God which He has redeemed through His own blood. For I know this, that after I am gone fierce wolves will get in among you and will not spare the flock. And from among you, some men will rise, speaking perverse doctrines, to draw away the disciples after them. "Watch, therefore, and remember that for three years, night and day, I did not cease to warn with tears every one of you. And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, Who is able to edify and to grant you an inheritance among all His blessed ones. "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. You, yourselves, know these hands of mine have provided for my needs and those of my companions. In all things, I have shown you that by working in this way you should help the weak, and remember that the Lord Jesus said in person, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And after saying this, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

**John 17:1-13** At that time Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come! Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You, even as You have given Him power over all flesh, in order that to all You have given Him, He may give everlasting life. Now this is everlasting life, that they may know You, the only true God, and the One You have sent, Jesus Christ. I have glorified You on earth; I have accomplished the work You have given Me to do. And now do You, Father, glorify Me with Yourself, with the glory that I had with You before the world existed. I have manifested Your name to the men You have given me out of the world. They were Yours, and You have given them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have learned that whatever You have given Me is from You; because the words that You have given Me, I have given to them. And they have received them, and have known as a fact that I came forth from You, and they have believed that You did send Me. I pray for them; not for the world do I pray, but for those whom You have given Me, because they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep in Your name those You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those You have given Me, I guarded; and not one of them perished except the son of perdition, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to You and these things I speak in the world, in order that they may have My joy made full in themselves."

### COMMEMORATION

On this day, the Church celebrates the memory of the three hundred and eighteen God-bearing Fathers who attended the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea (325), in the course of which the Universal and Orthodox doctrine of the Holy Trinity was defined.

### ANNOUNCEMENT

**St. Elias Ladies' Meeting:** This Saturday (6/3) 11am at Chili's, 5650 Almaden Expy, San Jose, CA.

## *From the Dioceses*

**THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**, which our Church reads publicly from Pascha to Pentecost, climaxes with the trial of St Paul and his journey to Rome where he would ultimately be beheaded. The story of his conflict with the Jewish leadership, his arrest and the various hearings which followed is told in Acts, chapters 20 to 28. After what has come to be known as his third missionary journey, St Paul resolved to return to Jerusalem for the pilgrimage feast of Pentecost. Paul traveled south and landed at the port of Caesarea, the Roman military center in the region. There “a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, ‘Thus says the Holy Spirit, “So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles”’ (Acts 21:11, 12). Despite this and other warnings Paul was determined to return to Jerusalem.

St Paul’s reputation was well known among the Jews of Jerusalem. His doctrine that Gentiles who became Christians did not need to be circumcised was particularly offensive in their circles. To devalue circumcision and the Jewish dietary laws was “to forsake Moses” (Acts 21:21) and undermine the very basis of Judaism. Knowing the animosity of the Jewish leaders, who considered Paul an apostate, St. James and the elders of the Christian community in Jerusalem devised a plan to keep Paul safe. They urged him to “...do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the Law” (Acts 21:23, 24). St Paul complied, but “Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, ‘Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the Law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.” (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple” (Acts 21:27-29). St Paul was seized and had to be rescued by the commander of the local garrison.

What followed was a series of hearings which would determine St Paul’s fate, fulfilling Agabus’ prophecy concerning him. As Christ had been tried before the Sanhedrin (the religious leaders), King Herod (the Jewish ruler) and Pontius Pilate (the Roman Procurator), Paul’s trial followed a similar route. He first was tried by the high priests and their council, the Sanhedrin, as recorded in Acts 22. Paul began his defense before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem by tracing his personal religious history: “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. 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, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished” (Acts 22:3-5). Paul was then taken to the current Roman governor, Antonius Felix by the Jewish authorities to validate their judgment against Him. Once it was clear that Paul was a Roman citizen, however, he was taken from the Sanhedrin by the Romans. He was not subject to their jurisdiction.

### **Citizenship in the Roman Empire**

While full Roman citizenship was restricted to those born in Rome and its environs, people from associated states were granted a form of Roman citizenship, without some of the rights which full citizens enjoyed. Judaea, however was a conquered province with none of those rights. Although a Jew, St. Paul had been born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, and the citizens of Tarsus were eligible for Roman citizenship. When St Paul revealed that he was a Roman citizen, the Sanhedrin knew that they could not touch him. It was illegal to whip or torture Roman citizens who could only be put to death for treason, and never by crucifixion, a punishment for slaves and subject peoples. As a result, some Jewish activists, with the blessing of the chief priests and elders, planned to kidnap Paul and kill him. When the Roman military commander in Jerusalem learned of the plot, “he called for two centurions, saying, ‘Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor”’ (Acts 23:23, 24). Acts continues describing St. Paul’s time in custody under Felix and his journey to Rome to be tried before Caesar. During the journey the ship carrying St Paul is shipwrecked off the coast of Malta. After three months on that island, St Paul continues his journey to Rome, meeting with Christians along the way, showing how the Church had spread into Europe even before the death of the last apostles. Acts ends with Paul in Rome, telling us that “Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him” (Acts 28:30, 31).

### **A New Identity in the Making**

In addressing Felix St Paul used the original term to describe the Christian faith among its Jewish adherents. This term, “the Way” suggests that the earliest Jewish-Christians did not consider that they had abandoned Judaism. Rather, their Way was simply a recognition that the prophecies in the Torah, the Psalms, and the other Scriptures had been fulfilled. They saw themselves as observing a “completed Judaism,” to use a modern term, not a different religion. Contemporary authors often point out that “the Way” suggests a way of life, not a new set of beliefs. The followers of “the Way” had the same Scriptures as other Jews, worshipped in the temple and celebrated God’s promise of a Messiah. The difference between them was that the followers of Jesus believed that He was the Messiah. The uniqueness of their Way was that Greeks as well as Jews were welcome in their company if they accepted Jesus as Lord. As we read in Acts 11, it was among the “Greeks,” the Gentiles in Antioch, that the term “Christian” was first used. Many commentators hold that Christian was originally a term of derision. It contrasted these followers of Jesus with the Caesarians, who patriotically worshipped the Roman emperor. It was certainly used in that way by King Agrippa, who told St Paul sarcastically, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian!” (Acts 26:28)

The third ancient term for believers in Acts is found in chapter 24. Paul is brought before the Roman procurator and is accused by the Jewish spokesman Catullus of being “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” (24:5). Paul and his company were called Nazarenes because they followed Jesus of Nazareth. While “Christian” became the common name for Christ’s followers in the Greco-Roman world, the Aramaic/Semitic world generally preferred the term Nazarene (Nasrani). Thus the members of the Syriac Churches of India are called Mar Thoma Nasrani, because they trace their identity to the mission of St Thomas the Apostle who brought the Gospel to their nation.