



St. Elias Melkite Catholic Church

Proclaiming the Ancient and Orthodox Christian Faith in the Silicon Valley

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Sunday, January 7, 2018: 2ND DAY OF CELEBRATION OF THE THEOPHANY and HOLY SYNAXIS IN HONOR OF THE PROPHET AND GLORIOUS FORERUNNER JOHN

الاحد، 7 كانون الاول 2018

اليوم الثاني للاحتفال بالمعمودية ومحفل مقدس اكراماً للسابق المجيد يوحنا المعمدان
الاحد بعد الذي بعد الظهور

HYMNS

Troparion of the Theophany: At your Baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, the worship of the Trinity was revealed: for the Father's voice bore witness to you by calling You his Beloved Son, and the spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of these words. O Christ God who have appeared to us, and enlightened the world, glory to You.

نشيد عيد الظهور باللحن الاول

في اعتمادك يا رب في نهر الاردن، ظهر السجود للثالوث، فإن صوت الآب تقدم لك بالشهادة، مسمياً أياك أبناً محبوباً. والروح بهيئة حمامة يؤيد حقيقة الكلمة. فيا من ظهر وانار العالم، أيها المسيح الاله المجد لك.

READINGS

Acts 19:1-8 In those days it came to pass, while Apollos was in Corinth, that Paul crossed the upper districts and went to Ephesus. He found some of the disciples and asked them, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you became believers?" But they answered him, "We have not ever heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "How then were you baptized?" They replied, "With John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus Christ." Hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in tongues and to speak for God. They were about twelve men in all. Then for three months he went into the synagogue, speaking confidently, arguing with them and convincing them about God's kingdom.

في تلك الايام، إتفق إذ كان أبلس في كورنثس، أن بولس اجتاز في النواحي العالية وبلغ افسس، وصادف بعضاً من التلاميذ. فقال لهم: هل نلتم الروح القدس لما آمنتم؟ فقالوا له: لا، بل سمعنا أنه يوجد روح قدس. قال فباي معمودية اعتمدتم؟ قالوا بمعمودية يوحنا. فقال بولس: ان يوحنا قد عمد بمعمودية التوبة، قائلاً للشعب ليؤمنوا بالذي يأتي بعده أي بالمسيح يسوع. فلما سمعوا اعتمدوا باسم الرب يسوع. ووضع بولس يديه عليهم فحل الروح القدس عليهم، فطفقوا يتكلمون بلغات ويتنبأون. وكان الرجال كلهم نحو اثني عشر. ثم دخل المجمع، وجعل يتكلم بجرأة مدة ثلاثة أشهر يفأوضهم ويقنعهم بما يخص ملكوت الله.

John 1:29-34 At that time John saw Jesus coming to him, and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one of whom I said, 'After me there comes one who has been set above me, because he was before me.' And I did not know him. But that he may be known to Israel, for this reason have I come baptizing with water." And John bore witness, saying, "I beheld the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven, and it hovered over him. And I did not know him. But the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The man upon whom you will see the Spirit descending and hovering, he it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit'." And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

في ذلك الزمان، رأى يوحنا يسوع مُقبلاً اليه فقال: هوذا حمل الله الذي يرفع خطيئة العالم! هذا هو الذي قلت عنه إنه يأتي بعدي رجلاً قد تقدم علي، لانه كان قبلي، وأنا لم أكن أعرفه، لكن لكي يظهر لاسرائيل جئت أنا أعمد بالماء. وشهد يوحنا قائلاً: إني رأيت الروح مثل حمامة نازلاً من السماء وقد استقر عليه. وأنا لم أكن أعرفه، لكن الذي أرسلني لأعمد بالماء هو قال لي: إن الذي ترى الروح ينزل ويستقر عليه هو الذي يُعمد بالروح القدس. وأنا قد عاينت وشهدت أن هذا هو ابن الله

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE BISHOP'S APPEAL 2017 will remain open until 31 JANUARY 2018. In today's Gospel, St. John the Forerunner testifies that he has seen the Christ, the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world! How much our troubled and sinful world today needs Christ's healing and salvation! It is through the Church that the Lord's saving power continues to flow out to all who have faith. In this new year of grace, your generous gift to the Bishop's Appeal, will enable our Melkite Church to touch the lives of so many, bringing the message of salvation, faith, and new life to our culture that struggles in the bondage of darkness and sin. If you have not already sent your gift, please do so today so that 100% of our parish will respond to Sayidna's call. If you have already given, please consider sending an **additional donation**. Bishop's Appeal donation slips are available in the narthex. Thank you for your generosity!

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

Bible Study

Wednesdays: 7pm Online

Catechism Class

Tuesdays: 7pm Online

Sunday School

During Sunday Coffee Social

Contact the Pastor

Rev. Sebastian Carnazzo

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COMMEMORATION

On this day the Baptist is honored for the part he has played in the events celebrated on the day before. The Synaxis, or gathering, is an occasion for the people of God to come together to hear the voice of the Forerunner preaching penance for the remission of sin.

Pray for the Servants of God

P. Christopher, Anthony

D. Fernando

Newly Illumined Peter

Newly Illumined Kevin

Natalia Carnazzo

Kaldani Family

Handal Family

Frank Demello

Nadga Haddad

Laila Hajjar

Robert & Lisa Andrews

Sramcik family

Joseph Sibert

Kamal & Eugenie Neimat

Isaac & Julia Kaldani

Maher & Therese Salama

The Expectants Mothers Anna

Higareda and Leila Carnazzo

The Catechumens Jonathan,

Maria, Jacob, and Grayson

Wright, Jess and Valerie Guy

Asleep in the Lord in the Hope of the Resurrection

Edmond Shihadeh

Shukri Anton

Ernest & Marion Young

Souad Elhage

Afaf & Hanna Moussy

From the Diocese



Who is the greatest saint after the Theotokos? Modern sentiment in the West looks to her spouse, St Joseph, as the foremost representative of holiness. For the Eastern Churches, however, “the Lord’s witness is enough” (troparion of St John). The liturgy here refers to the words of Christ concerning John, “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist...” (*Mt 11:11*) Thus John the Baptist is regularly depicted in the “Deisis” icons flanking Christ, opposite the Theotokos. This same grouping is found as the basic component of icon screens along with the icon of the church’s patron. A moving testimony to St John comes from the fourth-century Bishop of Milan, St. Ambrose. John, he writes, “...did not enlarge the boundaries of an empire. He did not prefer triumphs of military conquest to honors. Rather, what is more, he disparaged human pleasures and lewdness of body, preaching in the desert with great spiritual power. He was a child in worldliness, but great in spirit. He was not captivated by the allurements of life, nor did he change his steadfastness of purpose through a desire to live...” (*Exposition of the Gospel of Luke, 1.31*).

John in the Scriptures

John’s unique holiness is displayed in the story of the Theotokos’ visit to his mother Elizabeth. There the Gospel tells us that, at Mary’s greeting, the child in Elizabeth’s womb leapt for joy, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (see *Lk 1:39-45*). The Gospel thus shows John as aware even in the womb of the greatness of Christ who had been conceived in the womb of Mary. Thus he fulfills the prophecy made by the Angel Gabriel to John’s father, Zachariah: “He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb” (*Lk 1:45*). Reflecting on this event, St Ambrose connects the experience of John in the womb with that of another prophet, Jeremiah. This prophet, who lived during the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, describes God’s call to him: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations” (*Jer 1:5*). While Jeremiah describes himself as consecrated before his birth, Luke describes John as nothing less than filled with the Holy Spirit. John reappears in the Gospels as an adult, living in the Judean desert and baptizing at the Jordan. This “desert” was not what we consider desert; it was actually grazing land, useless for agriculture but able to sustain the sheep and goats and the occasional solitary who lived there. Nothing is said in the Gospels about the intervening years of John’s life, nor how he came to be in the desert. Some modern scholars have speculated that John was a member of the Essenes, a Jewish sect at the time which had retired to the desert and established a community there.

The Ministry of John

St Mark’s Gospel presents us with a thumbnail description of John as a Forerunner, preparing the way for One greater than he by calling people to “a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (*Mk 1:4*). In Matthew John is depicted preaching “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (*Mt 3:2*). God’s action in Christ was immanent; those in need of repentance had best make up their minds to do so. Matthew singles out the Pharisees and Sadducees – the religious establishment – calling them a “brood of vipers” (*Mt 3:7*) most in need of repentance. He depicts the coming Messiah as One who “will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor” (we would say “clean house”) burning up the unrepentant “with unquenchable fire” (*Mt 3:11-12*). One image from the Gospels has found its way into many icons of John baptizing. John is described as warning, “Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees” (*Mt 3:10; Lk 3:9*), meaning that the house cleaning is about to begin. In many icons an axe is shown imbedded in a tree or tree stump to suggest this image. In Luke specific examples for repentance are given in response to the question “What shall we do?” John tells the tax collectors not to extort more money than the tax law allows. He tells soldiers not to intimidate or accuse others falsely and to be content with their pay. And he tells everyone to give alms from what they have (see *Lk 3:10-14*). In St John’s Gospel, another note is added to the Baptist’s message. He identified Jesus as the One who is coming and depicts his own work as a testimony to Jesus. “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world ...I came baptizing with water that He should be revealed to Israel” (*Jn 1:29, 31*).

The Baptism of Repentance

Immersion into a stream, river or bathing pool (*Mikveh*) was practiced for ritual purposes in first century Judaism. Orthodox and many Conservative Jews continue the practice to this day. Ritual baths were necessary for Jewish men in preparation for Yom Kippur or the Sabbath, for entering the temple or ascending the Temple Mount. Women were required to bathe for ritual purity after childbirth or menstruation. Gentiles submitted to a ritual bath upon converting to Judaism. Some differences between these ritual baths and John’s baptism are obvious. Jewish ritual baths are self-administered; John baptized people into the water. Jewish baptism was a physical cleansing to achieve ritual purity; John’s baptism was to signify repentance, a moral act.

John’s Baptism and Baptism into Christ

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read how St. Paul, “finding some disciples” in Ephesus, learned that they had never heard of the Holy Spirit. Hearing that they had been baptized with the baptism of John, St Paul explained: “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in Him who would come after him, that is, in Christ Jesus” (*Acts 19:4*). Christian baptism is neither a kind or ritual purification or a symbol of repentance. It is the incorporation into the death and resurrection of Christ. Through faith we are buried with Him in baptism and then rise from the water with Him in the likeness of His resurrection. This effects an organic union with Christ in His Body the Church, a result never imagined by John. As we say at every baptism, in the words of St. Paul (*Gal 3:27*), “As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”